

Understanding the process of IOs politicization

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Introduction

One of the major issues concerning the functioning of the World Political System (WPS) is how International Organizations (IOs) interact with other policy actors, and how this interaction leads to more politicization at the transnational sphere. Recent social mobilization such as Occupy Wall Street in 2011 or, one decade before, the mobilization the Battle of Seattle (1999) against the policies enforced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or World Trade Organization (WTO)¹ have globally spread showing an increasing social scrutiny of IOs' policy decisions and its direct effects on citizens' daily life. As several authors have demonstrate, this trend is not new, international mobilization against slavery in the XIX Century and other international human rights campaigns are good examples of previous politicization at the transnational sphere (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). Even though, there is no consensus about what politicization exactly means, which are its attributes and how it occurs. Our aim is to contribute to this debate by discussing the meaning of politicization. To do that we explain why we think that politicization must be analyzed as a process; and how this process is prompted by social mobilization and the visibility of the issue at stake. We expect this conceptualization would be useful to analyze different cases of politicization of IO's around issues like the state and peace building among others.

There is an increasing consciousness between citizens that international authority can deter or influence the final national policy decisions about commerce, ecology, rights, education, retirement and so on, even in the absence of a world government. In this regard, previous research on globalization, for example, suggests that the politicization of the international sphere is related to alterations in the distribution of power associated to structural changes such as global international trade, the transnational flow of goods, services, communication or people, which have a direct impact in the distribution of life chances all over the globe (Beck, 1997). Based on everyday life experiences, such as changes in consumption habits (online shop) or international mobility to work or study, or even the consciousness of more dramatic events such as terrorism attacks related to international conflicts or immigrants' dead in the Mediterranean, national citizens are

¹ These mobilizations had an outstanding impact worldwide given the genuinely transnational nature of the movement, both on the basis of the target they pointed as the enemy (global capitalisme and its destructive policies), and the "global civil society" aspiration of the movement itself.

acquiring also consciousness of being a transnational community (Held, 1995; Ecker-Ehrhardt, 2012). In other words, at the same time national governments delegate responsibilities to IOs in terms of i.e. trade regulation, environment or citizens' security; individuals are also getting conscience of being affected by policy decisions taken beyond national borders.

Also international relations theory has developed an explanation about how nation-state society become vulnerable to the cost imposed by globalization, identifying at least three trends that transform the power distribution. First, national governments interdependence: states recognize they cannot regulate or solve problems that are beyond their national borders and delegate responsibility to IOs (Keohane and Nye, 1997). Second: in part as a consequence of the first, the emergence of transnational social mobilization through different strategies and different type of collective actions, as well as of a global public opinion. Third: changes in the distribution of power across venues (IOs and other international institutions), pushing to the creation of mechanisms and political organization that provide a framework of interaction -exchange of ideas and solutions-; regulation and law enforcement (Zürn, 2004; Tallberg et al 2013).

But we know less about how to explain the differences in the way different IOs get politicized, as we said before in this paper we suggest that politicization must be understood as a process. We think this process is driven by three main variables, which interact and influence mutually: 1) the way power is distributed in the international arena through different dimensions of order and disorder. The particular characteristics of the WPS affect the politicization of the international sphere, and at the same time the politicization of IOs. We understand IOs as a part of this structure of order and disorder, having their own institutional setting. 2) The mobilization civil society organization and other transnational actors around a particular issue. They participate actively in the process of politicization of the international arena, pressing to enter issues in to the agenda and to push particular views and conceptions about the dimension and the interpretation of specific issues. 3) The issue itself and the attention it raises. Following the agenda setting approach, we stand that not all issues get politicized simultaneously because there is a problem scarcity of attention both within IOs and also within other transnational actors own agenda. We suggest that the visibility of an issue and the previous existence of an international regime about the topic (such as international development and foreign aid) facilitates the process of politicization, while there are

other issues that never get attention and thus their politicization is controlled by the agenda setter.

From here, the paper is organized in three sections. The first is devoted to review previous research on IOs' politicization and its main contributions. Building on it, the second section is devoted to conceptualize politicization as a process and to explain which variables intervene in this process. Finally, the last section there are some concluding remarks and lines for future research.

1. Politicization of the international arena: transnational activism and global governance

From different disciplines and research fields, several authors stand that during the last century there is a growing politicization of the international sphere. Not only the European Union (EU) (Hugh and Marks, 2009) but also other international institutions such as the WTO, IFM and several agencies of United Nations (UN) are in the focus of international debates because of their policy decisions and performance, involving the general public and transnational actors (Tarrow, 2005; Zürn et al, 2007; Hanegraaff et al, 2011; Rixen and Zangl, 2012). At the same time, the interaction between IOs and transnational actors, such as civil society organizations, has been also analyzed from different approaches. The collective action approaches –those centered on transnational activism and global civil society- emphasize the rising social mobilization around global problems, pointing IOs and governments as main responsible to solve those issues and by this mean recognizing them the authority to do it. Transnational activism is an indicator of politicization of the international sphere in general, and in particular of IOs, constituting a third force that express the willingness to contest power distribution and decision making at the international arena (Florinni, 2000).

Transnational activism is directed mainly to IOs since they are institutionalized and visible venues of policy decisions. Also networks of transnational actors (involving academic, experts, civil society organizations as well as sympathetic governments) interact with IOs seeking to have a voice in setting the agenda and to pursue their policy goals; promoting change at national level thanks to international pressure (Tarrow, 2005; Joachim, 2007). These coalitional actors are also known as Transnational Networks of Activism (TANs), though it is important to distinguish them from particular transnational actors such as individual corporations or well-known NGOs, for

example Oxfam International, Médecins Sans Frontières or Transparency International (Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

By other hand, the analysis of global civil society similarly explains why concerns about legitimacy and democratization lead IOs to interact and open to transnational actors. Civil society organizations are considered to be a vehicle of healthy democracy since they play a fundamental role in making authorities responsible to voters and supervising their practices and decisions, monitoring government activities at national but also at global level (Held, 1995; Foley and Edwards, 1996; Encarnacion, 2002; Kane, 2001; Kaldor, 2002). Global civil society sees public problems as global and recognizes the importance of international institutions to solve them (Held, 1995; Anheier et al., 2002). Though recently, more empirical driven research has shown that global society is not equally distributed worldwide and that it also forms international elite mostly concentrated in western democratic countries, since global civil society needs material resources and favorable political conditions to develop and consolidate as an important political power (Anderson, 2000; Tarrow, 2005; Ecker-Ehrhardt, 2012).

On the other hand, international relations research has also analyzed the emergence of a growing system of global governance and interdependence. This has transformed the international systems from a realm of states and unequal struggle for power to a system of interdependence and interaction with new transnational actors, which are mobilized to influence international policies (Kehohane and Nye, 1997; Florini, 2000). Global governance has being depicted in functional and moral terms, for example, Mattias Ecker-Ehrhardt (2012) identifies two logics: 1) the logic of functional interdependence and 2) the logic of normative interdependence. The first one arises from the awareness and perceptions that problems that before were considered as mainly local or national have a transnational or global dimension, such as climate change, poverty, war or immigration. The second one comes from universalism and transnational responsibilities. In other words, interdependence and global governance goes hand by hand due to increasing vulnerability caused by the process of globalization (Beck, 1997). Also, a significant part of authority is now translated or delegated to international institutions because they are the main channels to solve problems derived from interdependence and because there is the perception that the nation state alone is inefficient to solve those vulnerabilities Ecker-Ehrhardt (2012).

In relation to democratization and legitimation concerns, analysis about global governance have also focused on how international institutions are compelled to interact with other international actors -individual NGOs and experts, or TNAs- to legitimate their policy actions.

Some scholars suggest that the concern about legitimation lead IOs to integrate transnational actors in one or several stages of the policy process. This can happen during the implementation phase, and in few cases in the decision making process (Tallberg et al, 2011). Specific case studies, for example the participation of private actors in the Ministerial Conference of the WTO or the degree of success of NGOs to influence specific policies, also illustrate this trend (Dür and De Bièvre, 2007; Hanegraaff et al, 2011). One of the examples of the successful politicization of IO by transnational actors is the process that leads to the ban of landmines with the Ottawa Treaty in 1999 (Mine Ban Treaty) (Anderson, 2000). In particular, the analysis of the opening up of IOs by Tallberg et al (2011) has demonstrated that only few IOs integrate transnational actors in the policy decision stage but also that the increasing open up IOs is explained by the states willingness to give them access and to a less extent to the civil society mobilization.

Other authors have focused on key concepts such as authority to explain IOs' politicization. Zürn et al (2012) argue that there is an empirical trend towards politicization of international Institutions linked to the rising authority of international institutions. They suggest that there is a nexus between IOs politicization and the rise of IOs' international authority measured in terms of their policy functions as rule definition (regulation mandate); monitoring of national governments decisions; interpretation and enforcement. There is evidence that IOs with high level of authority (they can regulate, supervise and enforce international decisions trough a treaty for example) are more contested by citizens, here the main examples would be the World Bank, the IMF or the WTO. Building on these contributions, in the following section we define what we understand by IOs politicization and which variables intervene in this process.

2. Understanding IO's politicization

As we said in the introduction, our aim is to contribute to analyze the meaning of politicization, and apply this conceptualization to the international arena, particularly to IOs. In order to develop our argument we must be able to provide a certain amount of previous definitions, among which *politics* and other concepts such as *international regime* related to the international system. This is important since in the field of social sciences, where many words are very often submitted to a “polysemic” nature, the final meaning depending of the context in which they are used.

As for politics, it can be defined as the competition for power or influence among actors, within institutions, structures, norms and processes. These processes can go through the parameters of conflict, negotiation, transaction or sharing (to some extent) a common agenda. These processes can be formalized (for instance under the rule of law in a given state political system), or could be only partly formalized but mostly submitted to more functional criteria, thus the importance of having an operational concept of international regime on hand.

Politicization can be approached under a narrow perspective according to which actors operate in order to bring their interests (on a specific issue or set of issues)² into the agenda for a better achievement of their programs. Under this perspective the process will advance through the principles of negotiation, transaction versus confrontation, lose-lose game approach, etc. But this definition can be nuanced from an additional functional perspective, when some issues suffer from some sort of intentional deviation of the formal agenda, in order to get more “political advantages” in terms of power competition in a larger sense. Alexander (2014) points out the case through some sensitive, transnational problems, each of one would deserve a full cooperation through actors in order for an objectively needed solution. Out of the five examples he gives some may evolve into some sort of “regime” in the broader sense of the concept that illustrate his argument. Two are especially relevant: how to face the Ebola disease outbreak, and how to confront Islamism radicalization, in particular the so-called last version of Jihadism (Daesh, terrorist attacks in France, Belgium or Denmark, etc) and the complex policies to face it domestically and at large simultaneously. We have to

² We do not enter here into the challenge of providing an objective definition of “Rational Choice” as the basis of the decision Making Process of an actor.

consider that in politics as a competition of interests every action of all actors is mutually reinforcing (the competition, not necessarily the common agenda), and can usually become a non-cooperative one. The two quoted examples show the partisan or “politician” takeover of the policy process, or the intention to do so, for which the use of media, transnational and national networks, lobbies, will be used, contributing to a greater confusion of public opinion both domestic and at a transnational scale. At the same time, both examples shows how has been reversed the absence of politicization involving the general public in international politics, a commonly fact until the late 20th Century.

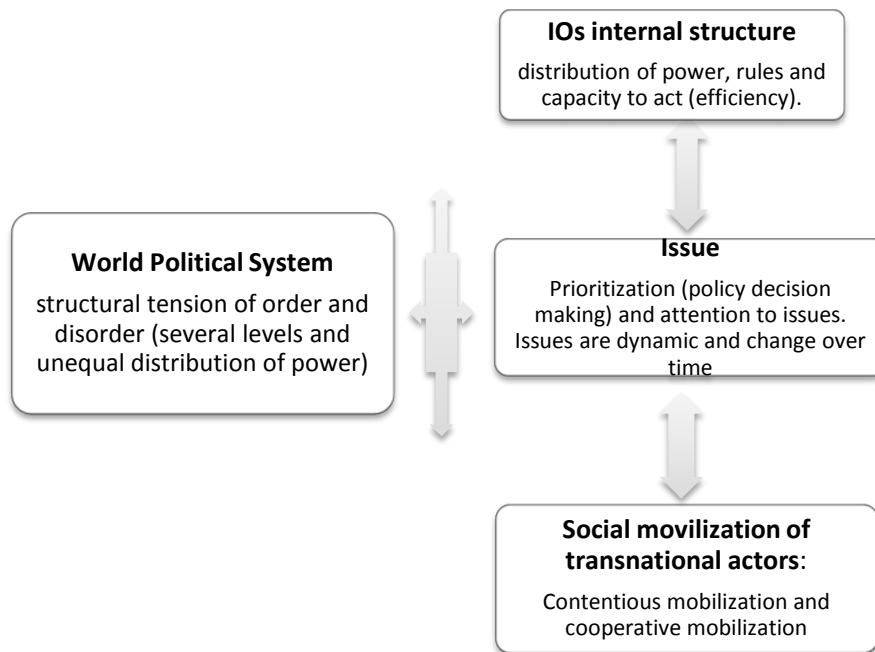
Rixen and Zangl (2013) argue a nuanced different position. Not all politics may be politicized, in the sense that many political decisions are made behind scenes by rulers and without being reported to or discussed by the public. In other words, politicization also refers to the act of naming something as political including the controversies surrounding the acceptance of this naming (problem definition or frame) and also the degree of openness to action of an specific political arena. In our case, this arena is formed by IOs, since they are one of the most visible actors in international politics. Nonetheless, we think politicization is not only naming something as political but politicization implies a process defined by the conjugation of opposing demands or visions about the problem, increasing visibility of the issue and thus more attention from different actors on it would lead to politicization.

Accordingly, politicization has to do with the scope of conflict around an issue. Following Schattschneider (1960), politicization can be depicted as the expansion of conflict and competition between actors around a relatively locked issue, opening it to controversy and discussions in favor or against. Most of the time, this expansion arrives to the public sphere generating a public opinion on it, and social mobilization. The social mobilization of transnational actors, especially of NGOs with capacity to spread concern about an issue, is crucial in the process of IOs’ politicization. Social mobilization is one of the main driving mechanisms of conflict (contestation) but also consent (mutual partnership) of the general public opinion with IO binding decisions and recommendations to their members. In sum we define politicization of IOs as a process in which confrontation about a particular issue leads to the expansion of conflict to different venues and to the social mobilization of different international actors. Our definition is in line with De Wilde’ framework (2011) to analyze the process of

European Union integration' politicization in relation to visibility, confrontation and social mobilization, though he lets aside the institutional setting and the distribution of power where the conflict happens (the venue).

From here we stand that politicization as a process in the international arena is driven by different variables, some of them frame the process and some other prompt it. These variables are similar to those that characterize politicization at national level but with important particularities that we cannot give for granted: First of all, at macro level there is the institutional structure of the WPS, as a set of different formal and informal rules that establish a diversity of patterns of order and disorder. Second, the patterns of interaction with civil society organizations, that we understand as an indicator of politicization and as policy actor embedded in the struggle for power. Third the issue at stake, following the agenda setting approach we understand that not all issues are politicized and not all issues catch the same amount of attention by IOs and other international actors, thus the attributes of the issue and the visibility of the issue affects also the degree of politicization. The following figure resumes this idea of the IOs politicization process.

The process of IOs' politicization.



Source: authors' own elaboration

2.1 Order and disorder in the WPS: implications for IOs politicization

At macro level, there is a structural tension in the international system that frames the politicization of IOs, which can be explained using the notion of order and disorder (Vilanova, 2006). This structural tension is due to its nature as a divided power system and can be described by three dimensions or parameters. The first is the horizontal dimension of the international system, which refers to the principle of sovereign equality among States, the principle of non-interference in their domestic issues between the parties, which are formalized in IOs and the principles of public international law as well as in the UN Charter. The second is the vertical dimension, which raises the issue of power hierarchy among actors (meaning a “de facto hierarchy”). The bipolar world (and its aftermath) and the use of force exemplify this dimension of “hierarchy of power” in the practice of the international system, in spite of its horizontal/normative dimension. Interestingly enough, even at the UN, the relationship between the General “horizontal” Assembly and the Security “vertical” Council (with the veto of the five permanent members) prove the difficult coexistence of these two parameters. The third is more complex to describe because it comprises the horizontal and the vertical dimension. Two apparently contradictory trends happen simultaneously: 1) the state as main actor would no longer have the importance it had in previous international systems (for example, before 1939), it competes with other actors, with IOs and many other heterogeneous actors; 2) At the same time, the state is the essential subject of IOs; it is the main actor with the legitimate capacity to promote (even if many times it does the opposite) the development of international law; it can be the main driver of the most effective international regimes, from arms control to the EU integration process, with all its ups and downs (Hass, 1970; Laird, 1988).

Also, the state is the indispensable protagonist of successful negotiations, should it be in bilateral or multilateral levels, as well as within IOs. In other words, it is at the core of all international debates. And most conflict management processes, when they enter in negotiation, must inevitably go through a formalization of the resolution that only states, and IOs under state control, can assume and guarantee. In this regard, the state remains a central, inevitable and indispensable actor in the international system. In conclusion, therefore, the state must adapt itself to an increasing difficulty, derived from

the fragmentation of its environment: the international system “in transition”, and not yet showing any trends of “stabilization” of the alleged “post-bipolar system”

The exploration of several questions can be useful to advance in times of overcoming our theoretical uncertainty. First, the further analysis of the systemic crisis of the WPS that is in a process of forming a global political system. Second, this leads to the idea of global transition, applying a global scale the theoretical concept of transition well rooted in political science (when it has to do with government changes). The main contradiction lies in the fact that the study of transitions in the classical sense focuses on the changes visible at the level of state institutions, forms of government, constitutional rules, multiparty system, basic rights, in short, the rule of law and its mechanisms. And that does not exist at a global scale; therefore, the question is what kind of transition for what kind of global system?³

Another important question is does the WPS working in a way so that all actors (who act within it) have the ability to act globally in all issues that get attention or get into the agenda? The answer is no, some of them do partly, others have more fragmented action spaces, and they do not tend to decrease the degree of incompatibility among many of them. Furthermore, the number of actors in the system has tended to increase, and therefore their interactions as well, but not regulated set of interactions. Interdependence governs the WPS.

On the other hand, when talking about order, special mention deserves the notion of international regime which, in our case, has nothing to do with the traditional concept of “political regime” applied to the theory of the state, comparative governments or constitutional law or the political right, and yet, directly affects the State actor on the international arena. As Barbé (1989) points out, "the international regime is a theoretical construct that seeks to explain not the situations of anarchy and classic

³ In line with this argument, we think it's time to close the thesis of the “unipolar world”, its refutation has been clearly established by facts and the real world as it works. Why the world is not unipolar at all? In different issues or parameters: military, economic, cultural, religious, demographic, cultural, for example, one can quite accurately measure the degree of superiority or power or leadership of this or that state actor, as the United States or China, but there is none which can pretend to be the comprehensive superpower in all of the parameters. The Iraq or Afghanistan wars and its aftermaths illustrate perfectly the lack of correlation between a clear military superiority in quantitative terms, and ensuring that this power guarantees compliance with the political or economic agenda set for the post-war stage of the conflict.

conflict of international politics, but the order emergency situations that occur in a given field of international activity (issue area). " Therefore, the international regime could be a set of principles, formal norms and rules, and decision-making procedures around which expectations converge in that given field of activity. In other words, an international regime occurs when a certain sustained process is consolidated around a particular issue or set of issues around a single policy, with the convergence of interests of a group of actors, and a set of transactions going on. This would be the case to a certain point of the different international summits during the last decades around issues like environment, development, human rights and international trade, from Río de Janeiro in 1993 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development to WTO Ministerial Conference of 2001. Another historic example would be the issue of nuclear proliferation. Brzoska (1992) applies the concept of international regime to this topic during the Cold War and how main actors managed to control this phenomenon. More broadly, this notion can be applied to the entire process of Arms Control of nuclear weapons⁴.

Stephen Krasner's (1983) influential definition seeks a middle ground between "order" and explicit commitments; it stresses the normative dimension of international politics. Krasner defines a regime as "implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations." Despite the care with which this complex hierarchy of components is defined, "principles" (which include not only beliefs of fact and causation, but also of "rectitude") shade off into norms, "standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations." Norms, in turn, are difficult to distinguish from "specific prescriptions or proscriptions for action." This means that those issues under the umbrella of an international regime enjoy from a previous consensus about their

⁴ Indeed, through the bipolar diplomacy among US and the USSR, the process of negotiation on nuclear weapons over many years has built a dynamic of nuclear conflict prevention. From 1972 to 1979, with the SALT I Treaty this has had a significant result (McLean, 1986). It cannot be ignored as control mechanism of risk even in moments of maximum tension in the cold war at its peak. In 1979 the SALT II (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks II) Treaty between Carter and Brezhnev was agreed, but the tensions arising from the issue of so-called "Euro-missiles", and by the aftermath of the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the US Senate refused to ratify the treaty. So from a legal point of view, it never came into force. And yet, both parties adhered to its "spirit" until in 1987 the changed situation, Gorbachev hand, it became obsolete and was later transformed into the START (I and II) accords.

relevance between stakeholders that could affect the degree of politicization in the international arena. We think the existence of an international regime facilitates the politicization of certain IOs in the sense there is already a consensus on the prioritization of certain issues over other.

Much of the existent IOs in the international arena respond in part to this dynamic in the WPS, being an expression to diminish chaos and disorder and at the same time, IOs are constrained by this structural tension of order and disorder. We think this macro variable is crucial to understand the scenario where IOs politicization takes place but also it is a variable that frames the whole process driving the result.

At meso-level, it is also important to take into account IOs' own institutional setting. There are important differences among them in the settings of policy decision making; interaction with external stakeholders; or in their efficiency to achieve their goals and compel the state members to fulfill collective decisions. In other words, it can be a difference in terms of policy efficiency between IOs with capacity to take binding decisions and those that have narrow capacity of action, depending on rhetoric statements of intentions. Here we have examples of IOs such as the Union for the Mediterranean that historically has demonstrated low capacity to achieve agreements and then to take policy decisions, also there are other examples of IOs that have transformed over time from being low profile organizations to high and increasingly efficient such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Efficiency is also related to IO's authority and legitimacy, as well as with formal and functional recognition of this authority by external stakeholders. To understand IOs efficiency and its implication for politicization it is useful to take into account the contribution of Zürich on IOs' authority. Those that fulfill their policy functions as rule definition (regulation mandate); monitoring of national governments decisions; interpretation and enforcement are also perceived as more efficient (and with more authority) than other IOs with few capacity of decision; we stand that this efficiency criteria would lead to more politicization, towards more contestation but also likely towards more cooperation in implementing policy programs.

2.2 Social mobilization and confrontation

Politicization is not activated if there is not a confrontation, or different defending positions, about a particular issue, leading to the expansion of conflict to different

venues. IOs' has being always politicized by their own states member but what is different now from the 19th century is that this politicization has spread to the "international public sphere", if we can call this way to the growing citizens mobilization in public squares and world summits and conferences against IOs policy decisions. In this trend, transnational actors, more specifically NGOs, are seen as the responsible for changing the way the game is played in world politics (Anderson, 2000; Kaldor, 2008). They reshape the terms of international debate over several issues, redefining them or shedding light into an issue to gain international attention.

Their substantial irruption in the international sphere has realigned alliances and coalitions of powerful players, forming TANs. Their interaction with international authorities, looking to change policy outcomes at international and national level, has restructured the struggle for power, since they pressure to set the agenda and also to visualize issues by giving them moral and emotional force (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Joachim, 2007). They politicize the international debate opposing to existing views of IOs policy decisions by providing relevant information about a particular issue. In other words, they use expertise and symbolic politics to reframe the issue and leverage politics to gain important allies. Finally, they monitor the actions of international authorities to make them responsible for their actions, which mean also confrontation between different positions. They use accountability politics to signal who is responsible and who must solve the problem (Kriesi et al, 1995; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Tarrow, 2005). This mobilization respond to new characteristics of citizens with a global consciousness, concentrated in western democracies and expanding beyond, that constitutes an emergent global public opinion and that adopts the axiom think global act locally. One of the main roots of this trend is the environmental social mobilization and also several social movements of the global social justice movement, for example the international mobilization supporting the Zapatistas action against the Mexican government in 1994, when officially the implementation of North-America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) started.

The increasing number of NGOs seems to provide the vertebral column of the political mobilization of individuals on a transnational and global scale (Tarrow, 2005; Risse-Kappen 1995). In other words, "whether politicization occurs or not depends crucially on the existence of civil society structures that motivate and enable individuals to organize themselves and make their interests heard" (Rixen and Zangl, 2012: 367).

These structures endow civil society and other type of transnational actors to interact with international authorities, giving them the pace to pressure to set the agenda, framing issues, or implementing policy programs. Transnational actor's mobilization has questioning the central relevance of the state in international politics and the intergovernmental institutions that defend or represent national interests.

Actually, one of the reasons of the recent attention to IOs' politicization is the increasing pattern of interaction with transnational actors (ie private business or interest groups representing economic interests as well as NGOs representing other societal interests). One major example would be Greenpeace, a well know global NGO whose actions are self-explanatory, both in terms of global impact and transnational organization or Oxfam International in the field of international development.

In this line, the analysis of Tallberg et al (2013) systematically details the patterns of access of these transnational actors to IOs, and the variables that explain this access. But politicization goes beyond formal access to IO and it is also related at least to two patterns of interaction among international authorities and transnational actors: 1) a pattern of contentious politics manifested throughout outsiders' strategies, such as protest or boycotts; and 2) a pattern of mutual interest and partnership, which can be also depicted as an exchange relationship. This pattern can lead, at certain point, to politicization because it also drives attention to the issue. Contradictory, this pattern of interaction can lead to stable and institutionalized interaction reducing the degree of conflict or to the consolidation of iron triangles that reduce the possibility of considering certain issues or integrating new participants. The interaction can be also bi-directional, with episodes of conflict and cooperation through time.

2.3 The issue at stake: attention and visibility

Politicization happens when confrontation about an issue expands across venues involving different policy actors. This process involves the attention and visibility that an issue gets. Not all issues raise the same amount of attention of policy makers and not all issues are politicized as stated before. Thus politicization is related to attention dynamics over certain issues and with agenda setting, or which issues are prioritized or are considered to devote serious consideration in policy venues such as IOs. Attention to an issue varies depending on their scope and their attributes.

In general, issues are multidimensional and complex subjects. Perception of issue importance, abstractness and urgency varies within organizations. New information about an issue or emphasis in a new dimension may define the issue in different ways, making it appear more or less appropriate for agenda inclusion. In other words, the issues addressed by IOs are dynamic; we can expect that the meaning and interpretation of the issue may change through time.

In the international arena certain issues such as development, peace, human rights and environment enjoy favorable conditions to get into the agenda, since they are the kind of issues that generate consensus about their political importance, as we said before we can consider that there is an international regime on those issues that facilitates its politicization. A quite known example is the Ottawa and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which started as a process in 1991 when six NGOs launched a campaign to ban landmines and began organizing the so-called ICBL (The International Campaign to Ban Landmines). This process turned quickly into a “regime” and ended up in total success by 1999 when the Mine Ban Treaty becomes binding international law on 1 March 1999. The visibility of the issue results from the characteristics of the issue itself but also from the attention paid by different policy actors and its discussions in different policy venues.

Likewise, few voices arise against protection of human rights or against peace but still we can find differences in the attention devoted to these issues at the international arena and within particular IO. By the same token, we can find variations in the way those issues are politicized by IOs and transnational actors. For example, Carpenter has demonstrated that child born from sexual violence in conflicts do not get the same amount of attention within transnational advocacy networks’ agendas than other issues such as orphans child or soldier child (Carpenter, 2007). From this theoretical perspective, an expectation would be that IO’s politicization is conditioned by IO’s agenda capacity as well as by TANs’ agenda capacity. From the agenda setting perspective we know that attention is scarce and that the policy process and institutional structure are important variables to understand why some issues are prioritized and others do not (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 1995; Jones et al 2005; Wilkerson and Green Pedersen, 2006). The set of issues to which IOs can pay attention at one point is not open; institutional and cognitive constrictions put limits on what policy makers are able to accomplish.

A final example of this logic would be the issue of peace and state building. The focus on fragile states -those that are in process of recovering peace after a destructive civil war and lack of strong public institutions to achieve development- arises as part of the broader agenda of development and governance⁵. They are considered to be the farthest in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which is the main framework of international development since two decades ago. Fragile states have been defined this way by the OECD, transnational actors mainly NGOs and it is also adopted by those states joined under this label. According to the OECD “fragile and transitional situations comprise a broad spectrum of contexts –from one-party state of North Korea to war-torn Syria and relatively stable Bosnia and Herzegovina. Close to half -23 of 51- are middle-income states and economies, and many of them are rich in natural resources” (OECD, 2014: 15).

The issue gets visibility and become politicized when different policy actors oppose different views on the general debate about human security and development. Human security is one of those topics that nobody wants to show disagreement about their priority or their relevance, since it influence directly human surviving and human life conditions in general. Accordingly to Human Security Report Project “it is a relatively new concept, now widely used to describe the complex of interrelated threat associated with civil war genocide and the displacement of populations” (HSR, 2013). But still there is confrontation between NGOs, IOs, specially OECD, and the states concerned about how to solve the problem of peace and state building as one of the pillars of human security worldwide.

⁵ The OECD has been one of the main promoters of the international development agenda, being their members the main donors in the development aid system. The broad issue of development is one of the so-called global issues easily identified, an important amount of issues that have been politicized in the last decades in the international arena are related to this macro-issue (sustainable development, human rights, governance, corruption, poverty; immigration, war, etc.).

Concluding remarks

We know from previous research that there is an increasing politicization of the international institutions, specifically of IOs. States are still the main protagonist of the WPS but interdependence limits their capacity to solve vulnerabilities raised by the process of globalization. Also we know that IOs politicization is related to legitimation and recognition of authority, as well as increasing delegation from states to IOs of competences to supervise and manage transnational affairs. At the same time NGOs and other transnational actors also recognize them the authority and the responsibility over an increasing amount of policy issues. At the same time, we consider the notion of process as a key theoretical concept to operate with the issues involved in this Paper. Process meaning the dynamic/functional way in which the interaction among actors produces a certain type of outputs, as well as indicators to measure the efficiency of it related to the initial agenda setting.

Therefore in this paper we depict IOs politicization as a process where it is important to take into account the variables intervening: 1) the structural tension in the WPS that constrained by the parameters of order and disorder, related to the structural distribution of power worldwide. Also, here it is important to analyze the specific position and the institutional setting of each IO. 2) The patterns of interaction with transnational actors that lead to the expansion of the conflict or/and cooperation. This patterns can lead to long term establish and institutionalized relationship between stake holders, diminishing the degree of conflict and leading to the politics of mutual partnership and cooperation. 3) The issue at stake, as well as changes in the nature of a particular issue, is also an important variable of IOs politicization.

This leads us to another consideration, which is the issue of efficiency. It is crucial to this kind of processes of interaction among actors to have the capacity of measuring the output, meaning what is the result of the dynamics. Of course, this has to do with an approach based on a systemic perspective, in which the institutional and legal nature of actors (namely OIs, states and even NGOs) is not enough to understand the mechanics of the process. For instance, any comparative analysis of IOs shows, as one the key elements, the different level of efficiency they have. Efficiency could be defined as the capacity of an actor –in this kind of processes—to match the goals of its agenda (as well

as the common agenda) with the results of the process in every given moment of the process.

As we explore in the paper, the concept of international regime is indispensable for further development of any research in this field. We quote in the text, although as limited samples, several cases of international regimes and their evolution, should they end up as international regimes or pursue their evolution as self-sustained regimes. Therefore one last conclusion would be that future research must to be done to explain better how the conceptualization of IOs' politicization can be operationalized and apply to different cases in order to draw potential findings.

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ACRONYMS

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

European Union (EU)

Global Forum on Taxation (GFT)

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF)

International Organizations (IOs)

North-America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

Official Development Aid (OAD)

Transnational Networks of Activism (TANs)

World Political System (WPS)

World Trade Organization (WTO)

United Nations (UN)