

Global Idea Networks:

The Impact of Transnational Policy-Actor Networks and Epistemic Communities on Perceived Policy Power in WSIS

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Draft Work in Progress - Please Do Not Quote

Roadmap

- Introduction and Purpose
- Research Questions
- Relevant Literature
- Theoretical Model
- Definitions
- Delimitations
- Method
- Results/Findings
- Discussion and Recommendations

Introduction

- Global governance and coordination of information and communication technologies in the Information Society
- International regime theory as answer to the anarchy problematique
- Importance of international conferences as locations for contestation
- Effectiveness and Power in Conferences
- Transnational policy-actor networks and epistemic communities coalesce around international conferences

Purpose

- The purpose of this study is:
 - to better understand the emergence and efficacy of transnational policy-actor networks in the global information and communication policy domain.
- To do so:
 - we examine the impact of policy-actor networks and epistemic communities on perceived policy power in one such international ICT policy conference
 - the United Nations-sponsored World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

Research Questions

1. To what extent are transnational policy-actor networks engaged in the WSIS processes?
2. What is the character and structure of these networks?
3. To what extent are these networks linked to specific epistemic communities?
4. What impact does membership in these networks and epistemic communities have on perceived policy power within WSIS

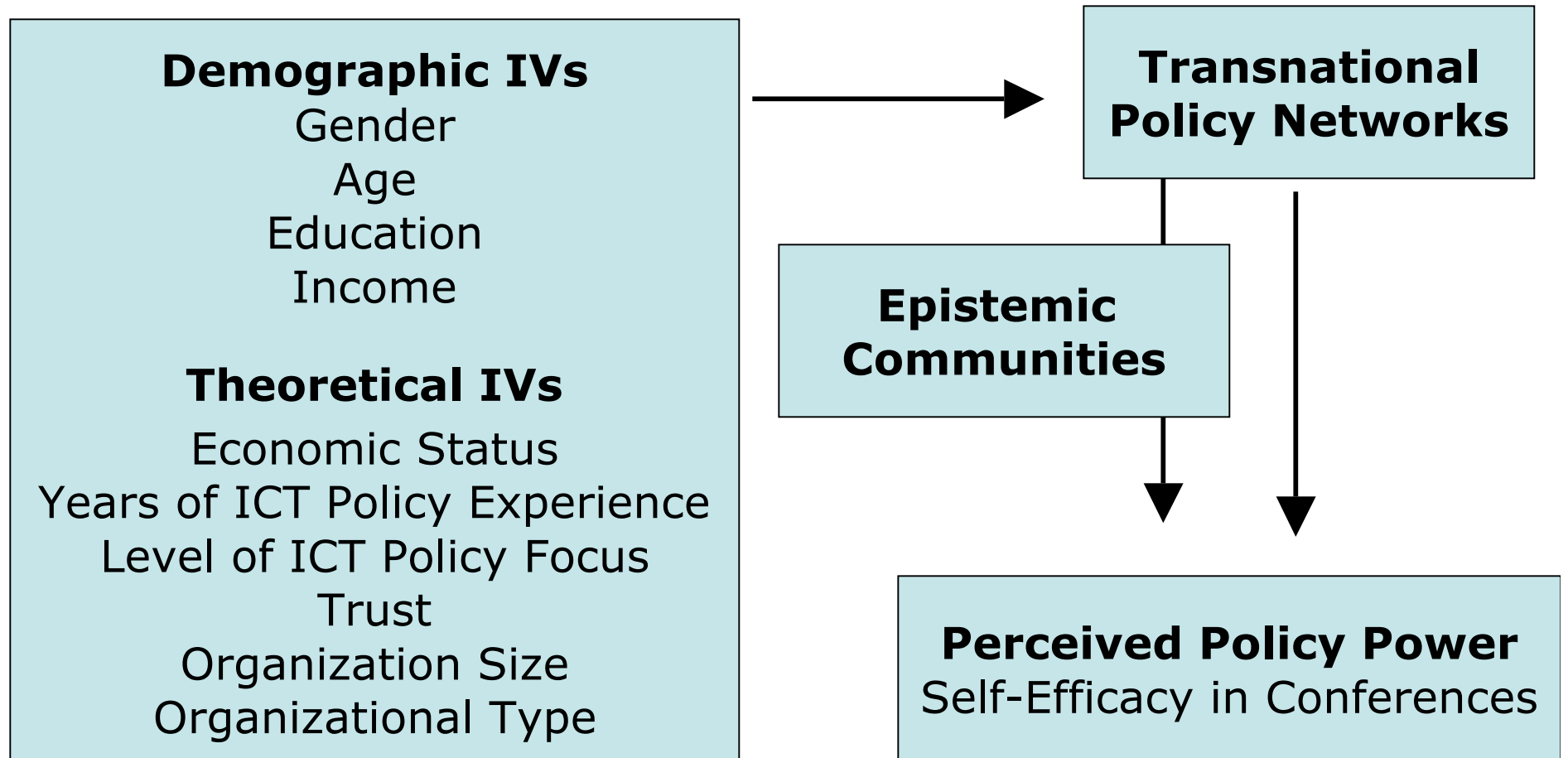
Relevant Literature

- Global governance and regime formation
- Institutions and institutional analysis
- Global governance of cyberinfrastructure
- Transnational policy-actor networks and global civil society
- World summits and international conferences
- Knowledge and ideas in international affairs
- Power dynamics in regime formation

Gaps in the Literature

- Empirical vs. theoretical studies
- Role of knowledge and information in transnational policy-actor networks
- Impact of policy-actor networks on perceived power
- Factors influencing participation in policy-actor networks

Theoretical Model



Definitions

- Epistemic Communities
- Policy-Actors
- Transnational Policy Actor Networks
- International Policy Conferences
- International ICT Policy Conferences
- Conference Outcomes
- International Regime
- Perceived Policy Power

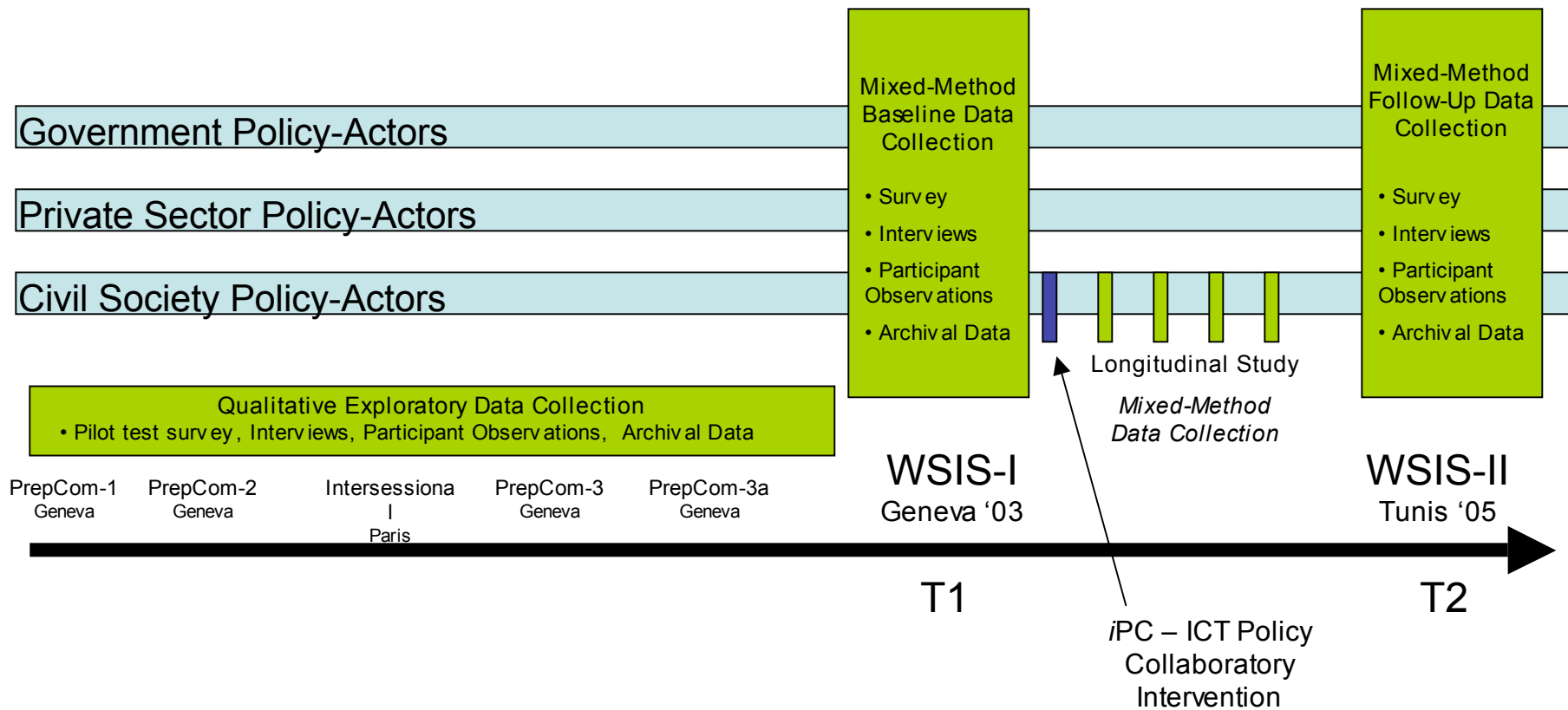
Delimitations

- Focus on WSIS
 - Not on the other important international conferences
- Primary Focus on Policy-Actor Networks and Epistemic Communities
 - Other important variables analyzed
 - Others not explored
- Focus mostly on the quantitative data
 - Qualitative data more fully integrated in future work

Method

- Part of a larger study called *From Pawns to Partners*
- Mixed method analysis
 - Quantitative
 - Survey
 - Qualitative
 - Participant Observation
 - Interviews
 - Content Analysis

Research Design



Survey

- Sampling frame drawn from multistakeholder participants in the WSIS
- November 24, 2003 - January 24, 2004
- N = 322, 15% response rate
- 83 items, open and closed ended
- Demographic measures and other variables - trust, experience, satisfaction

Independent Variables

- Demographic
 - Age (AGE)
 - Gender (GENDER)
 - Region born (REGBORN)
- Socioeconomic
 - Education level (EDUC)
 - Income (INCOME)
- Theoretical
 - Years of ICT activity (ICTYEARS)
 - Focus on ICT policy (ICTFOCUS)
 - Activity in ICT policy (ICTACTIVE)
 - Membership in Policy Network (GPN_MEM)
 - Membership in Epistemic Community (EPI_MEM)
 - Trust (TRUST)
 - Organizational Size (ORGSIZE)
 - Organizational Type (ORGTYPE)
 - Economic Status of Base (OECD)
 - Trust (TRUST)

Dependent Variable

- Dependent Variable
 - *Perceived Policy Power*
- Composite Variable (mean of 1-5 scale)
 - Ideas Influence (IDEAINFL)
 - Organizational Success (ORGSUCC)
 - Sufficient Information (SUFINFO)
 - Impact on Declaration of Principles (DP_IMPAC)
 - Impact on Action Plan (AP_IMPAC)
- Principal Components and Factor Analysis
 - Loaded on One Factor
 - Internal reliability ($\alpha = .80$)

Characteristics of the Sample

- Majority male (70%, n = 180).
- Master's degree modal education level (48.3%, n = 125), numerous doctorates (22%, n = 57).
- Majority either “high” or “upper middle” income in their own countries (64.1%, n = 164).
 - Contrasted by the opposite in exploring a sub-sample of civil society delegates, where a slight majority (52%, n = 36) reported to be of either “Low” or “Middle Income” in their own countries.

Characteristics of the Sample

- Western Europe (28%, n = 72), followed by Africa (24.1%, n = 62).
- Most of the respondents (68.2%, n = 174) did not speak English as their primary language.
- Most respondents (84.2%, n = 154) have a “Broadband (e.g., LAN/ ISDN/DSL/Cable Modem)” connection to the Internet,
 - with most (76.2%, n = 141) connecting from their “Office or work.”

Results/Findings

1. To what extent are transnational policy-actor networks engaged in the WSIS processes?
2. What is the character and structure of these networks?
3. To what extent are these networks linked to specific epistemic communities?
4. What impact does membership in these networks and epistemic communities have on perceived policy power within WSIS

(1) Results - Transnational Networks

- Respondents were given the following definition of a Global Policy Network:
 - A "Global Policy Network" can be defined as an international network of policy could consist of governmental and/or non-governmental actors. Frequently, such a Global Policy Network will interact as delegates to international conferences they attempt to work collectively to influence the outcome of the conference.”
- They were then asked,
 - “Based on the preceding definition, are you currently involved in a "Global Policy Network" for information and communication technologies?”
 - Their binary responses were coded “1” for No and “2” for yes.

(1) Results - Transnational Networks

- A majority of respondents (69.1%, n = 143) said that they were indeed members of a transnational policy network.
- A large number of respondents (n = 104) continued to give us the name of their transnational network, and several respondents (n = 85) even provided detailed qualitative information about how their transnational policy networks began.

(2) Results - Character of Networks

- We operationalized this question by asking:
 - “Which factors significantly predict membership in a policy network?”
- Binary logistic regression
 - Dependent variable - “Membership in Policy Network” (GPN_MEM)
 - Independent variables
 - REGBORN, AGE, GENDER, ORGSIZE, INCOME, EDUC, ORGTYPE, ICTYEARS, ICTACTIVE, ICTFOCUS, OECD, and TRUST.

(2) Results - Character of Networks

- Cox and Snell $R^2 = .23$
- Nagelkerke $R^2 = .31$
- $X^2 43.9$, $df 11$, $p < .001$
- Significant variables
 - ICT Policy Activity $B = .68^{***}$
 - ICT Focus $B = -1.28^{**}$
 - OECD Membership $B = .86^{**}$
- Marginally Significant
 - ICT Years $B = .09 (p < .06)$

$p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .001^{***}$

(3) Results - Linkage to Epistemic Community

- For respondents who had already indicated their membership in a transnational policy-actor network, we asked if their network was
 - “associated with a group of scholars, scientists, or other continuous source of knowledge and information?”
- A large majority (74.1%, n = 83) reported that their network was linked to an epistemic community
- These respondents also provided detailed qualitative information about the epistemic community

(4) Results - Impact on Policy Power

- We operationalized this question by asking:
 - “Does membership in a policy network increase *perceived policy power*, when adjusting for co-variants?”
- Follow-up questions were:
 - “What other factors significantly predict *perceived policy power*?”
- Standard Multiple Regression
 - Dependent Variable
 - *Perceived Policy Power* (POLPOWER)
 - Independent variables
 - REGBORN, AGE, GENDER, ORGSIZE, INCOME, EDUC, ORGTYPE, ICTYEARS, ICTACTIVE, ICTFOCUS, OECD, and TRUST

(4) Results - Impact on Policy Power

- Model Summary

- $R = .66$
- $R^2 = .43$
- *Adjusted R² = .37*
- $\Delta R^2 = .43^{***}$

- Significant variables

- GPN_MEM $\beta = .29^{***}$
- EPISMEM $\beta = .23^{**}$
- ICT Active $\beta = .21^*$
- OECD $\beta = -.20^*$
- TRUST $\beta = .19^*$
- AGE $\beta = -.18^*$
- ICT Years $\beta = .17^*$

$p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .001^{***}$

(4) Results - Impact on Policy Power

- “Is *perceived policy power* moderated by linkages with epistemic communities?
 - Hierarchical Regression
 - Dependent Variable
 - *Perceived Policy Power* (POLPOWER)
 - Independent variables
 - REGBORN, AGE, GENDER, ORGSIZE, INCOME, EDUC, ORGTYPE, ICTYEARS, ICTACTIVE, ICTFOCUS, OECD, and TRUST
 - Interaction test - (GPN_MEM*EPIS_MEM)
 - Not statistically significant

Discussion

- Large number of transnational policy-actor networks active within WSIS
- As expected, the more active a person is in ICT policy, the more likely they are to be members of a transnational policy network. Policy-actors from more developed OECD countries are also more likely to be members of policy networks
- Nearly all of the policy-actor networks seem to be linked with specific epistemic communities, with many details on these networks and linkages provided

Discussion

- Networks matter
 - Membership in a transnational policy-actor network was statistically significant in predicting *perceived policy power*
- However, five other variables were also statistically significant
 - Membership in epistemic communities is the second most important variable in explaining perceived policy power.
 - The more active you are in ICT policy processes, the higher your perceived policy power.
 - Participants from developing countries are more likely to be members of policy networks than those delegates from the developed world
 - Young delegates were more likely to have higher perceived policy power than older delegates
 - Finally, the more years you work on ICT policy, the higher your perceived policy power.

Recommendations

- Support for policy-networks, mechanisms that allow them to participate remotely
- Continue to provide mechanisms for multistakeholder participation
- Provide mechanisms to enhance linkages between epistemic communities and policy networks

Future Research

- Continue to explore and exploit the qualitative and quantitative datasets
- Structural equation modeling
- Follow-up survey in WSIS Tunis phase
- Exploring the impact of a strategic intervention “policy collaboratories on the development of policy-actor networks
- Studying how new members are integrated into the policy-actor networks