Explaining the Advocacy Agenda: Insights From the Human Security Network

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Why do transnational advocacy networks select particular issues for attention but not others? This is an important question because advocacy campaigns have been shown to matter significantly in developing new global norms and galvanizing political attention to global social problems. However, most scholarship on transnational advocacy networks has focused on whether they are effective in promoting global norm change, rather than understanding how actors in these networks determine which global norms to promote in the first place.

This research study sought to gain insight into these dynamics. We built on recent studies showing that the decisions of advocacy gatekeepers at the center of issue networks are crucial for agenda-setting, and explored the determinant of gatekeeper preferences by studying agenda-setting in the area of “human security,” broadly defined.

We sought to answer our research question in four ways. First, we captured variation in the salience of “human security” issues through surveys with human security practitioners, combined with content analysis of websites for organizations closely associated with the area of “human security.” Second, we aimed to identify a population of issues that practitioners in this network believe should be on the human security agenda but which (according to our measures) are not. Third, we explored the differences between “high-profile” and “neglected” issues through a series of focus groups with activists from leading organizations in the human security network. Participants were asked about what

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is and what is not on the human security “agenda,” how this changes over time, and why. Finally, we collected participants’ reactions to a variety of “low-salience” issues as well as their practical understandings of what made the “high-salience” issues a success.

We found that practitioners in these focus group named five general sets of factors influencing the likelihood that global civil society organizations will focus their attention on some issues and not others: the attributes of issues themselves, the attributes of the actors concerned (both issue entrepreneurs and those organizations they seek to court as allies), the broader political context, and structural relationships within advocacy networks themselves – particularly between thematic sub-networks in broader civil society. This empirical evidence substantiates but also refines or expands on many claims developed in the IR literature through inductive work.

However, we also found that the salience of these factors depended greatly on whether practitioners were being asked to talk abstractly or asked to evaluate candidate issues for human security campaigns. In the abstract, practitioners were much likelier to attribute inattention to issues to the broader political context (what scholars call the “political opportunity structure,” but in the concrete, organizational interests and intra-network effects were much more salient as explanations of why certain claims simply do not resonate with global agenda-setters.

This paper proceeds as follows. We begin with a general discussion of global agenda-setting and the need for an explanation of variation in transnational issue salience. We then discuss the methods by which we measured issue salience, recruited focus group participants, gathered and analyzed our data. We then present the findings of the study, which include a detailed discussion of factors that contribute to possible advocacy success, and what factors might lead to failure, and how practitioners’ understandings of these factors depend on the context of the conversation. We conclude with a discussion of theoretical and policy implications.

**Literature Review**

Why do some issues and/or populations of concern but not others galvanize the attention of transnational advocacy networks (TANs)? This is an important question because such networks play critical roles in the creation of new global standards. In the area broadly associated with “human security,” outcomes of the advocacy of these networks has included the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 1997 Landmine Treaty, and the 2002 Rome Treaty of the International Criminal Court. Besides agenda-setting, advocacy groups also play important roles in monitoring and enforcing such standards once states have agreed to them, and in implementing global policy. Yet while the relationship between transnational advocacy networks and global policy-making has

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2 We define an issue as an identifiable problem or category of concern on an official agenda, whether or not linked with a specific policy proposal.
been established, we know little about why transnational networks themselves mobilize around certain kinds of problem and not others at specific points in history, when the problem is not yet a priority for governments.

Indeed, organizations in such networks appear to be highly selective in the issues they choose to champion and the populations whose grievances they choose to frame as human security problems. For example, child soldiering has become the most prominent issue on a long list decried by a transnational network of activists and organizations working in the issue domain of children and armed conflict.\(^3\) However, the network around children and armed conflict does not lobby for all children affected by war equally: until very recently girls and HIV-AIDS orphans were invisible on this agenda, and children born of war rape still receive scant attention.\(^4\)

Similar variance exists in other issues areas. Landmines and cluster munitions have been the subject of widespread campaigns,\(^5\) but explosive weapons and depleted uranium have attracted less opprobrium.\(^6\) Internal wars are an important concern for conflict prevention analysts but gangs and urban violence are on the margins of the global security agenda.\(^7\) While HIV/AIDS and SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) are championed as health issues, other communicable diseases such as pneumonia and diarrheal diseases, despite the number of lives they claim, get only limited attention.\(^8\)

Similar variation occurs within “issue complexes.” Although “minority rights” is on the human rights agenda, for example, not every aggrieved group manages to channel the global attention to their causes. For instance, while there are many minority groups in China trying to get global attention to the discrimination they face, Tibetans are the only group who managed to get such an international attention while other groups such as Uyghurs failed to galvanize such international support; while discrimination against indigenous groups has attracted attention at the global level, the same level of attention is only recently developing against caste-based discrimination.\(^9\)

As the examples above suggest, many problems are articulated by groups in varying policy domains, but are not picked up on by global networks and promulgated as issues within transnational civil society. As the evidence suggests, analyzing only “the usual suspects” such as issue attributes falls short of explaining why some cases make it to the global agenda while the others, which have very similar characteristics, remain as

\(^3\)Issue prominence is defined as the relative frequency with which an issue is referenced within a sample of advocacy discourse. The exploratory sample on which this claim is based includes a content analysis of 36 advocacy websites in the children and armed conflict issue area. See Carpenter, 2007a.

\(^4\) Carpenter, 2007a

\(^5\) Hubert, 2000

\(^6\) Fahey 2004; 2008; MacDonald, 2008

\(^7\) Forman and Segaar, 2006

\(^8\) Shiffman, 2009

\(^9\) Bob, 2005; 2009a
‘non-issues’. Other factors such as crises or focusing events that create favorable political opportunity structures\textsuperscript{10} or the support of epistemic communities\textsuperscript{11} do not also always guarantee the rise of a new norm. Explaining ‘non-issues’, therefore, requires us to go beyond a static view of agenda setting.

The dynamics that shape the global agenda setting can only be explained by shedding light on the actors involved in the process and their interests. Therefore, both norm entrepreneurs’ (who initiate the advocacy campaign) and gatekeepers’ (whose involvement brings the issue to the global agenda) interests and preferences as well as the power dynamics within the networks need to be analyzed.

The significance of the agenda setting literature partially comes from the emphasis it puts on norm entrepreneurs’ ability to affect politics at a global scale, which had been disregarded by the international relations literature until the path-breaking works of Martha Finnemore, Kathryn Sikkink and others. As a part and a reflection of this significant contribution that the agenda setting literature makes, the role of issue entrepreneurs, their preferences and the tactics at their disposal have been widely analyzed.\textsuperscript{12} While norm entrepreneurs, who are mainly responsible for framing the issues to be advocated, have been at the center of the attention, the other set of actors, gatekeepers, who are key in putting an issue successfully on the global agenda have not attracted the same level of attention.

Yet as more recent works by Clifford Bob and Charli Carpenter have shown, not all norm entrepreneurs succeed in their attempts to socialize states into new understandings. An important permissive condition is the early support of advocacy “gatekeepers”: actors with the capacity and influence to disseminate and promote new issues within a specific advocacy space, but who pick and choose among the range of possible emerging claims, launching some issues to prominence and side-lining others. Various actors such as international NGOs, governments, international organizations as well as the media and foundations can play such a gate-keeping role.\textsuperscript{13}

The value that “gatekeepers” bring to the campaign comes from their reputation as credible actors as well as their organizational capacity to gather and disseminate information,\textsuperscript{14} often a function of their internal organizational structure.\textsuperscript{15} Carpenter argues that such actors tend to have the greatest centrality within given issues networks, creating

\textsuperscript{10} Legro, 2005
\textsuperscript{11} Busby, 2007
\textsuperscript{12} For a general discussion on the role of policy entrepreneurs in policy change see Roberts and King, 1991; Weisert 1991; Mintrom 2000; Crowley, 2003; Mintrom and Norman, 2009. For discussion on the role of policy entrepreneurs within advocacy coalitions see Mintrom and Vergari, 1996; Hajime, 1999; Litfin 2000; Goldfinch and Hart 2003; Meijerink, 2005; Zhu, 2008.
\textsuperscript{13} Joachim, 2007
\textsuperscript{14} Bob, 2005
\textsuperscript{15} Wong, 2008.
a “prestige effect” for issues associated with their organizational agendas.\textsuperscript{16} Thus involvement also has an important symbolic effect because “even if the gatekeepers do not communicate concerns directly to other network members, their choices have powerful demonstration effects, signaling that certain movements are important and certifying them for support”.\textsuperscript{17} Gatekeepers validate the ‘actors, their performances and their claims’ by exercising this ‘certifying’ role.\textsuperscript{18}

There is an increasing interest in the literature in “look[ing] inside the black box of ‘gatekeeping organizations’” in understanding why some issues fail to claim a spot on the global agenda.\textsuperscript{19} Clifford Bob, for instance, identifies four areas (substantive, cultural, tactical and ethical) that a local movement needs to match to the gatekeeper’s mandate to be able to secure their support.\textsuperscript{20} The literature has started to look beyond the moral commitments and began considering factors such as institutional environment and organizational survival\textsuperscript{21} in explaining issue emergence. This is important since understanding why gatekeepers choose to support one set of claims among seemingly equally morally valid claims can only be realized through such an analysis.

For example, Bob’s analysis of the Ogoni movement’s ability to appeal to the mandate of the international NGOs, while other minority movements in Nigeria could not, suggests the importance of winning gatekeeper attention.\textsuperscript{22} Similarly, Joachim also looks at the role that gatekeepers play and talks about a particular set of actors whose involvement is especially sought and analyzes their impact for the case of violence against women.\textsuperscript{23} In a recent study, Mertus analyzes the role that two prominent gatekeepers (Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch) played for the LGBT rights movement.\textsuperscript{24} Carpenter’s work on how children born of rape did not get on the agenda, and Lord’s work on why disability rights came to the human rights agenda so late also demonstrate that gatekeepers can play important roles in impeding issue emergence.\textsuperscript{25}

Despite the evidence that gatekeepers “matter,” there has been little systematic research on how gatekeepers decide. In the literature described above, gatekeeper preferences are generally either assumed or described on a case by case basis without providing a systematic analysis across cases. Our aim here is to better refine our understanding of what gatekeepers want and why, to develop better insights for norm

\textsuperscript{16} Carpenter, 2011.
\textsuperscript{17} Bob 2005, 18
\textsuperscript{18} McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001
\textsuperscript{19} Carpenter, 2007a
\textsuperscript{20} Bob, 2005
\textsuperscript{21} Cooley and Ron 2002; Barnett and Finnemore 2004
\textsuperscript{22} Bob, 2005
\textsuperscript{23} Joachim, 2007
\textsuperscript{24} Mertus, 2009
\textsuperscript{25} Carpenter, 2010; Lord, 2009.
entrepreneurs seeking to win their approval and testable hypotheses for further research on gatekeeping processes.

**METHODOLOGY**

This project utilized multiple research methods including surveys, hyperlink analysis, content-analysis of websites, interviews and focus groups. Our aim was three-fold: to identify a specific transnational network and identify its issue agenda; to draw on practitioners’ insights to develop a population of issues “missing” from that agenda; and to explore hypotheses about the differences between the “issues” and “missing issues” through conversations with practitioners in the network.

**Case Selection: Human Security**

In this study, we sought to develop a theory of gatekeeper preferences through an analysis of a specific “network of networks” – organizations working in the broad area of “human security.” Although the term has many meanings and is contested within global civil society, our research showed that the network is composed of several sub-networks and includes organizations working in the areas of human rights, humanitarian affairs, arms control or disarmament, environmental security, conflict prevention and development. This broad “human security” network (like others) includes not only nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), but also international organizations such as the United Nations, international specialized agencies such as the World Health Organization, various bodies, governments, academics, regional bodies, foundations, and think-tanks.

The vagueness of the term “human security” has paved the way to questions in the literature about the validity of using human security both as a policy framework and as a category of research. There are three main schools of thought on the meaning of human security and its policy implications. The first approach can be categorized as ‘rights and rule of law’ conception of human security. The main threat to human security is considered to be the absence of the rule of law as well as denial of human rights. The second approach is the ‘humanitarian’ conception of human security. In this conception the emphasis is on the protection of civilians in violent conflicts and supply of “emergency assistance to those in dire need”. The third approach to human security adopts a broader

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26 It may therefore be most appropriate to think of this as a “global policy network” encompassing a variety of distinct though interlinked “issue networks.” This community of practice is characterized by fluid relations among many professionals drawn from a variety of backgrounds, organizational locations, nationalities and areas of expertise yet sharing a common goal of addressing global policy problems that threaten vulnerable populations. The aggregate of the institutional agendas of the organizations within this network constitutes the “human security network agenda.”

27 Hampson, Osler, Daudelin, Hay, Martin, and Reid, 2002

28 Donnelly, 1986; Lauren, 1998

29 Hampson, et al., 2002
perspective on the issue and focuses on non-military threats to human security such as ‘unchecked population growth, disparities in economic opportunities, the rise of pandemic diseases, and environmental degradation’.  

Both the literature and political practices have evolved to a more encompassing definition of human security over time. This in turn, however, paved the way the theorists to create long lists of what constitutes human security which, according to the critics, made human security too vague of a concept to be ‘meaningful for policymakers’. Paris, for instance, refers to the concept of human security as nothing more than ‘the glue that holds together a jumbled coalition of ‘middle power’ states, development agencies and NGOs, all of which seek to shift attention and resources away from conventional security issues and toward goals that have traditionally fallen under the rubric of international development.”

While acknowledging the problems associated with the ambiguity surrounding the concept of ‘human security’, for our purposes treating the human security network as a subject of study has significant merits. We agree that human security network provides a venue for a wide range of actors to interact with each other. Indeed it is the very “jumbledness” of this coalition that allows us to draw on insights from many types of actors working in many adjacent issues areas, to develop both broadly generalizable findings and also investigate the role played by ideational and organizational synergies among sub-networks of meaning. Analyzing these synergies has the potential to help us overcome some of the ambiguities surrounding the concept of human security.

Secondly, as both the transnational advocacy efforts and the global political agenda became more complex, we are no longer able to neatly fit issues into distinct categories such as human rights and environment. Treating human security network as a study subject provides us a category where we can analyze and explain, for instance, how human rights groups and environmental groups collaborated with arms control and development groups to organize a campaign against land mines. It will not be possible to understand today’s advocacy networks without acknowledging these cross-cutting interactions that can only be captured with a broad concept like ‘human security’. As long as these networks that cross traditional issue boundaries remain at the center of the transnational advocacy stage, addressing the criticisms about the vagueness of human security as a concept lies in better engagement with the human security network itself rather than abandoning it.

30 Ibid
31 Paris, 2001
32 Nef, for instance, proposes a fivefold classification scheme (Nef, 1999) whereas Reed and Tehranian have ten items on their list (Reed and Tehranian 1999).
33 Owens and Arneil, 2003
34 Paris 2001, 88
Identifying the Network

We identified a population of organizations closely associated with the issue area “human security” through two methods. First, we conducted an analysis of hyperlinks between human security websites using an online tool called Issue-crawler to determine the cluster of organizations associated with the concept of “human security” who are connected to one another in cyberspace (see Figure 1). Second, we disseminated an online snowball survey in Spring 2008, beginning with the mailing list of a key information portal in the human security network: the Liu Institute of Human Security. One of the questions asked respondents to name “three or more organizations that come to mind when they think of human security.” The responses to this question gave us not only a population of organizations cited, but also a frequency count that enabled us to identify the organizations most closely associated with the network by the most practitioners. The top 20 of such central organizations are listed in Table 1.

As Figure 1 shows, we found that what we are calling the “human security network” actually consists not only of a few “human security” hubs and other prominent organizations, but also a variety of actors associated with several wider issue areas: human rights, humanitarian affairs, conflict prevention, disarmament and arms control, environmental security and sustainable development. It also includes many organizations that do work in more than one of these areas and many initiatives that cut across these specific communities of practice.

Identifying the Network Agenda

We were also interested in identifying the issues on the human security network’s agenda. Again, we used online and offline indicators of the issue agenda. We collected “mission-statements” and “issue-lists” from the websites of the organizations in the hyperlinked network, and we coded them according to which issues were named on human security web-pages. We also asked survey respondents to “name three issues that come to mind when you think of human security.” These open-ended questions were aggregated and coded using the same code scheme as the websites. The results from the link analysis and the survey responses were closely related in terms of the issue agenda,

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35 We thus ended up with two separate measures of network centrality for each organization. The percentage of citations from each source was averaged to arrive at a total centrality ranking for each organization, and we drew from this population of organizations in recruiting participants to the focus groups.

36 This survey went out to over 6,000 individuals in transnational civil society, who were encouraged to pass it along to others whose insights they thought we should include. In total, we received 290 survey responses.
though somewhat different in terms of issue salience.\textsuperscript{37} We averaged these measures to create an overall measure of issue salience within the network (Figure 2).

A network analysis of the co-occurrences of issues both on websites and in survey responses suggests a close relationship between issues that correspond to general ideational clusters within the human security network. In general, issues co-occur with some issues more than others, although the analysis also showed considerable thematic overlap throughout the network and synergy across issue areas (Figure 3).

**Identifying Missing Issues**

We were especially interested in low-salience issues, because we wanted to know what sort of factors might prevent an issue from getting “on the network agenda” in order to better understand what factors enabled other issues to get attention from transnational networks. So we asked respondents to name human security “problems” they knew of in the world that were not very prominent as “issues” within the human security movement. Focus group participants were given a similar survey prior to participation, and a portion of the time in the focus groups themselves was spent brainstorming additional “missing issues.” Participants were free to name any problem they could think of. We compared the problems named to the “issues” actually on the human security agenda (according to our indicators). Table 2 contains all the problems that were reported missing from the human security agenda at the time the data was collected.

**What Gets on the Agenda and Why?**

To answer this question we drew on the experience and insights of 43 senior officials drawn from organizations central to the human security network.\textsuperscript{38} Our goal was to spearhead and analyze a discussion about why some issues gain attention within this network of networks, and why others do not. Six focus groups were completed by University of Massachusetts Amherst researchers at Tufts University’s Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in Fall 2009.

*The Participants.* Participants were recruited based on their positions within organizations identified in both the surveys and the hyperlink analysis. Although all 110 organizations in the network received a letter of invitation and a follow-up phone call, we recruited most

\textsuperscript{37}This finding suggests the official network agenda as measured by aggregating network websites either reflects or constructs the understandings of individuals who identify themselves closely with a transnational network. Indeed, 82\% of the survey respondents reported they got either “some” or “a lot” of their information on the human security network from websites.

\textsuperscript{38}We considered in-coming hyperlinks as well as survey citations to be indicators of network centrality and we averaged organizations’ rankings from these two measures to arrive at their overall centrality score. Organizations were prioritized for focus group recruitment based on their centrality in the network.
aggressively from organizations with the highest centrality scores in the network. This follows from the assumption, documented in previous research, that organizations at the center of a network have the greatest influence over the network agenda. Therefore we were most curious about the insights of practitioners affiliated with organizations at the center.

We also aimed to recruit from the most senior ranks in each organization, in order to hear from individuals with some influence over each organization’s internal agenda. An initial letter was usually sent to the executive director, ambassador, or the highest executive management position. From there the executive assistant would often assist the research team in identifying a participant who would be knowledgeable about issue selection or rejection within the organization and the organization’s interaction with others in the network. The recruitment technique resulted in the participation of 43 individuals from 39 different organizations.

We also aimed for thematic, organizational and geographic representativeness across the entire sample of participating organizations, relative to the population in our network. Our final sample included practitioners from 18 nations, based in five world regions, with representation from most of major thematic clusters, organizational types and geographical region. We also aimed to create a diverse cohort of practitioners in each focus group, combining individuals operating in different thematic fields (human rights, humanitarian affairs, arms control, sustainable development and conflict prevention) and hailing from different types of organizations (NGOs, international organizations, think-tanks, academic institutions, and government agencies). Figure 4 presents a breakdown of the overall thematic expertise of the individual participants in the focus groups.

Despite thematic and organizational diversity, participants in the focus groups were more alike than they were different. Over 75% of the participants held graduate degrees, and over 70% held senior level positions at their organizations. All were fluent in English. Participants generally had worked at their organizations for several years, and more than half work in policy and planning within their organizations, and over half working on program management. Over 70% of participants reported a mix of specializations within the organization, spending time on a combination of policy and planning, program management, research, public relations and advocacy. Over half of the participants reported previously working at an NGO, while only one reported working previously at a foundation. Although our sample included participants currently based in Africa, South America, Asia and the Middle East, over 80% of our respondents were currently based in North America or Western Europe.

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39 Hafner-Burton, Kahler, Montgomery, 2009
40 Bob, 2005; Carpenter, 2007a; 2007b; Wong, 2008
41 Ultimately, however, we discovered that individual practitioners’ thematic expertise or professional “hat” did not in every case correlate related to the specific organization for which they were presently working.
Most reported expertise in more than one thematic issue-area and most reported significant contacts with colleagues in other issue-areas besides the one in which they had expertise. However it is interesting to note that certain types of thematic expertise seem more closely related than others. For example, those reporting thematic expertise in “human rights” report significant connections to colleagues in “development” but weaker connections to those in “conflict prevention” or “arms control” (see Figure 5). To some extent this corresponds to network analyses of the wider issue distribution in the network (see Figure 3).

The Focus Groups. Each focus group began with a brainstorming session on missing issues from the network. Participants were asked to list as many issues as they could think of that are not getting enough attention in the human security network. The brainstorming session led into a larger discussion on why certain issues make it onto the advocacy agenda, and others do not. Although no particular structure was imposed on this discussion by the moderator, participants often chose to apply certain cognitive schematics which were recorded on the whiteboards. After a coffee break, the final segment of the focus group centered on thought-experiments where the moderator presented issues that have not yet garnered international attention, and the participants were asked to analyze why these issues lack saliency. At the end of the focus group sessions there was time for a more general discussion and for comments on the research methods.42

The transcripts for the focus group sessions were analyzed using Atlas.ti 6.0, a qualitative data analysis software package with which multiple individuals can code large amounts of text for certain substantive themes or discursive properties. The project coordinator and four research assistants developed the thematic categories using a grounded theory review of the set of transcripts. We then developed codes both for substantive arguments made by focus group participants about the determinants of the issue agenda, and also for discursive patterns we observed during the conversations.

These analytical categories were applied to each passage of code-able text by at least two undergraduate student coders through a succession of coding waves in which we aimed to determine which codes could be applied most reliably and which were most subject to interpretation.43 Inter-rater reliability for each code was measured using the

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42 Although this general format was held constant across all focus groups, minor adjustments to the focus group protocol were made as we went along. We found early on, for example, that the discussion was limited if we encouraged participants to organize their brainstorming sessions around specific thematic areas like “human rights” or “environmental security” because so many issues are cross-cutting in nature. We also varied the specific “thought experiments” provided to the participants, retaining the ones that led to the liveliest substantive discussions and eliminating those that many participants considered to be “straw men.”

43 For the purposes of this project, we treated each discrete comment by a participant as a passage of codeable text. Frequencies of codes correspond to the number of discrete comments made in which a
Kappa’s Cohen, and each code-list was refined at least three times to derive the maximum degree of reliability among the coding team. While some codes were easier to apply than others due to the complexity of the dataset and the coding scheme, we achieved an average inter-rater reliability score of 0.47 for the entire dataset. Any resulting disagreement among coders was then adjudicated by the PI. The analysis below details descriptive statistical findings from the resulting annotations.

**FINDINGS**

Responses from the discussions fell into four broad categories. First, respondents repeatedly argued that the characteristics of issues themselves made an important difference in whether or not they were selected for advocacy attention. Second, respondents emphasized the attributes of relevant actors. Issue entrepreneurs, it was argued, must possess certain attributes and skills to successfully champion an issue; and existing organizations in a position to validate a new issue by incorporating it onto their organizational agenda will vary in their approach based on their attributes, including organization mandate and resources. Third, respondents described a variety of factors related to effects among organizations in advocacy networks: the dynamics at play within transnational advocacy networks might support or detract from successful advocacy. Finally, factors relating to the external environment or broader political context – what social scientists refer to as the political opportunity structure - were mentioned by many participants. We describe each of these patterns below.

**Issue Attributes**

In considering why an issue may or may not succeed in gaining salience in transnational advocacy networks, participants discussed how attributes of the issue itself might encourage or discourage success. Participants’ perception of the role that issue attributes play in the success of an advocacy effort showed parallels to the emphasis put on the nature of issues in the literature. We defined issue attributes as those intrinsic aspects of issues (or people’s perceptions of those aspects) that make them likelier or less likely to be selected. Examples of “issue attributes” would be the nature of the victims (are they, or are they likely to be perceived as, innocent or vulnerable?), the nature of the harm caused (bodily integrity rights violations versus social harms), the nature of the perpetrators (some are more politically acceptable than others); the number of victims or

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44 Complete appendices for the coding scheme and data outputs are available from http://www.people.umass.edu/charli/networks.

scope of the problem, and whether or not the issue is culturally sensitive in nature. A complete list of codes we used for this analytical category appears in Table 3.

One of the most widely cited issue attributes in the literature has to do with the causal relations underlying the social problem concerned. In other words, to what exact will advocates have the ability to present a clear and short causal story that links ‘deliberate actions of identifiable’ perpetrator to a specific damage it caused on a victim population? It has also been argued that the chances of attracting attention to an issue are better if the damage is physical and therefore, visible to an outside audience. However the nature of the victims’ relationships with their broader societies also matters in how an issue is perceived to be constituted. Being able to identify the violators is said to be especially important in illustrating that the issue can be resolved through an international action whereas the cases that are seen as ‘irredeemably structural’ have less of a chance at galvanizing support as the issue will not be considered as solvable.

Participants’ responses echoed and confirmed much of this existing knowledge from case studies, but also provided additional nuance to how issue attributes are socially understood. It was mentioned several times that an issue is more likely to succeed if there is an obviously vulnerable victim and an obviously guilty perpetrator. Issues that are “too complex” are thought to be less likely to gain advocacy attention, as are issues which seem to have impossible or unachievable solutions.

“You have to be able to get your message in a series of single sentences. You’ve got a millisecond of time when your press release goes across the editor’s table.”

“People need to be able to feel like they can make a difference.”

“The attention disappears from the issue just because it seems like there’s nothing that can be done.”

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46 Keck and Sikkink 1998, 27
47 Keck and Sikkink, 1998. For instance, the success of the Campaign to Ban Landmines came with the activists’ ability to publicize the indiscriminate human cost that landmines pose (Hubert, 2007; Clarke, 2008). Howard-Hassmann and Lombardo put forward the difficulty to demonstrate a short causal link as one of the reasons why African movements asking for reparation for the past treatments failed whereas Jewish reparation movements managed to attract attention (Howard-Hassmann and Lombardo, 2007).
48 For instance, Freedman reports that, in France, it is “far easier to gain asylum in cases of threatened FGM [female genital mutilation] when the asylum claimant is a mother trying to protect her daughter from this practice, rather than a woman who is fleeing the practice herself.” (Freedman, 2009)
49 Stone, 1989; 2006; Keck and Sikkink 1998, 27
50 Stone suggests that causal stories need to be developed so that the problem can be described as “amenable to human action” rather than as ‘mere accidents or fate’. (Stone, 2006 p.130)
Participants also named a variety of other “issue attributes” less often referenced in the literature on successful campaigns. For example many commented on the importance of “ripeness,” describing a sort of sweet spot or tipping point where an issue is no longer unheard-of but also not taken for granted, which affects the opportunity structure for agenda-setting:

I mean, one thing about the ripeness of the issue and you don’t want to do it too early and you kind of don’t want to do it too late. You sort of have to find that point where there’s enough information out there that you can work with without it having kind of moved beyond the point you can do something about it.

Often ideas will percolate for decades before the moment arrives.

Respondents also stressed the emotional side of agenda-setting: that issues that are “scary” or that “tug at heartstrings” are more likely to be picked up by advocates, because it is assumed that emotional appeals are often helpful when marketing issues to other NGOs or to a given constituency.

“If you can’t make it an emotional connection of the issue to the proposed—either solution or line of action towards a solution, you’re not likely to get substantial public win.”

“Nuclear terrorism gets a lot of attention because it combines two things people are really frightened of.”

Yet existing literature also suggests emotional appeals are not always sufficient, particularly in selling issues to gatekeepers. Various successful cases of agenda setting illustrate that providing systemic, quantifiable evidence to supplement the shocking testimonies is crucial in communicating the severity of the problem to the gatekeepers, many of whom pride themselves on their objective technical expertise: as Jutta Joachim has shown, “testimonial knowledge” must be combined with “scientific knowledge.” The campaign against domestic violence in the European Union and the use of detailed aggregate statistics in the Child Soldiers campaign provide examples of such a use of information. Similarly, key actors did not sign onto the Ozone campaign until scientists provided evidence proving the existence of an ozone hole.

Participants’ comments support these claims, emphasizing that the availability of credible data on problems and issues is an important element in the recipe for agenda-

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51 Joachim, 2007: 37.
53 Haas 1992a; Parson, 2003
setting success. Indeed it is partly the scope of problems, as well as their testimonial narratives, that are perceived to contribute to the emotional appeal advocates see as necessary for campaigns to succeed. The more widespread and serious the problem, the more the problem lends itself to greater attention. The prerequisite for creating such data is the measurability of the problem – a function of the issue itself as well as the tools available to advocates:

I would go even beyond and I would say that an element that influences the attention of organizations for issues is whether the issue is measurable or not. So, institutions, organizations, are more likely to give attention to things that can be measured as opposed to other things that are perhaps more important but cannot be measured or we don’t have measures for them

Participants also suggested that issues are more likely to succeed when it is possible to link them to other issues that are already firmly on the international advocacy agenda, or to existing international humanitarian or human rights laws, as predicted by Price.\(^5^4\) Additionally, participants suggested that perhaps some issues were just to “toxic” or too taboo, and that such discomfort leads to a lack of advocacy. These points made by the participants mirror the arguments in the literature that suggest that issues have a better chance at finding a place on the agenda if they fit into the existing normative discourses.

The match between the issue framework and the broader discourse has been referred as ‘issue-resonance’, ‘salience’ and ‘nesting’.\(^5^5\) Price, for instance, suggested that issues that can be successfully ‘grafted’ into the existing normative standards have a better chance at creating successful campaigns.\(^5^6\) The campaign against chemical weapons, for instance, was built on the existing norm against the use of poison in warfare\(^5^7\) and the campaign against landmines was built on the norm of civilian immunity.\(^5^8\) Similarly, Bob claims that groups whose claims fit easily to established categories of human rights are more likely to get the key actors’ support.\(^5^9\)

It was emphasized by some participants, however, that there is often nothing intrinsic about issues’ resonance with existing normative standards. On the contrary, it is the norm entrepreneurs’ capacity to successfully ‘graft’ an issue onto the existing agenda what paves the way to a successful advocacy campaign.\(^6^0\) Indeed, much “frame-shopping” by issue entrepreneurs occurs as new ideas are constructed and linked by trial and error to

\(^{54}\) Price, 1998.
\(^{55}\) Sikkink, 1991; Muller, 1993; Price, 1998; Price 2003; Cortell and Davis 2005
\(^{56}\) Price, 1998
\(^{57}\) Price and Tannenwald, 1996
\(^{58}\) Price, 1998
\(^{59}\) Bob, 2002a
pre-existing global discourses. For example, while HIV/AIDS is one of the most important health issues of today’s world, the issue made it to the forefront of the global agenda only after it was framed as a development issue.\(^{61}\) Thus whether grafting can be done successfully, it was emphasized, often has as much to do with the attributes and allies of the norm entrepreneur – and these organizations’ relationships with the wider network - than with the issue itself.

**Actor Attributes**

Thus, an important cluster of factors described in the focus groups centered on the character of the actors involved in pressing for an issue. Organizations in advocacy networks vary in terms of the prestige and credibility they bring to a new issue; they also vary in terms of their interest in championing a new issue and capacity to do so if they choose. And they vary in terms of the relationships they can establish with powerful allies in pre-existing networks, whose own attributes in part determine their support for new ideas.

Our analysis of the conversations suggests that focus group respondents refer generally to two types of actors when they refer to the attributes of organizations that make issues more or less likely to be successfully sold to a wide transnational coalition. First, the attributes of the *issue entrepreneur* who promotes a new idea within a network matters in terms of the seriousness with which a particular cause is taken. Second, the interests and decision-making processes of the prominent actors in the existing transnational networks – those whom the literature would refer to as having the capacity to function as *gatekeepers* - affect whether or not an issue proliferates.\(^{62}\) Table 4 lists the code definitions that fall into these categories. We discuss each of these categories in turn, although it is the dialectic between the two that is said to matter the most in generating attention to issues within advocacy networks.

**Entrepreneur Attributes.** Participants repeatedly stressed the importance of a skilled and dedicated sponsor who initially advocates for new ideas.\(^{63}\) Framing issues so that they resonate not only with the existing moral standards but also with the interests and priorities of the gatekeepers is the contribution that norm entrepreneurs make to issue advocacy.\(^{64}\) In other words, issue entrepreneurs are critical for agenda setting because they

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61 Ingenkamp, 2008
62 Notably, however, the focus group respondents did not use the term ‘gatekeepers’ and rarely explicitly made note of the agenda-setting power held by central organizations like those in which they were employed.
63 Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998
64 Finnemore, 1996; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Mintrom 2000; Payne, 2001; Mintrom and Norman 2009
“create’ issues by using language that names, interprets and dramatizes them.”

Norm entrepreneurs use moral arguments to “persuade actors to redefine their interests and identities”. What distinguishes entrepreneurs is not their mere power; it is rather “their capacity to effect dramatic change in the political landscape”.

Various actors such as prominent individuals, NGOs, international organizations, states, celebrities or think-tanks can perform the role of the norm entrepreneur. For example, in the case of the landmines campaign, it was a few individuals working with NGOs in Cambodia in the early 1990s who championed the cause and convinced others to sign onto the campaign.

In the case of the child soldiers movement, it was two individuals within the Quaker UN office who pushed the idea and sold it to larger organizations. In the case of millennium development goals, it was the ambassador of Chile, with the help of other UN staff and NGO leaders, who negotiated the Copenhagen Declaration with other UN member states in 1995. Respondents in the focus groups argued that much hinges on the power, as well as preferences, of norm entrepreneurs in terms of attention to new issues:

“I think it’s that combination of who the champions are that makes a big difference in whether it goes forward or not.”

To build coalitions, entrepreneurs must approach potential issue adopters, who generally hold a respected and powerful position in the advocacy community, and whose endorsement could greatly increase the salience of the issue. In doing so, entrepreneurs engage in an ‘inherently manipulative practice’ which is also called ‘strategic framing’ where the entrepreneurs define and package the issues to get influential actors’ attention and support. Many participants mentioned the importance of such effective initial

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65 Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 897. For a broad discussion on the role of norm entrepreneur’s role on framing issues see Payne, 2001; Mintrom and Norman, 2009.
66 Borzel and Risse, 2003; Risse, 2000. For instance, in the case of female circumcision, it was the reframing of the issue by the norm entrepreneurs as female genital mutilation that brought the issue on the global agenda. Similarly, it was the norm entrepreneurs’ efforts to define ‘violence against women’ as a separate category of human rights violation that attracted attention to the issue. (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Joachim 2007)
67 Goddard, 2009 p.251
68 On celebrities, see Cooper, 2007; Huliaras and Tzifakis, 2010; on think-tanks, see Stone, 2001; on epistemist communities see Haas, 1992b; Parson, 2003; on NGOs see Keck and Sikkink, 1998; on IOs see Finnemore, 1993; Grigorescu, 2002; Oestreich, 2007; on states see Hubert, 2007.
69 Price, 1998; Carpenter, 2010
70 Tomaskovic-Devey and Carpenter, forthcoming.
71 Hulme and Fukudu-Parr, 2009; for other examples of studies on the role of entrepreneurship see Young 1991; Adler 1992; Adler and Haas 1992; Finnemore, 1993; Evangelista, 1995; Legro, 2005; Checkel, 2001; Adamson, 2005
72 Bob, 2009a
73 Barnett, 1999
74 Payne, 2001
advocacy. But they also pointed out that not every entrepreneur is positioned to succeed at making such a pitch, regardless of the merits of their cause: there are many entrepreneur attributes considered important by participants, if not crucial, that enable them to successfully market their issue within wider networks.

Personal charisma, credentials, an extensive personal network, internet and social media skills, advocacy skills, and a mastery of the English language were all discussed as attributes of a successful entrepreneur. The extensive personal network allows the entrepreneur access to influential actors, such as governments, celebrities, or religious leaders who may be able to “adopt” the issue and promote it among other advocates. Additionally, a perceived connection to the community of victims on whose behalf they are advocating increases the likelihood that they will be seriously listened to. Participants suggested that the actual geographical location of the entrepreneur matters; it is easier to advocate for an international issue in New York, Geneva, or Washington D.C., then it is in Auckland, New Zealand. Repeatedly, participants argued that access to funding is one of the most critical aspects of successful entrepreneurship. A few comments suggested that entrepreneurship or championing by an unlikely leader provides additional likelihood of success; the recent promotion of the cause of nuclear disarmament by former Cold War hawks was mentioned as an example.75

“So it took a very small number of very influential, powerful people right at the heart of the elite, with—who was a seen as credible, right wing and therefore surprising, surprising, and that had experience right at the heart of the political establishment.”

“It’s very important to form unusual alliances right at the start.”

The value that norm entrepreneurs bring to an issue is not only about the actual attributes of norm entrepreneurs but also how those attributes are perceived by the gatekeepers. Firstly, it is important to highlight that even though gatekeepers work toward promoting norms, they have their own priorities, interests and organizational norms that they aim at pursuing in order to perpetuate their position as gatekeepers. Therefore, the value they see in different norm entrepreneurs’ attributes will reflect the extent to which these attributes support gatekeepers’ concerns and priorities.

Secondly, as it is stated earlier, actors take part in various advocacy networks in different capacities. An actor that is a norm entrepreneur in one campaign might perform the role of a gatekeeper in another.76 The complexity of the interactions forces the actors to "negotiate different identities, projects, and styles of participation associated with their

75 Another example might be the embrace of the Jubilee 2000 campaign by former foreign-aid skeptic Jesse Helms, as documented in Busby, 2007
76 Carpenter, 2011
various involvements”. These complex set of roles and interactions among actors also affect which norm entrepreneurs and which causes gatekeepers decide to support. As a result, rather than being objective qualities, entrepreneur attributes, such as extensive personal network and credibility, are subjective qualities whose value is determined based on their target audiences’ perception of each norm entrepreneur.

Adopter Attributes. Without major organizations signing onto a campaign, the issue may fail to gain salience regardless of how tirelessly the initial advocates work. Some issues are fortunate to have an insider in a major advocacy organization as the entrepreneur. When that is not the case, entrepreneurs must pitch their ideas to established organizations. In turn, these organizations must carefully weigh whether or not to adopt a new issue being marketed by an entrepreneur, and may be constrained by various factors, including organizational mandate and funding availability for the issue. 

Participants suggested that potential issue adopters either explicitly or implicitly conduct cost-benefit analysis of when deciding whether or not to add new issues to their advocacy agenda:

“All actors are really trying to basically figure out what’s going to give you the biggest bang for the buck.”

In particular, such organizations consider whether or not there is space on the organizational agenda for an additional issue, and whether or not the issue fits the mandate and programming culture of the organization. For example, when referring to an interview with the head of a particular central organization, one respondent reported: “He leaned forward and in a totally untypical, candid moment, and said ‘What I should really be doing in this country is organizing revolution, but it falls outside my mandate.’” This confirms Clifford Bob argument that norm entrepreneurs must match gatekeeper organizations’ mandates and suggests that “potential supporters will devote scarce time and resources only to a client whose grievances and goals jibe with the NGO’s central mandate.” But as Oestreich has shown, how an organization’s mandate is understood can shift over time, so the question is how a particular constellation of preferences comes to accommodate new issues or norms in a particular context. We found several additional factors to be important.

In particular, global civil society organizations vary according to how sensitive they are to the preferences of governments and funders. In general, these discussions suggested

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77 Mische, 2003 p. 262
78 Bob, 2005
79 Bob 2005, 28
global civil society organizations are more constrained by governments and donors than has previously been suggested in the literature on transnational advocacy networks.\textsuperscript{81} Moreover, if the organization is constrained by the preferences of funders, they may be limited in what issues they consider adopting, and as a corollary, they are wary of adopting issues that might cost them financially with their donors.\textsuperscript{82} While the preferences of funders themselves would fall into the “broader context” category, participants also emphasized that organizations vary in terms of their vulnerability to these concerns, based on their organizational funding structure.

I want to make a very bureaucratic point, because we looked the agenda like what like the public agenda is. So, another question which is, what the agenda of a specific organization is, and in particular where the funding is going? And it is a fundamental element, which is how much budget available there is. And depending on the organization, some of them are setting agendas year by year and have a lot of flexibility. Some others are setting it over five or six years. So, you have certain issues that will be addressed, because they have appeared right at the good time when the programming was done. And then during six or seven years, you cannot do anything on that issue, because you have to wait until the next cycle of programming.

Well, I’ve been working for two organizations which usually have very different funding. I would stress like where your-what kind of organization your funding is coming from because my-when I worked for an arms control association, 80% of our funding was foundation money, about 20% was individual members. And so, you have certain political relevance if you want it, but you also had a little more space to do long-term issues.

Ninety-seven percent of our funding comes from our donors who give it to us for very specific purposes. If the donors are not interested in any given activity, it is extremely difficult for us to do anything about it. Now that of course begs the question of why your donors are interested are interested in some things and not the others. And what is the role of organizations in bringing that, trying to move that up the priority list, so to speak?

Along these lines, organizations decide whether or not they have the resources, qualifications and personnel needed to initiate a new campaign or to contribute to advocacy on a new issue.

[Organizations] are going to be evaluating the cost-benefits of getting involved. Civil society, small organizations, and government, they have a cost for each one of those if they

\textsuperscript{81}See, however, Cooley and Ron (2002) for a discussion of the political economy of NGO and IO funding and the institutional constraints this can provide on programming.

\textsuperscript{82} Berkovitch and Gordon, 2008
are going to be involved in an issue. So, they have to make their own evaluation of the urgency, the relevance of the issue, whether it’s possible to solve.

Yeah, you look at it and you feel like you can do something about it. I mean, just the conversation you see everyone of these connects to every other one and so you have to like pick out one piece of it and say “Okay, my organization can do that.”

Yeah, I think that’s true. I mean, I think that some of the larger NGO’s have quite a bit of power with regard to being able to set the agenda in their field. So, if you look at one of the big projects that we’re working on right now is actually around maternal mortality. And the reason we picked that is because if you look at all the millennium development goals, this is the one that has made the least amount of progress. And it’s the one that’s received the least amount of money. And so, you know, we did an assessment that we could make an impact in this area and, in fact, we had an obligation to make an impact and draw attention to it. And if we began working on it, it would receive, we felt, a wave of attention from governments, from NGO’s, from others in the public.

Relatedly, an organization’s self-perception its own relative technical expertise matters greatly in its estimates of “fit” to work on certain issues. We discovered that gatekeepers discount the symbolic value added to campaigns simply by their validation of new issues areas, and instead feel an intrinsic need to make a concrete contribution based on their organization’s specific procedural or technical expertise. If an organization feels it does not have the expertise necessary to champion an issue it may decide it has little value to add to issue advocacy.

I do think there is analysis that says if someone else is doing it, I’m not going to do it. I think there’s a sense that, you know, what can I add to this debate? You know, for really trying to move the ball, or maybe they’re doing it better than we could, if we don’t really have expertise in it…

Participants freely admitted factors such as mandate, their expertise and resources and their estimate of the donor community’s preferences shaped their decisions as much as the merit of issues. While an issue’s fit to organizational mandates is important, gatekeepers’ understanding of their own technical expertise, their bets about whether the issue is likely to succeed and enhance their organizational reputation, and their sensitivity to the preferences of governments and donors all influence the cost-benefit analysis they conduct about whether or not adopting a new issue will serve their organizational interest.

**Network Effects**

In addition to organizational factors, respondents stressed another factor constraining advocacy choices: the power dynamics within advocacy networks -
connections and alliances between organizations and fit among issues on existing agendas (see Table 5). In explaining the qualities that distinguish transnational networks from other actors in global politics, earlier works on transnational advocacy networks highlighted the lack of organized leadership\textsuperscript{83} as an asset and emphasized the ‘horizontal relations’ within the network\textsuperscript{84}. This, however, ‘mask[ed] the power relations within networks’.\textsuperscript{85} As the competition to find a place on the global agenda becomes fierce, analyzing the effects that network structures have on the actors themselves became more important.\textsuperscript{86}

Speakers often discussed how there is only so much space for advocacy, both within an organization and in the broader networks. As such, issues compete for attention, with support for existing issues being threatened by the addition of any newer issues. Organizations may be limited in adopting new issues because of their commitment to these existing issues.\textsuperscript{87} Issue resonance is considered to be one of the issue attributes that are important for the success of an advocacy campaign. However, given the scarcity of resources and actors’ interest in assuring donor support and perpetuating their power within the network, similar issues that has already found a place on the agenda could impede the gatekeepers’ willingness to support a new issue:

An issue ‘takes’ much quicker if it can be related to an existing issue or set of issues that groups are already campaigning on because in a sense, it’s got to fit within the paradigm, the group-think of those organizations and groups of people because, you know, they’ve taken a lot of effort to construct them.

Beyond this, there may be times when a new potential issue might actually conflict with issues already on the agenda.

I think, what all of us in the field feel, so we don’t want more issues. You want to push them out, keep them away because we’ve got enough to work on already. We will only take them on if we see the possibility of them helping the issues that we already have, rather than seeing them as competing issues that draws away from our pet issues that we’ve been working on. So I think there’s a real challenge for new issues because that novelty isn’t strong enough.

Further, it appears that at times there may be a sense of which organization, or which type of organization an issues “belongs” to, and organizations may not pick up an

\textsuperscript{83} Bob, 2005
\textsuperscript{84} Keck and Sikkink, 1998
\textsuperscript{85} Carpenter, 2007a
\textsuperscript{86} Hafner-Burton, Kahler and Montgomery 2009; Kahler 2009
\textsuperscript{87} Carpenter, 2005.
issue if they feel it has a better home elsewhere.88 [See Figure 4]. Existence of multiple networks and the interactions among these networks create a potential obstacle in front of emergence of new issues by promoting buck-passing, increasing the number of actors whose support is needed and, increasing the likelihood of frame disagreements among different networks.89 Meyer and Whittier suggest that ‘spillover’ effects between the networks can have a potential positive impact on advocacy campaigns by opening up multiple venues for the issue to be adopted.90 However, issues that fit more than one normative framework have the potential to create buck-passing. It was mentioned that this buck-passing dynamic arises from the compartmentalization of issue turf within the network, or what respondents referred to as the ‘problem of the silos’:

The mandates are giving us problems right now... they make us work in silos and the communications are not very good. There was a food conference recently. Not one word about climate or environmental change was mentioned in the food conference. And the people who are going to meet in climate are not going to talk about food prices and oil prices and all these things, yet increasingly they impact forced migration. And what we are not finding right now is what is the right form to start putting the dots in between these silos.

We pick up where we get traction. And sometimes it’s mandate division, so we do peace building disarmaments. We have another coalition in the Canadian context that deals with Mideast, refugees, indigenous peoples, different things. And then we network and work with all manner. There’s not a thing we do that’s not done as-under some kind of umbrella.

There also appear to be interesting contagion effects at work within advocacy networks, including a band-wagoning effect, when certain powerful and well known organizations adopt an issue, it quickly proliferates within the network. This further illustrates the central role that gatekeepers play in determining the success of advocacy campaigns and signals the power they have in setting the broader agenda in which norm entrepreneurs try fit their issues.

“I mean climate change, not many people were doing it a few years ago. Now everybody’s got it somewhere in their agenda because it’s, you know, the talk of the day, the buzzword.”

“There is this group think idea, that, you know, oh, that think tank is doing a security and

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88 An issue can also end up ‘belonging’ to a particular venue as a result of norm entrepreneurs’ preferences. This occurs if “the use of a particular policy venue ... become part of the narrative and ideology of an advocacy group, a key component of their organizational image and identity” (Pralle, 2003).
89 Carpenter, 2007b
90 Meyer and Whittier, 1994
development program - we have to do security and development. That’s the new thing. And then it’s no longer a post-conflict reconstruction, it’s now security and development. And you know in a few years it will be something else.”

“I think one thing that’s really interesting is when you’re looking at the agenda setting within institutions, is to see how issues exactly from one institution or one organization influence another and how they have-if there is or if there isn’t this ripple effect. You have organizations with different memberships and yet we see issues coming to prominence in one organization and have that reflected over time. I mean, is it that when the [X] lending priorities change, that affects the development agenda in every single international and regional organization that does development work?”

Additionally, participants suggested that organizations often consider their existing coalitions when determining whether or not to sign onto a new campaign or adopt a new issue, as they would not want to compromise alliances with other organizations. For that reason, they feel the need to ‘negotiate’ their various involvements in calculating the interest they have in supporting an issue. They may also look to the size of the existing network around an issue as a measure of potential success before they sign onto a campaign.

Well, to some degree, [you] always want to be the first one out there, the first one to touch on an issue. At the same time, you don’t want to be the only one not doing it, because then you lose your credibility as well. Because then it’s like, why aren’t you doing it? You know are you behind the curve? So, you want to be in front of the curve as much as possible. But at the same time, you’re just as concerned about not being behind the curve.

At the same time, organizations may be more interested in adopting issues that will increase the prestige of the organization within the network or with governments: an issue which is successfully advocated and ends with a ratified treaty may lend some glory to the organization that initially adopted and promoted it. Therefore while organizations gauge the likelihood of success prior to determining whether to pursue an issue, which is partly a function of the issue’s existing network, they also gauge whether the issue is still at an early enough stage that they can be seen to be making a significant contribution rather than simply band-wagoning.

Ultimately, the interpersonal networks between individuals across various different organizations in a network may matter most of all:

91 Mische, 2003
Usually there is a small network of people in these organizations that are really moving things... people move around and they have their networks and they work together regardless of the organization they’re in. I think that works sort of across the issue spaces and geographically as well. So, I mean, I think the interpersonal nature of these networks is a lot more important a lot of times than sort of the abstract calculations like who you know who’s in power versus what’s actually going on.

**Broader Context**

Although attributes of the issues and of the actors promoting them can make or break an issue, if the political and social context in which advocacy attempts is unwelcoming, then advocacy may fail.\(^\text{92}\) Indeed, *by far the most frequent response to the question about why things do or don’t get on the agenda* was the broader political context in which global civil society organizations operate (see Table 6 for code definitions). This substantive finding corresponds somewhat to the predictions of Ron and Cooley, whose work has focused on “the incentives and constraints produced by the transnational sector’s institutional environment.”\(^\text{93}\) Similarly, theorists of political opportunity structures assign explanatory value to “the broader institutional context that provides opportunities for or imposes constraints on NGOs”\(^\text{94}\) and are crucial in “understanding a movement’s emergence and to gauging its success”\(^\text{95}\).

Specific institutional contexts that open a window of opportunity are said to have an important effect on organizations’ sense that an issue my succeed: an issue may be advocated for more effectively if there is an upcoming forum that will allow for a discussion on the issue.\(^\text{96}\) Reports produced on the topics, a political campaign that mentions the issue, or a piece of legislation passed may galvanize public attention and provide a receptive moment for advocacy. Additionally, organized events, such as an international conference or meeting may provide a political opportunity for advocacy.

Yet the examples of the “border context” respondents provided go beyond the focus on institutional access and receptivity on which the concept of political opportunity structure conventionally focuses.\(^\text{97}\) Respondents suggested, for example, that the general state of the economy may make a difference in advocacy work. One participant suggested, “I wonder whether at particular moments in time if there’s a feeling of economic well-being, there’s more capacity to be concerned about other people than myself.”

\(^\text{92}\) Joachim 2007
\(^\text{93}\) Cooley and Ron 2002, 6
\(^\text{94}\) Joachim 2007, 23
\(^\text{95}\) Keck and Sikkink 1998, 7; on political opportunity structures see Eisinger, 1972; Tilly, 1978, McAdam,1982; Tarrow, 1983; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 1996. This concept, originating in the social movement literature, is increasingly applied to transnational advocacy networks. See Tarrow, 2005; and Shawki 2010.
\(^\text{96}\) Joachim, 2007
\(^\text{97}\) Joachim 2007, 23
It was often mentioned that issues have “life-cycles”: sometimes enough time has to pass before people will understand the urgency of an issue. In other words, the political climate will only be receptive when an issue is “ripe.” While “ripeness” was partly discussed as an issue attribute, it is also related to factors in the broader context, such as outside trigger events which bring widespread attention to a problem: natural disasters, war, genocide, an industrial accident that causes acute environmental degradation, or other specific event. These events are referred to in the literature as ‘focusing events’⁹⁸ and they have a ‘cognitive punch effect’⁹⁹ which provide an opportunity for the advocates to ‘push for their pet solutions’¹⁰⁰. The sudden end of the Cold War, for instance, is believed to open up the political space for various issues ranging from women’s rights to genocide prevention to find a place on the political agenda.¹⁰¹

I think a lot of issues come onto the agenda because they’re a reaction to a crisis. I mean the whole responsibility to protect idea, you know came out of the failed action in the mass human rights abuses of the 1990s. And it wasn’t until, as a collective international community, we were confronted with these crises that people said wait a minute. And you know the whole human rights system that we have I mean is a reaction to the events of World War II. And so a lot of the agenda, I think, is very reactive or is an attempt to catch up to events.

There were many discussions on how the advocacy agenda is driven by the demand of certain key actors outside the advocacy network. Many suggested that various powerful groups drive issue advocacy, whether they are domestic lobbying groups, corporations, elite social classes, or other groups.¹⁰² It was also argued that certain groups, especially socially powerful elite, corporations, or powerful governments can at time hinder the progress of an issue if it goes against their interests.

“If the donors are not interested in any given activity, it is extremely difficult for us to do anything about it.”

“I know probably it’s so obvious we don’t say it, but things that go against the interests or the opinions of the powerful really have farthest of chances to move up.”

⁹⁸ Joachim, 2007
⁹⁹ Adler 1991, 55
¹⁰⁰ Kingdon 1984, 177
¹⁰¹ Joachim, 2007
¹⁰² However, as noted above, some respondents suggested that issues are more likely to be seen as legitimate and to receive attention when the people who have been affected by the problem are the ones lobbying for change. Further research is needed to determine which of these hypotheses most closely fits the widest number of outcomes.
On the one hand, the foundations, through the financial support they provide, empower the NGOs and increase their capacity to affect the global political agenda.103 On the other hand, due to the financial power they hold in their hands, they have a significant impact on the issues that NGOs can effort to pay attention to.104 Some participants argued that donors set the agenda, hand picking which issues will be funded, and which will not. Others argued that governments play a leading role in setting the global advocacy agenda, and that the most powerful states play the most powerful roles.105

“There are governments and there are governments.”

Other actors that participate either directly or tangentially in advocacy work are part of this political context, and can influence an issue’s success or failure. Academics and experts can lend both credibility to the issue and empirical evidence that helps to define the extent and severity of the problem106. Many participants mentioned how celebrities, such as Bono and Angelina Jolie, have used their influence to bring more attention to certain issues.107 108 Above all, media and donor attention to an issue were regularly mentioned as important contributing factors:

“Why are these organizations, like my own, paying attention to this? Why? Because it’s sexy for the moment and somebody can compartmentalize it in a column in the Wall Street Journal.”

“The funders then pick that issue up and they have their funding streams and you’ve got to fit your applications into that funding stream.”

“If an issue is, if an issue or the solution is too complex to be able to put into a ticker tape or you know in a headline whatever, it’s just unfortunately not going to get saliency.”

“I think it comes back to all - it comes back to funding, funding, funding.”

Thinking Abstractly Vs. Thinking Concretely

In addition to collecting practitioners’ insights in the abstract, we also asked them to
react specifically to several cases of issue entrepreneurship that as yet had not resulted in widespread attention by organizations central to the human security network. The moderator provided brief descriptions of issues that individuals or small organizations are attempting to gain global attention for. The problem was presented, as was the way in which the entrepreneur had framed the issue. Participants were asked to discuss reasons why advocacy might not have been successful as of yet, whether or not it was likely to ever be successful, and whether or not they thought it should be successful (whether or not it had merit as an issue). Additionally, participants were asked to discuss what larger organizations would be likely to pick up the issue.

We coded the “thought experiments” sections of the focus group transcripts according to the levels of enthusiasm or skepticism that participants expressed, and in particular, the types of explanations they gave for arguing that an issue was or was not a good candidate for international advocacy in the area of human security. Many of the factors mentioned dove-tailed with the earlier brainstorming section [see Table 5], but we also observed a shift in the emphasis placed in different factors in these two sections.

During the brainstorming session, while participants mentioned a variety of factors impacting agenda-setting success, the greatest number of comments included reference to the broader political context. In other words, in the abstract respondents mentioned the constraints of governments, donors, the media, the public and world events more than they mentioned the character of issues themselves or the preferences of the advocacy community.

However, in the thought experiment sections, references to the broader context did not constitute the majority explanation when respondents expressed skepticism about candidate issues. In this part of the conversation, most often concerns about poor fit to organizational mandate, conflicts with other issues, and the nature of the issue itself (for example how measurable or solvable it was) were more often raised as reasons that the issues at hand might be of low salience on the global agenda (see Figure 4).

The concrete thought experiments also helped us notice a number of additional factors that seemed to come into play in practitioners’ assessments of potential transnational “causes.”

*Cultural Imperialism.* Participants claimed that some issues fail to gain saliency because practitioners are afraid that they will be labeled cultural imperialists if they pursue the issue. The fear is that promoting “Western” or “Northern” ideals will hurt them in the eyes of an international community sensitive to the legacies of colonialism. This normative concern is coupled with a pragmatic desire not to alienate the populations with whom they work directly.
Sovereignty. Additionally, participants often voiced their concern that pursuit of an issue would violate state sovereignty. Participants repeatedly mentioned how states are inherently more powerful than advocacy organizations, and as such have the power to make or break a campaign. If an issue appears too consequential to state sovereignty, human security practitioners are likelier to assume that a campaign will fail and is therefore a poor use of resources. This narrative is interesting insofar as it flies against the conventional wisdom about advocacy networks: that their greatest power is precisely in helping state’s reconstruct their interests in line with humanitarian principles. To some extent, members of global civil society view this power as more fleeting and fragile than scholars of advocacy networks have assumed.

The Global Elite. Actors’ personal intellectual and professional histories could also have a potential to affect their decision to prioritize certain issues over others. During the “thought experiment” and conclusion sections of the focus group, participants engaged in some unprovoked self-reflection on their belonging to a global elite class. Indeed, although our participants were diverse in country of origin and expertise, many of them attended the same elite schools and network in the same circles. 75% of all participants had attended one of the top 150 schools in the world, and 42% received a degree from one of the top 50 Universities in the world (according to U.S. News and World Report 2010 Rankings). Participants acknowledged this homogeneity and spoke directly about how this might affect the selection of issues within global civil society networks:

“I mean our staff are from all over the world, but they’re all educated in the US Ivy League schools. They are all a product of that socializing environment.”

“… this global upper-class to which we all belong, the class who does the talking and the meeting and who defines what’s to be the agenda for the remaining 90 percent of the world: what is convenient to us and understandable to us, legible to us, has a far higher chance; what challenges us as individuals and our own values and our own sense of goodness will not move so far at all.”

This insight needs more academic exploration, as do the motivations of specific individuals embedded within networks of organizations: what prompts certain people to champion certain issues and not others?

“Human Security”: A Contested Framework. The “thought experiments” brought up another interesting theme: that whether or not the “human security network” should be involved in an issue depends a great deal on one’s definition of human security. Some respondents described human security in comparison to traditional “security:” a focus on individual security instead of state security, and the protection and security of individuals as taking prominence over state sovereignty. Many tended to view human security as defined in

109 Jones and Baumgartner, 2005; Carpenter 2010
terms of human rights. This pattern was especially prevalent and at times explicit, i.e., “In my mind, human security is another way of framing “human rights.”” Others presented a view of human security using the terms, “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want.” Interestingly, some participants said both are part of human security, while others argued strongly for a “freedom from fear” definition and arguing that “freedom from want” detracts from the human security movement. Finally, some participants tended to use language similar to Amartya Sen to discuss human security; human security to these is about providing the means for individuals to “realize the full potential of their capabilities,” or to “enjoy their development potential (however they choose to define that).” While our empirical analysis of the human security network suggests that it is a master frame that ties together all these different ways of thinking about global social justice, contestation over terminology itself may sometimes be an impediment to successful agenda-setting.

CONCLUSION

Our dialogues with practitioners resulted in a broad set of hypotheses about why some issues are more neglected than others: centering on the nature of issues, the attributes of entrepreneurs and policy gatekeepers within networks, the relationships among advocates, and the broader political agenda. Practitioners were likelier to describe the broader context as a constraint on agenda-setting in the abstract, but likelier to invoke factors related to the issue or their organization in expressing skepticism about candidate issues.

Theoretical implications of this study are threefold: First, this study took a step toward developing a theory of gatekeeper preferences. Developing such a theory requires us to see norm entrepreneurs and gatekeepers not only as norm-driven actors but also as actors with interests, concerns and priorities. Such an analysis also speaks to the recently developing literature that emphasizes the importance of analyzing power dynamics within the networks.

Developing a theory of gatekeeper preferences also contributes to our understanding of the role of norm entrepreneurs within advocacy networks. It is crucial in further developing our understanding of how certain groups manage to assume the role of norm entrepreneurship over other potential norm entrepreneurs and how some norm entrepreneurs manage to attract attention to their cause while others who are advocating for similar issues fail to do so.

The differences in the insights we got from the practitioners in talking about the issues in the abstract versus talking about specific cases bear importance for the agenda setting literature. While our focus group findings support some of the major arguments in

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110 Sen, 2000
the literature, the focus group discussion on concrete issues revealed the potential importance of factors that are not generally taken into consideration in the literature. This highlights both the need for further research on these factors as well as the usefulness of focus group research in developing the agenda setting literature.

A substantive insight of this research is about the nature of ‘human security’ as a policy domain. While acknowledging the ambiguity surrounding the concept of human security and the difficulty it brings for both the researchers and the practitioners, the conversations with the practitioners combined with the network analysis illustrated that human security network is more than a ‘jumbled coalition’. Paris is correct that the network comprises actors from multiple issues areas, but he is mistaken in thinking that it is dominated by NGOs or that it is a means for development discourse to displace security. Rather, the network is comprised of many layers of actors, and security, conflict prevention and arms control issues co-exist and overlap in interesting ways with human rights, development and environmental security. Given the importance respondents placed on ideational “network effects,” more attention should in fact be paid by scholars to the relationships and ties between sub-networks, rather than simply examining issue networks as actors in themselves.

The implications of these findings for issue entrepreneurs is that careful thought must be given to framing and pitching one’s issues if one is to build successful coalitions within global policy networks. Practitioners in such networks care deeply about social change but are selective and strategic in attending to different issues. While issue entrepreneurs may have little control over the attributes of the issue they are promoting, they may be able to affect the perception of those attributes through their information strategy. In particular measurable indicators and testimonial evidence from claimants are important factors in generating appeal. Additionally, issue entrepreneurs should carefully consider the organizational interests of those with whom they seek coalitions, and be aware that these interests are constituted as much by relationships with the rest of the advocacy network as by the organizational culture and broader political environment. They should also focus on developing the skills, alliances and professional profile that will lend them credibility among the wider global advocacy community.

Our study suggests insights for organizations in a position to accept or “vet” advocacy claims as well. We identified a perception among practitioners, particularly in the abstract, that their hands are largely tied by states, donors and the media, yet this perception flies in the face of many successful advocacy campaigns in recent years, documented in an extensive scientific literature. Global civil society plays a role in setting the government, media and donor agenda as well. Moreover, within these networks certain civil society organizations play a larger role than others. As one respondent stated, “There are NGOs and then there are NGOs.” Organizations at the center or issue networks have a powerful legitimating effect on new issues. Organizations operating at the
intersection of networks or ideas have the ability to bridge the distance between “silos” in new and synergistic ways.
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FIGURE 2.
FIGURE 3.
Co-Occurrences Between Issues Named on Human Security Websites and in Surveys
FIGURE 4

Thematic Expertise of Participants

- Disarmament
- Arms Control
- Conflict Prevention
- Environment
- Development
- Humanitarian
- Human Rights

Percentage of Participants Reporting Thematic Expertise
Participants had identified themselves as having expertise in specific thematic clusters. They were then asked to respond to the following question: “Please describe the number of professional or personal connections you have to people working in different thematic clusters within the human security network. For each cluster, write whether you have ‘a great many, some, very few or almost no’ contacts in those areas. Please check only one category for each cluster.” The visualization demonstrates the strength of reported ties from self-identified thematic clusters to other clusters. In this graph, only ties occurring more often than the median are visible.
FIGURE 6.

References to Explanations in Different Sections
**TABLE 1.**

**Most Mentioned Organizations in Human Security**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>SURVEY CITES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amnesty International</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Consortium on Human Security</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Security Report Project</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Commission on Human Rights</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Security Network</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Institute for Global Issues</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights Watch</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Crisis Group</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors Without Borders</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Strategic and International Studies</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxfam International</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Central Intelligence Agency</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Foreign Ministry</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Children's Fund</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

112 Responses to the survey question “Name three or more organizations that come to your mind when you think of human security.”
TABLE 2.

HUMAN SECURITY “NON-ISSUES”
IDENTIFIED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS*

| Megacities | Resource Extraction |
| Nonlethal Weapons | Indigenous Land Rights |
| Aging of Northern Populations | Climate Refugees |
| Global Social Welfare System | Militarism |
| Recycling Exports | US Military Budget |
| Leprosy | Fetal Rights |
| Corporate Resource Plunder | High Sex Ratios |
| Family Integrity | Literacy |
| Safe Child-Bearing | Slums |
| Social Esteem Needs | Food Prices |
| Ophthalmic Care | Consumerism |
| Piracy | Coltan |
| Urban Insecurity | Safe Passage for IDPs |
| Civilian Men | Nuclear Weapons |
| Fighting Women | Hostages |
| Traffic Accidents | Developed World Poverty |
| Mercenaries | GMOs |
| Impunity For World Leaders | Sexual Orientation Persecution |
| Social Exclusion | Propaganda |
| Fundamentalism | Forced Marriage |
| Hijackings | Cyberterrorism |
| Tobacco | Familiarization of Governance |
| Household Waste Disposal | Protection for the Elderly |

*Issues identified through survey responses to the question: “Sometimes problems exist in the world that get little or no attention from transnational activists. What human security problems can you think of that are not very prominent as issues in the human security movement?”
### TABLE 3.

**List of “Issue Attributes” Mentioned By Participants and Code Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional Appeal</strong></td>
<td>use code for statements that issue advocacy hinges on being able to use emotional appeals, fear, empathy, etc or other non-evidence-based arguments. Eg some issues are “scarier” than others, some issues “grab us” more than others, some issues “tug at the heartstrings” more easily, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feasibility/Solvability</strong></td>
<td>Statements about whether or not solving a problem is feasible. For example, that a problem have potential solutions, or that the solution needs to be simple or clearcut; practical, not pie-in-the-sky, and something that people can “make a difference” on. Also look for terms like “doability” or “achievable.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Linkability to Other Issues:</strong></td>
<td>this is for references to the potential to link the issues to other issues already on the international agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Magnitude of Problem</strong></td>
<td>use this code when speakers state that the magnitude of a problem matters for the kind of attention it gets – eg how many people are affected, how widespread the problem is, how serious the problem is, either in absolute term or relative to other problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measurability/Data/Evidence</strong></td>
<td>use this code if speakers argue that an issue or problem must be amenable to data-gathering and empirical evidence; or that the availability of data or evidence impacts advocacy attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perpetrator Attributes</strong></td>
<td>arguments that some issues are easier to pursue depending on who the perpetrator is. Eg, when there is a clear and/or politically acceptable perpetrator? Or other attributes of perpetrators that make issues easier to mobilize on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Simplicity/Complexity:</strong></td>
<td>use for statements that the complexity of the issue matters in its chances for advocacy attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Toxicity/Sensitivity:</strong></td>
<td>this is for references to the sensitivity, toxicity or taboo nature of some issues, or issues being political mine-fields or “too-hot-to-handle.” It’s not necessarily that a powerful actor opposes them, so much as that they’re uncomfortable to deal with, controversial or sensitive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victim Attributes</strong></td>
<td>statements that the nature of the victims or claimants around an issue matters — how innocent they are, vulnerable, minority status, perceived similarity to “us” or other factors related to the identity of the victims.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.

**List of “Actor Attributes” Mentioned by Participants and Code Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entrepreneur Attributes</th>
<th>Adopter Attributes/Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENT-Credentials</strong> – code statements where the speaker argues that credentials or status matters, whatever that might mean to the speaker. An institutional affiliation that is considered credible, an organizational reputation for being credible, different kinds of expertise or credibility, secret passwords (JK), etc.</td>
<td><strong>ORG-Agenda-Space</strong> – is there room for the new issue on the organization’s agenda? References to prioritization, only enough attention for a few issues at a time, references to “advocacy space” etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENT-Beneficiary Buy-In</strong> – references to the issue entrepreneur needing the support or validation of the community they are claiming to represent. Include instance where speakers note that it matters whether the entrepreneur is a member of the victim community or an outsider speaking on their behalf. Also includes instances where they talk about the importance of knowing what beneficiaries themselves want, or victim/claimant legitimation of claims as a source of credibility.</td>
<td><strong>ORG-Organizational Fit/Value Added</strong> – This code is for statements about how organizations decide whether issues “fit” what they do enough that they should get involved in them. Does a new issue fit the organization’s mandate or its culture, or its perception of its niche vis-à-vis other organizations in a network? Does the organization perceive that it will have procedural expertise to add to the campaign, or some other value to add to the issue advocacy? To what extent do organizations need to feel they are needed and can add something useful to a campaign?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENT-Access to Funding</strong> – the importance of the issue entrepreneur being able to get money for advocacy. Note that the speaker must be specifically referring to the ability to get grants, resources, funding, as an attribute of the issue entrepreneur – there is a different code on another code list for the general availability of funding for an issue or money as a broader problem for advocacy organizations.</td>
<td><strong>ORG-Resources/Costs-Benefits</strong>– references to the costs and benefits associated with solving the problem or responding to the issue – do perceptions of these costs affect the likelihood of advocacy? Costs include considerations about what the organization will expend to do advocacy: do they have the material resources (time, money, staff etc) to contribute to an issue? [Don’t code expertise here; don’t code references to “natural resources” as an issue.] This is for comments about how organizations must allocate scarce resources among their many priorities, and how they weigh this against expected gains of advocacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENT-Advocacy Skills</strong> – how skilled the entrepreneur is at doing advocacy – references to procedural knowledge, marketing savvy, understanding how to frame things, ability to use data/evidence/statistics and political know-how, references to the importance of Internet skills or ability to connect with the media, etc; also code charisma and personality here. You can include passages that provide examples of good advocacy skills or talk about the importance of advocacy skills even if the respondent doesn’t mention entrepreneurs per se or seems to be talking about wider networks of actors or wider “recipes for agenda-setting success.”</td>
<td><strong>ORG-Marketability</strong> – is the issue marketable to the public and the media, and will this be good for the organization’s visibility?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENT-Influential Allies</strong> – references to issue entrepreneurs having access to or the support of influential, high-profile allies like celebrities, religious and moral leaders, governments, powerful well recognized NGOs or UN agencies, etc. References to the important of attracting the leadership of influential people or organizations goes here.</td>
<td><strong>ORG-Prestige</strong> – references to glory, prestige, reputation, credibility etc. Will joining the campaign or adopting the issue increase or decrease the reputation, prestige, or credibility of the gatekeeper organization within the network and with governments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENT-Language Fluency</strong> – references to the importance of English or French fluency or fluency in other official global languages in advocacy networks</td>
<td><strong>ORG-Senior Leadership</strong> – reference to the importance of specific individuals in adopting organizations taking leadership or not on new issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENT-Unlikely Leader</strong> – use code if speaker suggests that issues are easiest championed by those who are perceived to be unlikely champions, like white men promoting women’s rights, or religious leaders promoting the environment or some such. Don’t use for just any reference to leadership, but only references to the importance of unlikely leaders.</td>
<td><strong>ORG-Funding</strong> – any references to how funding affects decision-making about issue adoption, or ways that donors influence organizations issue agendas. Eg, is the organization constrained by the preferences of its funders, or does it make a difference how they are funded (by governments, foundations or citizens)? Do they think about whether adopting a new issue will help them gain more funding or cost them financially with their donors?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**TABLE 5**

List of “Network Effects” Mentioned by Participants and Code Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bandwagoning / Copy-Cat Effect – suggestions that there is a contagion effect in networks: when some organizations start gravitating toward an issue, others will come on board because they want to follow the bandwagon. This effect should be differentiated from cases where organizations come on board because they are convinced of the merits of the issue – it’s all about being part of the in crowd or the latest fad. Also don’t code passages that refer solely to following donor money or governments’ lead – it’s about band-waggoning with other activists.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intra-Network Dynamics – The code is about dynamics or perceptions of dynamics between activist organizations in a network and how that influences agenda-setting. Include references to hierarchies within networks, statements like “not all NGOs are equal” or references to disproportionate weight/influence or other power relations among activists themselves that might cause some issues to get neglected. (Do not use this code to describe power differentials simply between global civil society and governments, but rather some global civil society actors and other global civil society actors. Also code the perception within networks that you need to be able to build a coalition or create consensus around a problem with one’s existing partner organizations, that doing advocacy around an issue will not compromise existing alliances with other organizations. The code is about relationships between organizations rather than the nature of the issue itself, and organizations’ guess about how championing an issue would affect their current relationships with partner organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Turf/Strategic Linkages - references to who owns different issues within a wider network, instances where a speaker suggests that confusion about “where the issue belongs” might cause the issue to be missed, or references to how “who” is doing an issue or “how” the issue is framed matters in whether other organizations will do it. EG references to organization mandates relative to other orgs, people being limited by thinking in “silos,” references to who does what and with whom, or to the “fit” of issues in different frames would receive this code. This code can be used for statements about how an entrepreneur’s existing network or existing issue frame affects its adoption by other organizations. For example, use it for references to who the entrepreneur is already affiliated with if this factor is seen as a facilitator or inhibitor of issue proliferation within networks. It’s also about how the issue is framed within the broader network (eg: is landmines an arms control issue, a humanitarian issue, or both and how if at all does it matter in determining how it proliferates?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Competition/Conflicts – This code is about relationships among issues in a network, as opposed to relationships among organizations. Use this code for either of two kinds of statements: 1) when speakers talk about there being finite advocacy space, competition between issues for attention, a zero-sum relationship between new issues and existing issues, the commitment of organizations to existing issues being an impediment to advocacy around new issues [if you hear them say something like, “you can’t do everything” or “you have to prioritize” or “there are limited resources” then use this code] 2) Use code if they describe new issues actually conflicting with or under-mining issues already on the agenda.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 6

List of “Broader Context” Factors Mentioned by Participants and Code Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics/Experts</td>
<td>references to the importance of scientists, university researchers or the academy or academic scholarship generally in agenda-setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chance</td>
<td>any reference to idiosyncrasies of history, chance events, serendipity making a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claimant Demand</td>
<td>suggestions that problems are likelier to get attention when the people affected by them begin lobbying for it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrity Influence</td>
<td>references to celebrities being important. Celebrities include public figures whose notoriety inheres in themselves as an individual rather than in the office they hold: movie, TV, music stars, also influential religious, political or cultural figures who use their name recognition and status to bring attention to an issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donor Demand</td>
<td>arguments that donors set the agenda, or references to financial transfers, aid money, or donations of any kind playing a role in agenda-setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum</td>
<td>references to the importance of specific institutional initiatives on some wider issue (e.g. a report, a piece of legislation, or a campaign) or organized events (a debate, a conference, a meeting) at particular points in time in focusing and galvanizing attention or providing a political opportunity for advocacy. Only apply code if speaker is referencing the importance of these sorts of wider initiatives or events in providing a focal point agenda-setting around a particular issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Demand</td>
<td>arguments that governments set the global advocacy agenda, or references to state power over the agenda that is non-monetary in nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Framework</td>
<td>references to the importance of the presence or absence of pre-existing bodies of law on a topic similar or related to the issue promoted by the entrepreneur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Attention</td>
<td>references to the importance of media coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerful Interests</td>
<td>any suggestions that the interests of any powerful group – domestic groups, powerful governments, corporations, elites or social classes, or other influential constituencies – are driving issue advocacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ripeness</td>
<td>suggestions that issues only get attention when “the time is ripe” – sometimes enough time has to pass before people understand the urgency of the issue. Also references to the importance of the political climate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of the Economy</td>
<td>suggestions that the state of the economy makes a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trigger Events</td>
<td>reference to acute, specific events causing sudden, widespread attention to a problem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>