

# Briefly Noted

***Secrets in Global Governance: Disclosure Dilemmas and the Challenge of International Cooperation in World Politics***, Allison Carnegie and Austin Carson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 362 pp., \$99.99 cloth, \$34.99 paperback.

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Transparency in international organizations (IOs) is at the top of the list of practices traditionally thought to comprise good governance and is often argued to be associated with greater accountability to their member states and enhanced information sharing among the states. However, in *Secrets in Global Governance*, Allison Carnegie and Austin Carson use information from interviews and new data on the sensitive data-transparency practices of 106 different IOs to argue that, paradoxically, confidentiality systems, which are designed to protect sensitive intelligence and economic information, actually increase an IO's policing power and ability to punish states and private firms that break the rules-based order.

Carnegie and Carson analyze why countries and firms may not feel comfortable sharing information with IOs, even if doing so would absolve them of accusations or incriminate a rival, or would allow the IO to punish a rule breaker, such as an accused war criminal. While member states may choose to share such information, they also run the risk that the information could be leaked, allowing their rivals to adapt their practices, which happened, for example, when Bosnian Serbs destroyed mass graves

after Germany released surveillance photos showing evidence of the graves (p. 200).

Through reviewing case studies in four areas of international relations (nuclear nonproliferation, international trade, international war crime tribunals, and foreign direct investment), Carnegie and Carson analyze under what conditions states and nonstate actors share sensitive information with IOs, and whether the sharing of sensitive information increases compliance or cooperation within that IO.

Each case study examines an international organization's ability to uphold its rules-based order after confidentiality systems are introduced, or taken away, through reforms. For example, the authors explain how in the early 1990s, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), spurred by the discovery of a clandestine nuclear weapons development program in Iraq, shifted from verifying members' self-reported nuclear activities to accepting intelligence provided by member states about other members. This shift resulted in the IAEA being able to act on intelligence provided by the United States and to insist on visiting additional nuclear sites in Iran during an IAEA inspection.

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In other case studies, they explore how adopting greater transparency concerning how disputes are brought to an international organization can actually harm that IO's ability to promote a rules-based order, or how introducing confidentiality systems within an organization can also come with steep costs. Such costs include allowing an actor with increased access to intelligence, such as the United States, to drive the agenda of an IO. The United States is the most prolific sharer of intelligence with the IAEA, and that has led the IAEA to increase scrutiny of "nonallies" of the United States, such as Iran, with less scrutiny directed at U.S. allies, such as Pakistan.

Carnegie and Carson also provide suggestions for further applications of how

their confidentiality systems theory could resolve disclosure dilemmas in other IR fields, from cybersecurity to intelligence sharing in UN peacekeeping. Though outside the scope of the book, I was left wanting to know more about the confidentiality systems themselves—the extent to which they differ across organizations, the costs involved in designing and implementing them, and whether some work better for certain IOs than others. In a world where the viability of IOs is questioned in the face of rising nationalism and protectionism, this book provides a strong blueprint for how these organizations can stay relevant and strengthen the international rules-based order by adopting confidentiality systems to resolve disclosure dilemmas.