

Unexpected Power: Conflict and Change among Transnational Activists.

By Shareen Hertel. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006. 159p. \$45.00 cloth, \$17.95 paper. DOI: 10.1017/S153759270702568

— Sabine Lang, *University of Washington*

Shareen Hertel's book focuses on the evolution of human rights norms and strategic choices within transnational campaigns. She wants to explain "why and how actors on the receiving end of campaigns put forward alternative understandings of human rights norms" (p. 3). Building on Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink's groundbreaking modeling of the "boomerang effect" of transnational campaigns (see *Activists Beyond Borders: Transnational Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, 1998), Hertel identifies two new patterns of campaign emergence, which she calls the "outside-in" pattern and the "dual-target" pattern. Outside-in patterns are at work when campaigns are framed outside of the targeted area, generally in the global North, and then introduced to change conditions in targeted countries. Dual-target patterns, by contrast, evolve around collaborations and shared interests of outside and inside actors to change human rights conditions in both the sender and receiver countries (p. 25). Both of these patterns, argues the author, reflect more accurately than previous formulations the contentious frame negotiations that go on in such campaigns.

Hertel supports her claims with two case studies from the 1990s, one a transnational campaign against child labor in the Bangladeshi garment industry and one to prevent gender discrimination in the Mexican border *maquiladoras*. Both of these cases are well documented with interviews, campaign materials and official documents. The central premise in the two narratives is similar: The norms initially associated with the campaigns change with the involvement of local actors. Those on the "receiving end" (p. 24) of campaigns challenge the assumptions and political strategies of those who initially frame and organize them. In the Bangladeshi case, the outside-in pattern is at work, as the original Harkin bill aims at boycotting imports that are associated with child labor in the garment industry. In the Mexican case, a dual-target pattern emerges as activists on both sides of the border take issue with their respective governments and collaborate, even though they use different frames. This book's main virtue is to provide a closer look at the contentious politics of transnational campaigns—contentions that go beyond what Keck/Sikkink have termed "frame alignment." In the Bangladeshi case, local activists reject the northern frame and confront it with their own; in the Mexican case, local activists adapt the imposed Human Rights Watch frame to use the momentum it generates in order to transport less of a northern rights message and more of an economic and social justice frame.

Hertel introduces two receiving end mechanisms that add texture and nuance to these dynamics of transnational advocacy, which she calls "blocking" and "backdoor moves" (p. 6). Both mechanisms are rather self-evident strategies for anyone who has ever been involved in campaigns of any sort, and yet her systematic exploration of these mechanisms gives additional credibility to the hypothesis that transnational activists are not a unified voice in any campaign. Blocking, explored in the Bangladeshi case, refers to actors on the receiving end who halt or significantly stall a campaign that does not represent their specific interests. An additional proposition that Hertel puts forward is that receiving-end actors are especially prone to blocking if economic sanctions, such as boycotts, are involved (p. 26). Yet while this turns out to be accurate in her case, it does not reflect others. The boycott against Nike, for example, which was also largely framed and organized by northern activists, did not result in Indonesian resistance against the campaign. Backdoor moves, as in the Mexican case, are employed by receiving actors in order to add distinct secondary reference points to already existing frames. Blocking, as Hertel shows, has a far larger impact in terms of the scope and locus of change, whereas backdoor moves lead only to marginal adjustments in the norm alignments of campaigns.

While both of these mechanisms add new dimension to our understanding of transnational advocacy, the study could have produced a somewhat more dynamic flow by not putting forward a rather static set of "senders" (the global North and its international nongovernmental organizations) and "receivers" (the global South and its people). Transnational campaigns such as that for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women come to mind, where the receivers played a decisive role in the original framing of the issue, its advocacy, and policy strategies. And in other campaigns, larger nongovernmental organizations on the receiving end might be part of the initial framing, whereas local activists will not be. Often the receivers themselves are a heterogeneous and internally contentious constituency. In both of Hertel's case studies, it is not at all clear that the northern sender has not been somehow consulting with a segment of southern activists before drafting the original campaign frame. A more dynamic narrative could also have drawn out more in terms of the communication patterns and power bases of respective actors. What exactly generates, sustains, or expands the respective power bases of her actors? The author briefly mentions funding and media, but could have explored these roots of power and tools of communication in more detail to make us understand shifting norms and strategic choices.

Last, a bit more editing of this manuscript would have served its publication well. We are referred to a diagram on page 8 that never appears and read the same quotation

in a footnote as well as in the text on page 5. These minor issues notwithstanding, Hertel's *Unexpected Power* is a very valuable and nicely readable contribution to the growing body of literature on transnational advocacy campaigns. It adds new theoretical depth and should be required reading for scholars as well as graduate and advanced undergraduate students of social movements and international relations.

Direct Democratic Choice: The Swiss Experience.

By Hanspeter Kriesi. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005.

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The determinants of the voters' decision in direct democratic votes have received growing attention over the last 15 years. The reasons for this are mainly twofold. First, there has been a sharp increase in the number of popular votes worldwide. In Europe, the successive waves of referenda on the European Union, up to the recent rejection of the EU constitution in France and in the Netherlands, have put the issue of direct democratic choices on the top of both the scientific and political agendas. Second, we have witnessed important theoretical developments in the study of opinion formation and political behavior (e.g., the contributions of social and political psychology with respect to the role of cognitive strategies, or the contributions of communication studies with respect to media and campaign effects).

As the country with the most far-reaching experience with direct legislation and referendum campaigns, Switzerland constitutes a unique "laboratory" for the analysis of direct democratic choices. Exploiting this "comparative advantage," Hanspeter Kriesi delivers a pathbreaking study. At the theoretical level, he uses the long-lasting dispute between the elitist and the pluralist conceptions of direct democracy as a starting point, and argues for a third, "realistic" conception that sheds light on the conditions under which "ordinary citizens are able to arrive at an enlightened political judgment and to make a reasonable choice" (p. 8). These conditions depend on the political elites and on citizens themselves.

First, the realistic conception is premised on the belief that—by delivering political messages, forming coalitions, and mobilizing support during a referendum campaign—the elites play a leading role in the individual process of opinion formation. Second, the author builds on the dual-process theories and distinguishes between two paths of individual opinion formation: a heuristic path, based on shortcuts and simplifying strategies, and a systematic path, based on the arguments provided by the elite. While the former has given rise to an extensive literature, in the United States and abroad, empirical tests

of the impact of argument-based reasoning on the voters' decision are scarce. Kriesi's study fills a gap in that respect.

Methodologically, the author also innovates by relying extensively on hierarchical (two-level) models, which enables him to evaluate how contextual, project-related variables and individual variables interact, and jointly influence the voters' choice. Empirically, Kriesi analyzes an impressive data set of postelection surveys covering nearly 20 years (1981–99) of direct legislation in several policy domains (148 popular votes altogether). This survey data provides systematic information about respondents' sociodemographic background and political attitudes. At the contextual level, the author takes into account both the intrinsic characteristics of the proposals submitted to the voters (e.g., their institutional form, familiarity, and salience) and the characteristics of the related referendum campaign (e.g., the intensity and direction of the campaign, based on newspaper ads, and the level and type of conflict among the elite, based on parties' voting recommendations).

In the first part of the book, Kriesi introduces the reader to these context-related variables and convincingly shows that they strongly structure voters' participation, their level of political information on the issues at stake, and their voting decisions. Thus, the intensity of the referendum campaign and the familiarity of the proposal submitted to the voters significantly increase participation, in interaction with individual factors. Similarly, intense campaigns and familiar projects lead to higher levels of political awareness among individuals. Higher awareness, in turn, increases the likelihood of taking part in the vote, and at the same time reduces the risk of unreasonable decisions. Finally, and in sharp contrast with the view that one could "buy" a popular vote, Kriesi's study demonstrates that once the type of coalition among the party elite is controlled for, campaign spending no longer plays a role for the outcome of a popular vote. Overall then, the analysis confirms that while direct democratic votes necessarily introduce some element of uncertainty for the party elite, the latter still holds fair control over (the quality of) the individual decision.

The core—and major contribution—of the book stems from the analysis of the heuristic and systematic paths of opinion formation (Chapters 6 to 8). The resort to two-level models appears as a successful strategy and leads to several interesting—albeit in some cases fairly complex—findings. Among the three different heuristics included in the analysis (status quo, trust in government, and partisan cues), the last two are at first sight decisive. For example, when the elite is divided, reliance on parties' voting recommendations appears as a widespread strategy, and this even among unaware voters. However, the effects of the partisan and trust heuristics turn out to be partly spurious: They disappear when systematic strategies are controlled for. Indeed, according to Kriesi's main—and most intriguing—finding, argument-based, systematic strategies are of overriding importance, and clearly outweigh