

**Boomerang Politics and International Finance: Transnational civil society activism
and the contestation over debt cancellation**

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Abstract

This paper will consider the role of innovative political strategies and variations on boomerang politics in the contestation over the rules and practices governing international finance. Through two case studies, one on the civil society based campaign for the cancellation of third world debt and the other on the WEF as a site of contestation, this paper explores how the tactic of boomerang politics was used in the campaign for the cancellation of third world debt from its origins to the adoption of the MDRI at the 2005 G8. In conclusion the limitations of these innovative tactics will be discussed and what this might mean in the case of the ongoing financial crisis will be explored.

Boomerang Politics and International Finance: Transnational civil society activism and the contestation over debt cancellation

On May 10, 2010 the Globe and Mail proudly featured two British rock stars Bono and Bob Geldof as special guest editors. In the words of the editor John Stackhouse (2010) the purpose of this exercise was “speaking to Canadians through the Globe to try and put Africa back in our minds at the very moment the world is looking to Canada for leadership at the G8/G20 summits.” This initiative is an example of what Keck and Sikkink have termed “boomerang politics” and it is not the first and, almost certainly, will not be the last time this tactic has been employed by transnational activists seeking to shape the global agenda.

This paper examines how boomerang politics were employed in the campaign for the cancellation of third world debt in the period leading up to the adoption of the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) at the Gleneagles G8 in 2005. It tests the hypothesis that transnational civil society norm entrepreneurs working in transnational advocacy networks, employed a number of variations of boomerang politics to redefine the agenda of the possible with respect to the rules and practices governing debt cancellation. This question is explored through two case studies: first the broad based transnational civil society based campaign for debt cancellation, and second the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting as a site of contestation. Finally the strengths as well as the limitations of boomerang politics and how boomerang politics might matter in the ongoing financial, economic and political crisis will be briefly discussed.

What is boomerang politics?

Just as the technological and communications advances associated with globalization have facilitated the global expansion of international finance beyond the borders of the state, civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become able to expand and network in new and innovative ways. Keck and Sikkink (1998: 8-9) argue that transnational social movements and social movement organizations increasingly work together in transnational advocacy networks. They write:

The network concept travels well because it stresses fluid and open relations among committed and knowledgeable actors working in specialized issue areas. We call them advocacy networks because advocates plead the causes of others or defend a cause or proposition. Advocacy captures what is unique about these transnational networks: they are organized to promote causes, principled ideas, and norms and they often involve individuals advocating policy changes that cannot be easily linked to a rationalist understanding of their ‘interests’.

Advocacy networks reflect the rise of human rights politics and, as Sikkink (1998: 1) argues “virtually any explanation of the rise of human rights politics must take into account the political power of norms and ideas and the increasingly transnational way in which those ideals are carried and diffused”. Sikkink (1998:2) outlines two stages of norm acceptance: first “norm emergence” and second “norm cascade” when a given norm gains widespread acceptance. In this process “norm entrepreneurs” work to redefine and reframe the issues. Cognitive frames and frame resonance are important in influencing

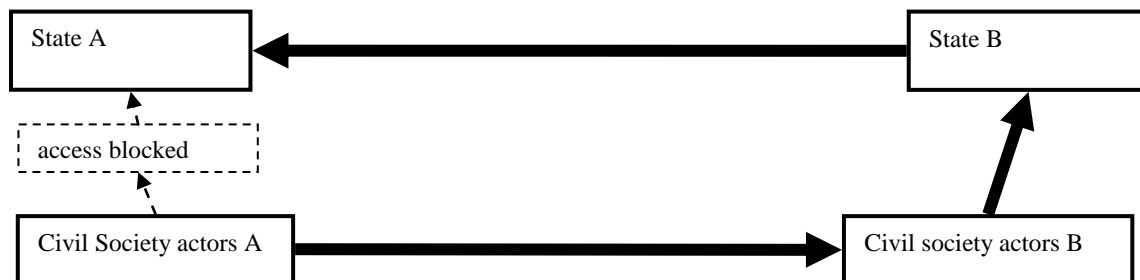
the broader public's understanding and support of the demands put forward by transnational advocacy networks (Keck and Sikkink, 1999: 5).

According to Sikkink the path to power can be circuitous for both norm entrepreneurs and transnational advocacy networks and the lines between "insiders" and outsiders" often blur. Sikkink (1993: 3) observes:

Although nongovernmental actors have played a particularly important role in the origins of human rights norms, it is often the collaboration among norms entrepreneurs inside of governments, those within international organizations, and nongovernmental actors that leads to the emergence of human rights norms.

Keck and Sikkink propose the concept of "boomerang" politics (see Figure 1), in which national civil society actors, finding the path to their goal blocked within their own state (State A), activate transnational civil society networks to apply pressure within other, more receptive states (i.e. State B) which, in turn, apply pressure to the reluctant state (State A).¹ In this way popular pressure "boomerangs" back on its target via an indirect route (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 12-13). As will be seen, boomerang politics, as well as a number of variations of this innovative strategy have been employed in the transnational campaign for the cancellation of third world debt.

Figure 1 Classic Boomerang Politics



The importance of transnational advocacy

In order to appreciate the power of reframing activities undertaken by norm entrepreneurs acting through transnational advocacy networks it is necessary to appreciate that power can be exerted not only in situations of obvious conflict but also in the case of hidden or latent conflicts. This paper draws on Lukes (1974) three dimensional view of power. Lukes' (1974: 25) presents three "views" of power. According to Lukes, the "one dimensional view of power" focuses on the power relations inherent in decision making, and observable overt conflict. The "two dimensional view of power" expands the concept to focus on decision making as well as non-decision making, issues as well as potential issues, and covert as well as overt conflict. Finally, the "three dimensional view of power" focuses on decision making as well as control of the political agenda including that control which may be achieved without making decisions. Therefore, it includes observable conflict, either overt or covert, and also includes latent conflicts (1974: 25). The three dimensional definition of power is important step in understanding the political contestation that underpins the construction

of the rules and practices governing international finance.² It emphasizes that power relations can be at work, even in the apparent absence of overt conflict. It helps to clarify the immense power inherent in economic structures and the political power that derives from the capacity to set the rules that govern these structures. Yet Lukes is always aware that the privilege to set the rules is won in a political contest either overt or latent.

While Lukes calls attention to three dimensional power Gramsci (1971), Polanyi (1957) and Foucault (1986), each in their own way, provide insights into how the assumptions which underpin three dimensional power relations might be challenged. Gramsci's work emphasizes the importance of social forces and provides an explanation of change in hegemonic systems. Similarly, although based in a different intellectual tradition, Polanyi's concept of movement and countermovement is a useful complement to the Gramscian concepts of hegemony and counterhegemony. The double movement underlines the power of societal norms in changing, as well as maintaining, economic systems (Polanyi, 1957; Birchfield, 1999). Combining Polanyi's concept of the double movement with Gramsci's concept of hegemony and counterhegemony is helpful in understanding change in the rules and practices governing international finance. Both Gramsci and Polanyi emphasize the power of ideas and the importance of consent in maintaining hegemonic systems. By conceptualizing consent as an outcome of social forces it becomes possible to consider not only how consent is constructed but also how it is undermined.

Finally, the governmentality approach underlines the power of ideas to shape, not only understanding, but also the very possibilities of action (Foucault, 1977). In Foucault, discursive networks are seen as networks of power and, in much of Foucault, there is a sense of being enmeshed and paralysed by power. But Foucault too has a theory of change. Foucault (1983: 225) argues that every instance of power brings with it an instance of resistance and this resistance may produce change in discursive formations. Foucault provides a complement to neo-Gramscian and Polanyian accounts because he points to the potential (and pitfalls) of individuals as agents of change as well as suggesting the possibility of multiple sites of resistance. As de Goede (2005: 152-153) argues, "just as power does not emanate from one clearly defined source, resistance may emerge from multiple sources in many possible ways".

This view of a multiplicity of sites and forms of challenge and contestation over the rules and practices governing international finance is helpful in understanding the following case studies. In finance networks of consent set the tone and create an intellectual climate in which certain actions are considered to be possible, while others remain off the agenda and therefore out of the question. In the following two case studies it will be seen how transnational political contestation and the tactic of boomerang politics called attention to the political aspects of what had up to then been understood as a primarily economic problem and in this way shaped the international response to the campaign for the cancellation of third world debt.

The civil society campaign for the cancellation of third world debt.

This case study examines the civil society based campaign for the cancellation of third world debt. In the period between 1980 and 2005 the ongoing contestation to determine the rules and practices governing international finance in general and debt cancellation in

particular changed profoundly. This had a great deal to do with the effective civil society based campaigns which challenged the monopoly of economic experts in defining these rules and eventually reframed the “proper” role of international finance. Civil society campaigners shifted the terrain on which these issues were contested from a narrow technical basis to one in which the human impact of financial policies assumed a central role in measuring success or failure. Transnational civil society campaigners invoked a broad interpretation of human rights, which included economic and social rights in addition to political and civil rights. By this measure international finance was found wanting.

The chronic third world debt crisis and the painful social impact of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in many debtor countries came to exemplify all that was wrong in the organization of financial relations. CSOs and NGOs in the developed as well as the developing world argued that economic and social justice demanded the cancellation of the crippling burden of debt that was stifling economic development in many debtor states. As CSOs and NGOs reframed the issues around debt cancellation, they produced a shift in discourse with respect to debt cancellation and a more critical view of international finance in general. Keck and Sikkink’s (1998: 12-13) concept of transnational advocacy network and their related concept of boomerang politics are useful in understanding the civil society based response to the third world debt crisis.

In the postwar era efforts to end poverty in the third world through modernization and development were partly rooted in the desire for self preservation of Western capitalist societies but they were also, at least in part, a reflection of idealistic values such as those put forward in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948). Evidence of this renewed idealism can also be found in the civil society and relief organizations of the time such as Oxfam, founded in 1942 and Christian Reconciliation in Europe, a forerunner of Christian Aid, established to respond to the needs of refugees in Europe after World War II. In the 1970s and early 1980s a growing number of influential NGOs and CSOs took an active role in a variety of development initiatives but, with a few exceptions, the baffling workings of international finance were left to the financial experts. While Marxist critiques of the negative effects of capitalist economic relations on human welfare were important in academic circles, they do not appear to have been internalized by most of the CSOs and NGOs active in the developed world at this time.

This changed in the following decades and for many NGOs and CSOs the campaign for the cancellation of third world debt became a way into challenging the rules and practices governing international finance. As the burden of debt grew and debt was rescheduled, this became conditional on the implementation of SAPs. For a number of NGOs and CSOs involved in the third world, the negative social impact of SAPs became obvious and unacceptable. In the period from 1982 to 1993, as the expert community in the international financial institutions was becoming more convinced that the way forward lay in structural adjustment and neoliberal policy prescriptions, many in the NGO community and in civil society at large were becoming increasingly disillusioned with this approach. At the same time as a neoliberal consensus was developing within the international financial institutions, a profound scepticism was growing within civil society both in the developing and developed world.

This scepticism was based on experience. As material conditions for many of the poorest deteriorated, development NGOs were frustrated as they saw their efforts

unravelling. For the citizens of debtor states, deteriorating economic conditions produced disappointed expectations. Political theories sceptical of capitalism such as Marxism and dependency theory provided a theoretical framework for analysing these events. The popular reaction, however, went beyond this analysis in the sense that it incorporated a sense of moral outrage. By focusing on the impact of debt and structural adjustment in human terms the effects of the international financial system were translated into a form that was comprehensible, not only to financial experts or academics, but also to the average person. In this way the debt crisis was reframed and the measure of success (and failure) redefined.

As early as 1976, domestic civil societies in debtor countries had mobilized in protest but in the period from 1982 to 1994 the civil society response started to take on a transnational character. In this faith affiliated groups led the way. These provided ready made networks between communities located both in the North and the South. For example, in 1973 GATT-fly, a Canadian faith based CSO was founded with the goal of understanding and, therefore, ameliorating the disparity between North and South. At first its focus was on trade but this rapidly grew to include an interest in finance (Dillon, 2008).

In the years from 1982 to 1994 a series of developments laid the foundations for future activism on debt and finance. In 1984 The Other Economic Forum (TOES) was established when a number of individuals and groups concerned with social justice and the environment decided there should be a “Peoples” response to the G7 summits. In 1986 the New Economics Foundation (NEF), a “think and do tank”, was founded by TOES (TOES, 2005a; Jubilee 2000, 2005a). At the same time a growing expertise on finance and debt was coupled with popular education and lobbying (GATT-fly, 1985). The Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) founded in Washington DC in 1963 and in 1973 the Transnational Institute (TNI), its “sister institution”, was founded as the international program of the IPS. The TNI developed into a “world-wide fellowship of committed scholar-activists”. By the late 1970s it was supporting research into the role of multilateral banks in the third world. In 1986 TNI established the Debt Project led by Jan Teunissen, a fellow of TNI (TNI, 2006a). In 1988 Susan George, a fellow of the TNI, wrote the influential book A Fate Worse than Debt. Furthermore NGOs continued to be established and campaigning NGOs continued to expand their activities. For example, by 1991, however, Oxfam UK started to devote substantial resources to policy, research and campaigning work aimed at addressing the structural causes of poverty in the South.

The period from 1982 to 1994 also marked the start of the use of the tactic of transnationally co-ordinated popular actions and demonstrations aimed at pressuring governments and institutions for change in the international financial order. In 1985, the G7 in Bonn was the scene of a counter conference and mass protests (Days of dissent, 2006a). In 1988, at the September meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) in West Berlin, a successful two day counter conference was followed by a peaceful street demonstration of between 50,000 and 80,000 people (Days of dissent, 2006a; George, S., 1988, 238). The 1988 demonstration is important because it targeted the international financial institutions (IFIs) directly. Similarly in this period the Ethiopian famine and the 1985 Live Aid campaign provided a model of how popular culture could be employed in human rights politics. Finally, the AIDS epidemic, which

emerged in the 1980s, politicized activists and organizations which eventually played an important part in the debt cancellation campaign.

In 1994, the 50th anniversary of the Bretton Woods institutions and attracted attention to both the successes and failures of the IFIs. As NGOs and CSOs working on international finance became increasingly good sources of information and analysis their input became increasingly welcome at the elite level. Leadership in Canada, the UK and the World Bank became increasingly receptive to the participation of NGOs and CSOs (Rayfuse, 2008; Montador, 2007; Foster, P., 2008; Anonymous International Public Servant, 2008). At the grassroots level popular education initiatives continued and this developed an increasingly informed and engaged public (Kane, 2007). At the same time the normative authority for future claims was being strengthened. In 1996 the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD adopted a “people centred” approach to development and articulated a series of goals. These goals later became the foundation for the eight UN Millennium Development Goals which became an important complement to the UDHR (OECD, 2006a:26, 45-50).

At the same time CSOs and NGOs continued their efforts to exert influence at the G7 meetings. In December 1994 the Halifax Initiative (HI) was formed by Canadian NGOs to ensure that demands for fundamental reform of the IFIs were high on the agenda of the G7 scheduled to be held in Halifax in 1995 (Halifax Initiative, 2006a). The Halifax Initiative illustrates the transnational and strategic nature of campaigning that was taking shape at this time. The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, a private foundation based in Michigan, USA, has provided stable funding to the HI since it was founded. This has allowed the HI to be independent and also to stick with complex issues without worrying about the constraints of fundraising (Foster, P., 2008). The Mott Foundation first became interested in international finance through its concern for environmental issues. In, in the 1980s it became aware that, in order to understand environmental issues associated with a number of controversial WB development projects, it was necessary to “follow the money”. In the mid 1990s, the Mott Foundation decided that it needed a strong G7 strategy and therefore decided to fund a number of NGOs campaigning on the IFIs in a number of G7 countries. Its funding for the HI came about as a result of this decision (Smithey, 2008).

Oxfam continued to extend and politicize its operations. In 1996, in its first report on the impact of SAPs in Latin America and the Caribbean, Oxfam International, in an effort to better communicate their findings to the IFIs, deliberately employed the language and style of the IFI policy elites. This marked an important transition because, even though the findings of the report were condemned by both the IMF and the WB, they took Oxfam’s analysis seriously. This marked the beginning of Oxfam’s influence on the WB and, to a lesser extent, the IMF (Fried, 2008).

April 1996 saw the official launch of the Jubilee 2000 campaign in the UK. In 1997 Jubilee 2000/USA was established (Jubilee USA, 2006a). The German Jubilee campaign *Erlaussjahr* was launched in September 1997 and the Scottish campaign launched in October (Jubilee Research, 2007a). The Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative (CEJI) was formed in 1998. At the same time as Jubilee 2000 was networking in the developed world a number of debt advocacy networks were active in the South. For example in 1996 the Uganda Debt Network (UDN) was formed (UDN, 2006a). It was a coalition of local and international NGOs designed to mobilize Ugandan civil society to engage in the

national debate on Uganda's debt problem. At this time most Ugandans regarded the issue of external debt as a government problem that was too complex for ordinary citizens to understand. International NGOs³ supported UDN with funding and capacity building. This boosted the credibility of the UDN in national debates and, eventually, the Ugandan government began to see civil society groups as allies in the effort to accelerate debt relief (Collins et al, 2001: 145).

By 1996 CSOs and NGOs had learnt to network and apply effective political pressure to state and international officials. Popular education initiatives had demystified finance and lay individuals felt empowered to hold opinions on debt cancellation. Campaigning CSOs and NGOs put the moral and normative aspects of the third world debt crisis on the public agenda (Dillon, 2008; Kane, 2007; Tomlinson, 2008). Furthermore CSOs and NGOs learnt to speak the language of international policy elites and became respected for their substantial expertise (Rayfuse, 2008; Tomlinson, 2008). This respect enhanced their access and allowed them to make their case at the highest level.

When, in July 1997, the Asian financial crisis started in Thailand, spread through East Asia and eventually threatened financial stability in Brazil and Russia, in financial terms this was another brush with global financial disaster similar in impact to the Mexican financial crisis of 1982. By 1997 the IMF was well practiced in dealing with countries experiencing financial crises however, in 1997 the steps the IMF took in Asia provoked a split in expert opinion within the IFIs.⁴ After 1997 there were two parallel reform movements at work in international finance. One was located in NGOs and CSOs and had economic justice and debt cancellation as its focus. The other was centered in the community of experts and policy makers connected to the IFIs and, whatever their view on the Washington consensus, "reforming the international financial architecture" became a top priority. The Asian Crisis had driven home the highly precarious state of the globalized and deregulated international financial system. Therefore, almost everyone agreed that the international financial system needed to be reformed, but just how this would be accomplished and on whose terms remained open to debate.

In 1998 the G8 in Birmingham was once again transformed into an important site of popular protest. At the summit the Jubilee 2000 coalition mobilized 70,000 people in peaceful protest in the streets of Birmingham (Jubilee Debt Campaign, 2005b). Demonstrators formed a human chain to recall the importance of breaking the chains of debt, handed over a petition of 1.5 million signatures, (Jubilee Research, 2006b) and Jubilee organizers met with British Prime Minister Tony Blair (Jubilee 2000, 2006a). One Canadian government official recalled how, in the lead up to Birmingham, a series of meetings between Canadian officials and Canadian NGOs and CSOs had opened up the official thinking process. Also, the church based networks within Canada had also been active and she recalled how a number of officials would come to work on Monday wanting to know what was being done about third world debt because they had been lectured about it from the pulpit the previous day (Kane, 2007).

After Birmingham the debt cancellation campaign took off as a large scale international campaign. Two years later there were Jubilee collectives in 66 countries and other debt cancellation networks had been formed in other northern countries. These networks met at seminars, international conferences and at demonstrations (CADTM, 2006a). In November 1999, Jubilee South was formally constituted at the South-South summit in Johannesburg (Jubilee South, 2006a). The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries

(HIPC) initiative which gave a select group of debtors relief on their multilateral debt, had been formally adopted at the WB/IMF meeting in the fall of 1996 (WB, 2007a). At the Cologne G8 in 1999, the 1996 HIPC debt relief initiative was enhanced to provide deeper and more rapid relief to a wider group of countries and to enhance links to poverty reduction and social programs (WB, 2007b; IMF, 2007a). In this process the Canadian government was a leader in pressing for enhancements. Both the Canadian Prime Minister Chrétien and Finance Minister Martin were vocal advocates for debt cancellation. Their support provides evidence of the impact of the efforts of the CSOs and NGOs in advocating on this issue in Canada (WB, 1999a; Standing Committee on Finance 1999a; CCCB, 1999a; Finance Canada, 2005a; Foster, P., 2008; Rayfuse, 2008).

On June 19, 50,000 Jubilee 2000 supporters demonstrated to demand the G8 leaders adopt deeper cuts to debt than they had accepted in the Cologne Debt Initiative, also known as HIPC2, announced the previous day. A Jubilee 2000 delegation with representatives from each continent, including Bono and the Archbishop Oscar Rodrigues from Honduras, met with the German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder to underscore these demands (Collins et al, 2001: 139). At Cologne Jubilee 2000 once again presented their petition for debt cancellation. By this time it had 17 million signatures (Jubilee Research, 2006b; Kairos, 2003).⁵ Throughout the summer and fall of 1999 and 2000 popular pressure continued to build culminating in the demonstrations in Seattle in November 2000.

The “Battle in Seattle” attracted unprecedented popular attention and became a turning point in the public’s imagination. The protests in Seattle attracted the public’s attention and, in the following year, campaigners worked hard to take advantage of this. Oxfam believed Seattle had caused the public to “wake up” to injustice and had increased support for Oxfam’s campaign for fair trade (OxfamUK, 2006a). After the success of the Seattle protests, the technique of targeting major world meetings and using them as a stage to present the alterglobalization message continued. After Seattle a norm cascade (Sikkink, 1998:2) started to develop as government representatives and members of the business community increasingly expressed concerns similar to those expressed by debt cancellation campaigners. In November 2001 then Finance Minister Paul Martin expressed his view that the “crushing burden of debt” should be lifted from the “shoulders of the poorest of the poor” (Finance Canada, 2005b). In his years as finance minister Martin became increasingly interested in international finance and his involvement made a huge difference with respect to NGO and CSO access to decision makers. Members of the NGOs and CSOs campaigning for debt cancellation and reform of international finance were increasingly included in high level discussions (Anonymous International Public Servant, 2008; Rayfuse, 2008; Culpeper, 2008; Tomlinson, 2008).

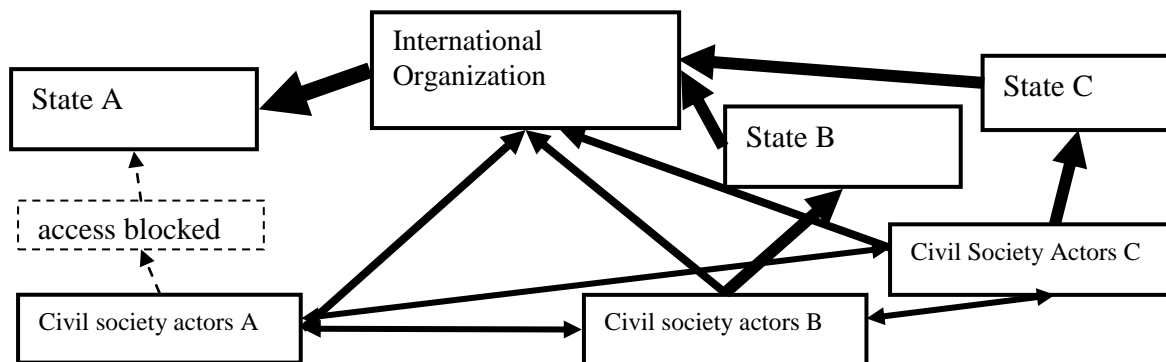
NGOs and CSOs recognized the usefulness of the G8 in shaping IMF and WB policy. To this end, they lobbied actively in the lead up meetings, especially the meetings of the G7 finance ministers, and made every effort to ensure their views were well represented to the G8 participants (Fried, 2008; Culpeper, 2008; Rayfuse, 2008). They worked to put a “human face” on the impact of debt rescheduling and economic restructuring in the third world and to bring into question the assumption that market discipline and financial liberalization were the best way to maximize welfare. Furthermore, they made the links between financial rules and practices and human rights outcomes clear and accessible to interested publics in the developing, as well as the developed, world. They mobilized

public opinion and, not only brought the rules into question, but highlighted the political nature of the process which generated these rules. By emphasizing that the rules governing international finance were political constructions, the campaigns opened the door to renegotiating these rules in a manner that would take into account specific human rights impacts. Campaigners reframed the question and shifted the terms of the debate to redefine the measure of success.

There has been substantial debt rescheduling and cancellation over the years but it is important to recognize that, originally, this had little to do with normative considerations. It was not until 1999, when HIPC 2 was adopted at the Cologne G8 that the normative concerns started to have an effect. After 1999 a growing unease with the human costs of the debt crisis became apparent. From then on there was growing concern with the social impact of debt and structural adjustment policies even in official circles and within the IMF (2006b). Debt cancellation campaigners employed a number of variations on classic

Figure 2 Boomerang Politics Variation 1

Transnational advocacy networks work through states and international organizations to target unresponsive state i.e. high level lobbying at G7/G8.



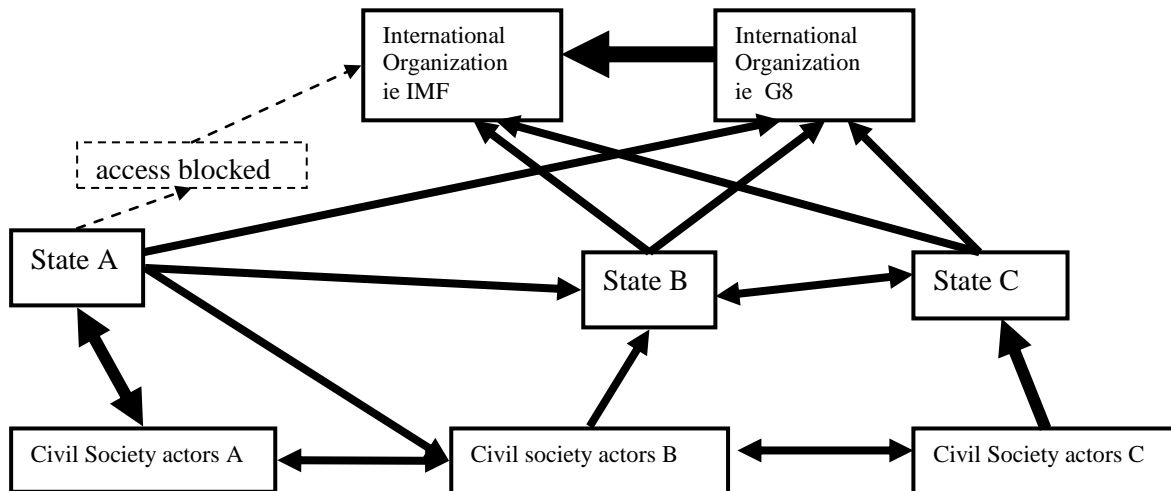
boomerang politics to achieve this. In one variation civil society actors working in transnational advocacy networks target a number of key states (state B, state C) simultaneously in order to get a responsive international organization to exert pressure on state A (See Figure 2). An example of this is the high level lobbying efforts that took place at the G8 meetings in 2002 and 2005.

In another variation, where both civil society actors and state actors seek the same policy outcome but find their way blocked by an unresponsive international organization, they may join together and work to influence another influential international organization (See Figure 3). For example, this diagrams the way high level lobbying within the G8 was able to exert pressure on the IFIs.

As noted above, many NGOs and CSOs came to recognize the potential of the G8 as a key moment to influence the IMF and the WB and they brought considerable expertise and analytic strength to bear in lobbying key actors in member states. By 1998 many NGOs had learnt how to effectively communicate with policy elites and had become respected participants in the process generating a norm cascade around putting human factors, not just economic indicators at the center of development (UNDP, 2009; UN, 2003; Millennium Project, 2006).

Figure 3 Boomerang Politics Variation 2

Transnational advocacy networks and states target an inaccessible international organization through another international organization ie. When civil society actors and state actors seek the same policy but access is blocked by an unwilling international organization



Debt cancellation became explicitly linked with fighting poverty and the G8 became an important site of change. In Okinawa at the 2000 G8, for the first time leaders from the debtor countries were included in informal discussions about debt relief (BBC, 2000). Two years later at Kananaskis the G8 African Action plan was adopted. The discussions continued at subsequent G8 meetings culminating in the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) in 2005. By the spring of 2005 support for debt cancellation was the new consensus (Engler, 2005b; Jubilee Debt Campaign, 2006a).

Debt cancellation campaigners found their reframing of the issue of debt particularly resonant due to a longstanding ambivalence or even disapproval of finance which is shared by many cultures (see de Goede, 2005: 45-87, 108; Chernow, 1990: 375-377). Furthermore, campaigners deliberately tailored their demands for debt cancellation to powerful societal norms in specific societies. For example, Jubilee USA, the American member of the Jubilee 2000 network, adopted the slogan “Break the chains of debt” and referred to the condition of the debtor nations of the third world as “debt slavery”. The linkage between debt and slavery was a particularly powerful image for the American public.

In this campaign boomerang politics was important in changing the process of decision making to include alternative perspectives and actors. Norm entrepreneurs participated in advocacy networks at domestic, international and transnational levels, and worked to persuade actors at all levels to adopt a new cognitive framework. Sympathetic norm entrepreneurs in government, international organizations, and civil society organizations collaborated to influence the agenda. Transnational networks cultivated the support of powerful state actors as they sought to achieve change in the policies of the G8 and the IMF with respect to debt cancellation. When CSO and NGO networks found their conventional lines of influence blocked, for example as in the case of a powerless

state or an unresponsive state or even hostile state, they pursued variations on boomerang politics to exert pressure on more responsive states and international organizations. This case study demonstrates how transnational advocacy networks made excellent use of boomerang politics in the campaign for the cancellation of third world debt. The next case study considers the case of the World Economic Forum (WEF) as a site of innovative political contestation and civil society activism.

The World Economic Forum annual meeting as a site of contestation

At first glance the World Economic Forum (WEF), whose high powered membership gathers each winter at Davos, Switzerland, appears to be an elite club devoted to organizing the world in the interests of big business and free market economics, yet, as the years have passed since its inception in 1971, the WEF has embraced an increasingly public role and normative agenda. This case study analyses the WEF annual meeting as a site of innovative political contestation in the campaign for the cancellation of third world debt and considers how the concept of transnational advocacy network might apply in the case of the WEF. Each year a kind of “conventional wisdom” comes out of Davos and this case study will briefly examine how shifts in the discourse of the WEF have both reframed the global agenda (Lukes, 1974; Keck and Sikkink, 1998) as well as enhanced the effectiveness of innovative political strategies such as “boomerang politics” (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 12-13). The ongoing, overarching project of the WEF is to make the world safe for capitalism, one way or the other. But which vision of capitalism the WEF seeks to promote varies with time and place and within the WEF the optimal means of achieving its stated goals has been hotly, but politely, contested.⁶

The WEF started off with an agenda focused on introducing the European business elite to American management techniques but, by 2005, it had been transformed into a forum which drew participants from around the world and in which the business agenda, while still important, shared space with a substantial social and ethical focus. In the period before 1989 the conventional wisdom at the WEF held that the rules and practices governing economic relations were a given. At the time the goal was to work within the existing rules, not reform them. Even early on however, the WEF leadership made an effort to include a few dissenting voices. They invited celebrated individuals to Davos, not only to enhance the international prestige of the WEF, but also to help communicate a message that might be considered somewhat beyond the business emphasis of the forum. These non-business celebrities included academics, politicians, representatives of international institutions, media leaders, artists and Nobel Laureates (Crane, 1988a; Crane, 1989b). But while business participants were exposed to their messages, there is little evidence that it spurred them to action. While participants became aware of new information on a variety of topics, at this time they felt little responsibility to act on this information.

At Davos in the 1980s the third world debt crisis was seen in primarily technical terms with little discussion of the impact of domestic austerity programs on the citizens of debtor states (Carr, 1986). In 1987 Daniel Cohn-Bendit, one of the dissenting voices invited by the WEF to enrich the discussion, first made a clear link between the debt crisis and the moral responsibility of the developed world but even he concluded his critique by connecting the moral argument with a pragmatic one: “If we don’t solve the problem, there will be more violence and violence is bad for business” (Stevens, 1987a).

This is an early example of the kind of “two track” - moral and pragmatic - argument that in later years typified the discussion around debt cancellation at Davos. In 1987, however, the moral argument fell on deaf ears at Davos.

By 1989 at the WEF the belief that neoliberal policy prescriptions of privatisation, deregulation, and economic restructuring would eventually provide a lasting way for debtor states to grow out of the debt crisis was starting to take hold. At the time “debt forgiveness” was employed as a part of the toolkit for managing the global economy but it was not associated with any normative project. Rather it was seen as a form of default, an emotionally neutral side effect of the incorrect assessment of financial risk. The fall of the Berlin wall and the ongoing implosion of the Soviet Union reinforced the ideological shift towards neoliberalism. At Davos the enthusiastic participation of new converts from the emerging economies of Russia and Eastern Europe added to the sense that free market capitalism had won the day. By 1990 the move from Keynes to Hayek seemed complete, however, at Davos the neoliberal consensus did not last.

Arguably, the turn towards neoliberalism at Davos in the early 1990s was the result of external events and shifts in economic fashions. However, the subsequent challenges to neoliberalism at Davos were largely the result of the intellectual leadership of the WEF. Through the power of communication and invitation Klaus Schwab could, and literally did, set the agenda at Davos. Before 1993 Klaus Schwab appeared first and foremost as an excellent host and an efficient manager. In 1993, however, he stepped into the role of a visionary (Schwab, 1993a: 100). The next year, in his opening address, he developed this arguing that “what we need now is to extend entrepreneurship to politics, economics and social interaction. Entrepreneurship does not mean just adapting to change, it means provoking change in a positive direction ... for the benefit of mankind” (Schwab, 1994a: 112).

On January 26, 1995 Klaus Schwab and Malcolm MacLaren published an op-ed piece in the International Herald Tribune. These editorials, which for several years appeared just before the start of the Davos meeting, were calculated to highlight certain issues and set the tone of meeting. In this piece their growing concern with the impact of economic liberalization is apparent (Schwab and MacLaren, 1995). The next year the Schwab and Smadja (1996) editorial was called “Start taking the backlash against globalization seriously”. In this they emphasized that the benefits of markets must be considered in conjunction with their social impact. Although largely pro-market in tone, this editorial opened the door to a more values-based discussion of social issues at Davos (Thorsell, 1996a). By 1996, the Washington consensus was no longer the consensus at Davos yet, at the same time as neoliberal policies were being criticized in one panel, in other parts of the forum the success of neoliberal policies in New Zealand, the new “South Pacific Tiger”, was being lauded (Thorsell, 1996a; Elliot, 1996a; Economist 1996a; Metcalfe, 1996a).

In 1997 the WEF leadership continued to bring social issues and the human impact of economic relations to the forefront of the discussion at Davos (Schwab and Smadja, 1997a; Schwab and Smadja, 1997b). In the same year George Soros (1997) published an article also timed to coincide with the Davos meeting. His concerns, which Soros repeated at Davos, presented a profound challenge to the neoliberal view of the proper market/society relationship. But at the 1997 meeting, even as the market model started to come under increased scrutiny, most financial experts continued to believe that neoliberal

policy prescriptions provided the best way to achieve progress. Bringing debtor states more fully into the world economy by enforcing market discipline continued to be seen as the best means of addressing inequality and under development. Although this view was being increasingly challenged outside of the meeting, inside Davos only a few had started to openly question the conventional wisdom.

However the Asian financial crisis, which emerged in July 1997 several months after the WEF annual meeting, blindsided the Davos community (WEF, 1997b: 31) and, as the crisis spread around the world, a number of important opinion leaders became increasingly critical of the Washington consensus and the policy prescriptions of the IMF. The 1997 Asian financial crisis brought the international financial system to the top of the Davos agenda. Financial instability and international debt became linked with concerns about the unequal benefits of economic globalization. At Davos this resonated with the concerns that had been previously expressed by the WEF leadership.

In 1998 and 1999 as the Asian financial crisis developed into the Russian financial meltdown, the global financial system preoccupied the Davos meetings (WEF, 1998c: 10). Supporters of the neoliberal approach had held up the Asian economic “miracle” as a model for the rest of the world to follow and, when it collapsed like a pack of cards, this shook the Davos worldview (Elliot, 1998b; Hutton, 1998a). As noted earlier, Jeffrey Sachs, Joseph Stiglitz, and George Soros, three important opinion leaders at the WEF, were vocal in their criticism of the global financial system and the role of the IMF in responding to the crisis. They described liberalized financial markets as inherently unstable and criticised the IMF for its high handed approach as well as the incompetence of its policies. (Soros, 1998; Sachs, 1998a; Elliot, 1998a; Uchitelle, 1998b; South China Morning Post, 1999b). But in 1998 at Davos this view was far from unanimous (Elliot, 1998b; Economist, 1998a; Mehta, 1998a). By 1999 finance was increasingly linked with questions of economic justice at Davos and a number of participants had become concerned that an increasingly deregulated international financial system had a disproportionately negative impact on the developing world. At the WEF many were highly critical of the policies of the IMF and argued that the Asian crisis proved that the neoliberal model of development had failed (WEF, 1999c: 20; Vallyelly, 1999a; Sachs, 1998a). Finally, in a break with previous meetings, many representatives from developing countries no longer expressed their faith in the benefits of liberalization but instead expressed their own concerns with the impact of the deregulated international financial system (Kohli, 1999a; South China Post, 1999a).

One week after the 1999 WEF, G7 finance ministers meeting in Bonn considered three new proposals for more generous help to developing countries, and in June of that year the Cologne Debt Initiative was launched at the G8 (Elliot, 1999a). This process was spurred on by public pressure for reform of the debt relief process led by high profile campaigning organizations such as Jubilee 2000 and Oxfam (Elliot, 1999a). For years CSOs and NGOs had lobbied government leaders in the G7 countries. In 1999 the support of Gerhard Schröder, chancellor of Germany and the head of the G8 host government and a number of like minded representatives from the US, UK and Canada, many of whom were in attendance in Davos in 1999, was crucial to the success of this initiative.

The demonstrations in Seattle in the fall of 1999 had an important impact on the agenda of the WEF. At the following meeting in 2000 the WEF invited representatives

from a number of CSOs and NGOs to attend Davos. Over the next five years, the WEF continued to provide a space for formal and informal discussions between a number of individuals and representatives of organizations that otherwise would not encounter each other in a non-confrontational setting. After 2000 critics of neoliberal globalization were able to express their views inside, as well as outside, the meeting.

Overtime the leadership of the WEF expanded the scope of the WEF to include an increasing number of issues that one would have previously defined as beyond the scope of business. In spite of the renewed focus on security which took hold in much of the rest of the world after the events of September 11, 2001, at Davos the normative and social aspects of economic globalization became more important each year. Davos shifted from a forum designed to help business understand the global business environment to an organization playing a part in shaping the global agenda. In 2001 inside Davos representatives of NGOs pressed the point home. Justin Forsyth of Oxfam emphasized that some debtor countries were still spending more on debt service than on their entire health, education and development budgets combined (Hieber, 2001). Representatives of IFIs were “contrite” (Carnegy, 2001a). By 2002 debt relief had become a prominent issue on the WEF agenda and it was increasingly framed as a necessary step in alleviating poverty and disease. In the opening plenary Bono made the link between AIDS and the urgent need for debt relief (WEF, 2002e). In a later session Bono and Sachs reinforced this message (WEF, 2002g). Kofi Annan spoke out in favour of debt cancellation (Annan, 2002a). Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin announced Canada’s plans to “lighten Africa’s choking debt load” (WEF, 2002f). At Davos many were eager to join the cause (Barrett, 2002). In 2003 and 2004 the momentum towards debt cancellation continued to build.

In 2005 the Davos meeting was structured to give targeted support to the agenda the UK had adopted as the chair of the G8 and debt cancellation was an important part of this (Schwab, 2005a: 3). On the second day the WEF had scheduled two plenary sessions calculated to push Africa to the top of the agenda: in the morning “Africa and the G8: Rhetoric or action?” and in the afternoon “Getting the MDGs back on Track” (WEF, 2005b: 6-9). In the first session Bono, UK Prime Minister Blair, former US President Clinton, Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates, South African President Thabo Mbeki, and Nigerian President Benjamin Obasanjo, took their place on the stage to call for action (WEF, 2005b: 6-7).⁷ By 2005 the WEF had become, for better or worse, what one commentator called a “facipulator”, a combination of facilitator and manipulator, and the annual Meeting at Davos was a key site in this campaign (Zadek, 2005a)

Although finance and debt became ever more important topics at Davos, increasingly, they were addressed in separate panels. In the period from 2000 to 2005 there was a tension between panels with a technical orientation and those panels which emphasised economic justice and called for debt cancellation. This split points to the strength but also the weaknesses of the tactic of boomerang politics. Even at the 2005 meeting, when an agenda focused on development and social responsibility dominated at Davos, a number of panels continued to look at financial issues in isolation. For example, the panels on the hedge fund industry were concerned primarily with whether hedge funds could continue to be engines of wealth creation or if they might require enhanced regulation to avoid collapse. Even against the background of the high profile panels on global welfare which had taken place at Davos the previous day in these panels there was

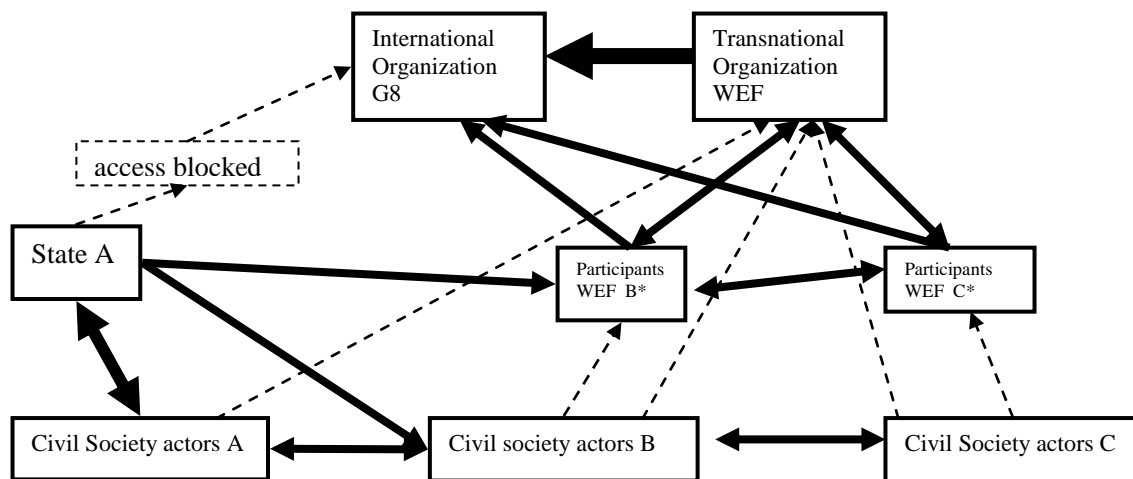
no mention of the impact on global welfare a collapse of the hedge funds might entail (WEF, 2005k; WEF, 2005b: 6-7). However, in the period from 2000-2005 another kind of financial panel concerned with economic justice and debt cancellation began to take off at Davos. In these panels the human costs of economic globalization and the moral responsibilities of business were invoked.

The WEF annual meeting was particularly well positioned to influence the G8 agenda with respect to financial policy. Not only did most of the G8 finance ministers, central bankers, and representatives of the IFIs attend Davos but also a G7 finance ministers meeting traditionally took place shortly afterwards. For years Davos had provided a convenient place to lay informal foundations for G8 initiatives. Furthermore at Davos

Figure 4 Boomerang Politics Variation 3

Transnational advocacy networks and states target an international organization i.e. The G8 through a transnational organization i.e. The World Economic Forum.

*WEF Participants include state and non-state actors



opinion leaders in the business elite could be informally consulted and their support recruited. Through its power to set the agenda at Davos the leadership of the WEF was in a position to influence the atmosphere in which this informal foundation could be developed. This was the case in 2005 and, in its annual report, the WEF was pleased to conclude:

The energy generated on day one of the Annual Meeting continues to reverberate across Africa and around the world. During the summer – as the Live 8 series of international concerts kept momentum strong – this energy ensured that Africa, debt relief, trade and global poverty held centre stage at the G-8 meeting in Gleneagles and beyond (WEF, 2005b: 6-7)

By the time the G8 met in Gleneagles in July 2005, it was almost impossible to adopt a public position critical of debt cancellation. As intended support for debt cancellation gained momentum at Davos (Mulvey, 2005a). While a large part of the credit for the

shift in the attitudes toward debt cancellation must go to the broad based civil society campaigners who successfully challenged the conventional wisdom that the morally correct course of action was to repay debts and reframed the conventional wisdom so that, under certain circumstances it was seen as morally abhorrent to demand debt repayment, the contestation which took place at Davos also played an important part in achieving this.

At the annual meeting the “two track” argument was made with increasing frequency. According to this argument, embracing social responsibility and initiatives such as debt cancellation was the “right” thing to do it but was also good business practice. As early as 1996 Schwab and Smadja had written about the need to avoid the “backlash against capitalism” but, over time, values came to play a larger part in this argument. At Davos debt cancellation and anti poverty campaigners created a growing sense of uneasiness with being wealthy and privileged in a world of extreme poverty. They reframed the argument so that wealth was no longer seen as a reward for hard work or a sign of divine approval. For some this uneasiness was linked to traditional faith values and the emphasized by the declarations of religious leaders. For others, with a more secular approach, human rights, economic justice and empathy provided a way into questioning the existing arrangements. These criticisms had a powerful cultural resonance and were not easy to dismiss.

At Davos agents played an important part in putting the issues into context in new ways and in this way reshaping the discourse. Agents are important in creating “facts” (Jacobsen, 2003:58- 59) and conflict over the ‘facts’ takes place at a multiplicity of sites including the WEF. When the WEF leadership extended invitations to representatives of NGOs and other activists, this allowed them to be heard in a new way by members of the business elite. Since the WEF was designed as an informal forum for the communication and the exchange of ideas (albeit the ideas of a limited elite) and not for the binding negotiation of international agreements, there were fewer constraints on the WEF than existed in many other international or transnational meetings. Yet, due to the power or the influence of the participants, pronouncements made at Davos carry weight in the forum as well as on the international scene. Just as Jubilee 2000 reframed the debt cancellation debate in terms of what had to be accomplished but did not prescribe exactly how this was to be achieved, the multitude of civil society organizations and social movements involved in this period inspired a vision of the possibility of a “better” world while leaving the exact terms of how this might be achieved somewhat open ended. This challenge proved irresistible to many at Davos and, for better or worse, inspired them to set about doing their bit to achieve this. The WEF provided an ideal site to challenge orthodoxies and reframe issues, a fact which was not lost on its leadership nor on the NGOs and CSOs campaigning for reform.

By the late 1990s CSOs and NGOs were proceeding on two fronts simultaneously. They campaigned at the grassroots level and lobbied at the elite level. Sometimes the two worlds intersected. As discussed in the first case study within a number of creditor states, representatives of campaigning NGOs had learned to present their concerns in the language of government. They took an active role in lobbying key decisions makers and, when these decision makers attended Davos, they brought with them a more broadly informed perspective. Furthermore, after 2000, when representatives from civil society were included at Davos this enhanced the capacity of these agents to exert influence on

other participants. Finally, the pressure of the campaigning taking place in the world at large and the forces challenging the orthodoxy of neoliberalism became increasingly visible to those attending Davos.

NGOs and international policy institutes like the TNI played an important part in preparing the ground for debt cancellation by providing an alternative source of expert analysis. A measure of their success can be found in the fact that while arguments in favour of free trade as a means to eliminate global poverty through the discipline of the market were popular at Davos in 2005, at the same time there was almost unanimous agreement that, in international finance, market discipline must be moderated by debt cancellation. This is evidence of the success of the lobbying efforts of Jubilee 2000 and other debt cancellation campaigners in reframing the issue and exerting political pressure as well as moral suasion at Davos. At the Davos meeting a number of state leaders and finance ministers, who had been previously influenced by transnational advocacy networks, acting through their domestic constituencies, became important opinion leaders in the transnational setting.

In the case of the WEF, the impact of boomerang politics increased exponentially with the number of potentially effective pressure points available at the Davos meeting and the Forum's other activities. In this case "ricochet politics" might be a more apt term but, although the challenge of controlling and directing the path of a given intervention became correspondingly difficult, the tactic remained appealing because its potential impact was high. At Davos opinion leaders became "norm entrepreneurs" and were instrumental in presenting these ideas to the WEF membership in the language they understood and respected. Alternative approaches to the rules governing the global economy achieved a level of legitimacy among many individuals in attendance. This resulted in a norm cascade at Davos and this, in turn, eased the progress of these approaches to being accepted as potential alternatives when presented in other international venues and enhanced support for reforms to the rules governing debt cancellation.

At Davos many business participants developed a more nuanced and sophisticated view of capitalism and a broader understanding of the challenges facing the capitalist system. For many at Davos success was based on material success but there was also a normative element included in this. Many WEF participants shared a desire to take pride, not just as the CEOs of profitable enterprises but also, in a broader sense, to take pride in themselves as responsible human beings making an important contribution to the global community. At Davos, it has always been important to be able to hold one's head up and be proud of one's actions. After 1997 a growing number of norm entrepreneurs in attendance at Davos made it difficult for many participants to ignore certain negative outcomes associated with the rigid application of market based solutions. Outside the meeting CSOs and NGOs campaigned and lobbied to drive this point home and as the search for the "human face" of capitalism moved onto the Davos agenda, the force of their argument increased. Over time the importance of normative considerations as part of the definition of being "truly successful" grew at Davos. As long as business participants subscribed to the view that, in the long run, free markets would maximize global welfare it was easier to accept negative short term outcomes but, when this ideological certainty was brought into question at Davos, it became more difficult for business participants to feel they were occupying the moral high ground simply by

fulfilling their narrowly defined responsibilities in a business sense. This reframed the issues, started the debate around corporate social responsibility, and eventually led to the shift in discourse which produced support for debt cancellation.

Conclusion

This paper has shown how transnational advocacy networks have used the tactic of boomerang politics to exert effective political pressure on states and influenced international political outcomes with respect to the policies governing the cancellation of third world debt. Two case studies, one at the popular level and one at the elite level have shown that these two levels are connected and how both complement each other in the process of changing the discourse and challenge the fundamental assumptions on which the rules and practices governing finance are constructed. Reframing the issue of debt cancellation and reshaping the agenda to explicitly include the human impact of debt and structural adjustment changed the political discourse around debt and this generated a new consensus which supported the cancellation of third world debt and led to the adoption of the MDRI in 2005.

In many ways however, this case is exceptional. First, the campaign for the cancellation of third world debt provided an excellent opportunity for reframing. Finance, debt and economic justice are culturally and emotionally resonant issues. Debt, when linked to poverty and social justice is also a traditional area of responsibility and concern for faith groups, many of which have a longstanding history of cultivating transnational networks. Second, third world debt cancellation could be achieved at relatively little cost to its supporters in the developed world and therefore there were relatively few obstacles to its political popularity among both electorates and elites.

In contrast, in the present ongoing crisis it is more difficult to reframe the issues. For many the question of financial regulation succeeds in being intellectually baffling and profoundly boring at the same time. Furthermore the present crisis is proving more difficult to reframe in terms of economic justice than the third world debt crisis. In many NGOs and CSOs much of the substantial expertise that focused on the rules and practices governing international finance is focused on development and global antipoverty campaigns. In the developed world there is no shortage of popular anger and there is a sense that financial elites have seriously mismanaged their responsibilities but confusion and political exhaustion reign. Arriving at an informed opinion on the problems as well as on the possible responses requires time and energy, all of which are in short supply at the electorates face losing homes, cuts in benefits and chronic unemployment. At present NGOs and CSOs appear unable to present a convincing analysis capable of transcending political divisions as effectively as that of the debt cancellation campaigners.

The present moment may be an opportunity to implement financial regulations to would constrain some of the instability and destruction associated with what Polanyi (1957) has termed “unfettered” financial markets. At the height of the global financial crisis in the fall of 2008 there appeared to be an urgent need to reregulate international finance but more recently the sense of urgency has dissipated. Transnational advocacy networks could play an important part in a campaign for increased regulation of international finance; boomerang politics could be an effective tactic in this campaign. At the moment however, NGOs and CSOs seem at a loss to reframe the issues in a way

anxious publics as well as over stressed state leaders can embrace and use as a motivating ideal and a means of developing a common foundation for a co-ordinated campaign.

¹ These figures are intended to diagram the primary relationships of boomerang politics. For this reason one way arrows have been used to indicate the most important paths of influence even though this may not completely reflect the multiplicity of relations and all the paths of influence in a complex political environment.

² It is important to clarify that, although the understanding of political contestation adopted in this thesis is greatly influenced by Lukes' definition of power, it does diverge from Lukes in one important way. Lukes (1974: 25) argues that what he calls "real interests" exist and even if the excluded "may not express or even be conscious of their interests ...the identification of those interests always rests on empirically supportable and refutable hypotheses". In both political and economic theory there has been a tendency to assume that the goals pursued in a conflict will reflect a calculation of material interest of the parties involved. This is not always the case (Reitan 2007: 96; Watson, 2005: 5). I follow those who take a more nuanced view of the relationship between ideas, interests, and action and suggest that, although quantifiable, empirically measurable interests do remain very important, material interests may sometimes conflict with normative interests and it is by no means certain that the materially oriented goal will always dominate.

³ including Oxfam, EURODAD, Bretton Woods Project, Bread for the World, The Africa Faith and Justice Network and Jubilee 2000UK

⁴ For example both Joseph Stiglitz, chief economist at the WB and Jeffrey Sachs, an important and well respected economist, publicly stated their criticism.

⁵ The Kairos website gives the total signatures as 24 million worldwide while the Jubilee Research archives gives the figure of 17 million worldwide. In the end 24 million was the final figure.

⁶ It is possible for this tension to remain unresolved at the WEF because the Forum pleased to be included in the elite circles which attend the Davos meeting and, with very few presents itself as a space for networking, communication, and discussion. In general participants are exceptions, the WEF has succeeded in keeping the tone of discussion civil. This is, no doubt, aided by the fact that the WEF has no responsibility to formulate or implement policy or law and, at Davos, the more difficult disagreements can be allowed to remain politely unresolved.

⁷ This session resulted in the iconic image of the six leaders, looking somewhat breathless and pleased with themselves, photographed against the background of an enormous WEF logo with Bono flashing a peace sign

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