

Elite Communication and Popular Legitimacy in Global Governance

Lisa M. Dellmuth and Jonas Tallberg

Stockholm University

While popular legitimacy is central to international cooperation, existing research offers few insights into the process by which citizens come to perceive of international organizations (IOs) as legitimate or not. This paper offers the first systematic and comparative analysis of the role of elite communication in shaping the popular legitimacy of IOs. We build on framing theory to develop an argument about why citizens should be susceptible to elite communication about IOs, and when those effects should be particularly strong. We empirically evaluate the impact of elite communication through a survey experiment conducted among almost 10,000 residents of three countries in relation to five IOs. Four principal conclusions stand out. First, elite communication affects citizens' perceptions of IO legitimacy, irrespective of whether it invokes the procedures or the performances of IOs as grounds for criticism or endorsement. Second, communication by relatively more credible elites has stronger effects on the popular legitimacy of IOs. Third, negative messages are more effective than positive messages in shaping citizens' legitimacy perceptions. Fourth, elite communication is more effective when it targets IOs that citizens are relatively less familiar with.

Extensive research suggests that popular legitimacy makes it easier for international organizations (IOs) to gain support for ambitious policy goals, secure ratification of negotiated agreements, and achieve domestic compliance with international rules.¹ Conversely, shortfalls in popular legitimacy reduce the likelihood of effective global governance, as illustrated by historical and contemporary examples. Plans for an International Trade Organization, European Defence Community, and Multilateral Agreement on Investment never materialized because of resistance in key countries. Voters in several European countries have rejected successive European Union (EU) treaties, leading to delayed reforms and scaled back ambitions. Domestic skepticism toward the United Nations (UN) has caused the US government to withhold funding for the organization. Lack of confidence in the EU and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has undermined Greece's implementation of internationally prescribed reforms.

Yet, despite the importance of popular legitimacy for international cooperation, we know little about the process through which citizens come to perceive of IOs as legitimate or not. Notably, existing research offers few insights into the effects of elite communication on citizens' legitimacy beliefs. A growing number of studies explore legitimation and delegitimation of IOs by civil society organizations (CSOs), national governments, and international organizations themselves.² However, this literature primarily maps and explains patterns in the contestation and defence of international cooperation. The consequences of such legitimation and delegitimation for the popular legitimacy of IOs have not been systematically examined. An important reason is the methodological challenge of isolating the effects of elite communication, since popular perceptions of IOs may be shaped by a range of other factors that are difficult to control for and even reciprocally related to elite communication.

¹ Putnam 1988; Moravcsik 1993; Martin 2000; Dai 2005; Tomz 2007.

² E.g., O'Brien et al. 2000; Della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Halliday et al. 2010; Zaum 2013; Morse and Keohane 2014; Binder and Heupel 2015; Gronau and Schmidtke 2015.

This paper makes two central contributions to our knowledge about elite communication and popular legitimacy in global governance. First, we offer a novel theoretical argument for why and when elite communication should affect the popular legitimacy of IOs. Drawing on theories of framing in political psychology and public opinion research,³ we argue that citizens rarely have well-developed attitudes toward IOs, and therefore are susceptible to communication by domestic and international elites. Depending on how political elites frame messages about an IO, citizens will develop more or less positive legitimacy beliefs toward that organization. While elite communication is known to shape individual attitudes in domestic politics, it should have even greater effects in the global setting, where information, debate, and knowledge about political institutions are weaker. We hypothesize that the strength of framing effects in global governance varies with three conditions of the communication situation: the elite engaging in communication, the evaluative tone of the message, and the familiarity of the IO.

Second, this paper offers the first systematic and comparative empirical study of the effects of elite communication on popular perceptions of IOs. We adopt an experimental design intended to bypass the methodological problems that have afflicted assessments in the past. To test the hypotheses about elite communication's effects on legitimacy beliefs, we design a population-based survey experiment. The survey experiment isolates the causal effects of elite communication on public confidence in the EU, IMF, North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), UN, and World Trade Organization (WTO) among a total of almost 10,000 respondents. To increase the external validity of our findings, we conducted the survey experiment in three countries – Germany, the UK, and the US – and selected respondents to achieve nationally representative samples.

³ Kinder 1998; Druckman and Lupia 2000; Chong and Druckman 2007a.

The paper's central findings lend support to our argument about the role of elite communication in shaping the popular legitimacy of IOs. First, the experiment offers evidence of a general causal effect of elite communication on public confidence in IOs, irrespective of whether the communication refers to IOs' procedures or performances. This finding suggests that elite communication is central to how IO features feed into perceptions of legitimacy, and that citizens are sensitive to both the input and the output side of global governance when forming legitimacy beliefs.⁴ Second, we establish that communication by relatively more credible elites – CSOs and national governments – has stronger effects on public confidence than communication by IOs themselves. This finding suggests that the increasingly prominent practice of self-legitimation is a strategy of limited effectiveness for IOs interested in boosting their popular legitimacy.⁵ Third, the evidence shows that messages with a negative evaluation are more powerful than those with a positive evaluation in shaping public confidence in IOs. This finding suggests that delegitimation strategies are more effective than legitimation strategies in elite contestation over IO legitimacy.⁶ Fourth, we find that elite communication is more effective in relation to global IOs, with which citizens are relatively less familiar, compared to regional IOs, which normally have been subject to intense public debate and on which citizens therefore have more developed attitudes. This result points to important variation vary across IOs, underlining the importance of a comparative approach to the study of legitimacy and legitimation in global governance.⁷

The paper proceeds in four steps. In the next section, we briefly review existing research and then develop our argument for why and when elite communication should shape the popular legitimacy of IOs. Second, we outline the research design, explaining the methodological advantages of survey experiments and describing the specific design of our

⁴ Scharpf 1999; Hurd 2007; Schmidt 2013.

⁵ Zaum 2013; Gronau and Schmidtke 2015.

⁶ Nullmeier et al. 2010; Hurrelmann and Schneider 2015; Schneider et al. this volume.

⁷ Tallberg and Zürn this volume.

study. Third, we report and discuss the results of the survey experiment, focusing on communication about procedure and performance, the credibility of elites, the evaluative tone of messages, and the familiarity of IOs. Finally, we conclude by outlining four broader implications of this paper for the study of legitimacy and legitimation in global governance.

Elite Communication and IO Legitimacy

This paper conceptualizes popular legitimacy as public beliefs or perceptions that an IO's authority is appropriately exercised.⁸ This conceptualization conforms to a sociological understanding of legitimacy and the perspective on IO legitimacy laid out in the introductory paper of this volume.⁹ It is different from a normative understanding, where an institution's legitimacy is derived from its conformance to values such as justice and democracy.¹⁰ However, normative beliefs in society about rightful rule may very well influence popular perceptions of an institution's legitimacy. In the following, we review existing literature and outline our argument about elite communication and popular legitimacy in global governance.

The State of the Art

Two relevant empirical literatures have addressed issues related to elite communication and popular legitimacy in global governance. Yet neither has so far offered a systematic theoretical and empirical analysis of the effects of elite communication on citizens' attitudes toward IOs.

⁸ Caldeira and Gibson 1995; Bodansky 1999; Bernstein 2005; Bernauer and Gampfer 2013; Voeten 2013; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2015.

⁹ Weber 1922/1978; Suchman 1995; Tyler 2006; Tallberg and Zürn this volume.

¹⁰ Buchanan and Keohane 2006; Beetham 2013.

To begin with, recent years have witnessed an upsurge of interest in the legitimation and delegitimation of IOs by political elites. This development in the academic literature reflects actual trends in world politics, where IOs increasingly have become objects of contestation and politicization.¹¹ Research in this area is centered on three themes. First, growing out of social movement research, a range of contributions have explored opposition by CSOs against IOs.¹² Second, a number of studies have examined states' attempts at legitimizing and delegitimizing IOs as a means to further their objectives in world politics.¹³ Third, scholars have recently begun to address IOs' discursive and institutional strategies of self-legitimation.¹⁴ Taken as a whole, this growing literature highlights, maps, illustrates, and attempts to explain the variety of ways in which IOs are contested and defended by alternative elites. Yet, so far, it has not theorized and empirically evaluated the conditions under which legitimation and delegitimation are successful in shaping popular perceptions of IOs.

The other relevant body of research is focused on sources of public support for IOs.¹⁵ This literature is still in its infancy, partly because of poor availability of systematic and comparable data. Data are either fragmented across disparate regional samples (e.g., Eurobarometer, Afrobarometer), or insufficiently systematic in its coverage of countries and IOs (e.g., World Values Survey). As a consequence, most studies focus on individual IOs or small groups of IOs for which there is comparable data. Substantively, existing scholarship examines how individual-, national- and, to some extent, IO-level factors combine in explaining variation in public support for IOs. The findings from this literature mainly highlight three types of explanations: rational evaluation of the processes and outcomes of international cooperation, social conceptions of identity, and trust in domestic political

¹¹ Zürn et al. 2012; Schneider et al this volume.

¹² E.g., O'Brien et al. 2000; Khagram et al. 2002; Della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Kalm and Uhlin 2015.

¹³ E.g., Hurd 2007; Morse and Keohane 2014; Binder and Heupel 2015.

¹⁴ E.g., Zaum 2013; Gronau and Schmidtke 2015; Dingwerth et al. this volume; Rocabert et al this volume.

¹⁵ E.g., Hooghe and Marks 2005; Edwards 2009; Johnson 2011; Ecker-Erhardt 2011; Harteveld et al. 2013; Chalmers and Dellmuth 2015; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2015; Schlipphak 2015.

institutions. However, with one important exception, no work exists that systematically examines the role of elite communication in shaping public opinion toward IOs.

The exception is the sub-literature on public support for the EU, where a range of contributions have assessed the effects of party cueing on mass opinion.¹⁶ Grounded in comparative politics, these studies have varyingly focused on the effects of party positions, party polarization, and party communication on support for European integration. This research is more developed than any comparable literature on public opinion toward IOs, and offers inspiration for research in IR. At the same time, this literature has confronted problems and restrictions that research on elite communication in global governance should move beyond. Methodologically, it has proven difficult to correctly estimate the effects of elite communication on mass opinion, given problems of endogeneity and omitted variables, recently leading to calls for experimental designs.¹⁷ Empirically, the scope of this research is limited to the EU and the broader applicability of its findings has not been assessed. Theoretically, this literature is focused on why party cues should influence public opinion, whereas elite communication in global governance is a broader phenomenon, involving legitimation and delegitimation by multiple types of elites.

While the following sub-section outlines our theoretical argument about the effects of elite communication in global governance, the next section explains how our experimental design helps us to by-pass known methodological problems in this type of research.

The Argument

We draw on theories of framing in political psychology and public opinion research to advance an argument about why elite communication should affect citizens' legitimacy

¹⁶ E.g., Ray 2003; Hooghe and Marks 2005; Gabel and Scheve 2007; De Vries and Edwards 2009; Maier et al. 2012; Chalmers and Dellmuth 2015.

¹⁷ Gabel and Scheve 2007; Maier et al. 2012.

beliefs in relation to IOs, and when those effects should be particularly strong or weak. Our argument builds on the premise that citizens rarely have well-developed attitudes toward IOs, and therefore are susceptible to elite communication. Popular legitimacy beliefs are formed in an interaction between individual priors and public communication about the virtues and vices of IOs. An alternative premise is to assume that individuals have independent and plentiful information about IOs that allows them to develop well-informed and stable attitudes on their own, without tapping into public discourse about IOs. While this alternative assumption is implicit in public opinion research that assesses the effects of objective factors of IOs on citizen attitudes, we consider it a less realistic and productive starting point. Instead, we theorize that elites' framing of political messages about IOs shapes citizens' perceptions of these organizations, and that this effect is moderated by the credibility of the elite, the evaluative tone of the message, and the familiarity of the IO. In the following, we outline the logic of our argument and derive four testable hypotheses.

The expectation that elite communication can shape mass attitudes unites theories of framing, persuasion, and cue-taking in the study of voting behavior and public opinion in American and Comparative Politics.¹⁸ The starting point of such theories is the malleability of citizen attitudes toward public policies, political parties, and political institutions. This premise is not based exclusively on assumption, but a significant amount of empirical research as well. As Chong and Druckman explain: “[F]rom the earliest days of public opinion research, citizens have been found to have low-quality opinions, if they have opinions at all. In the public opinion literature, high-quality opinions are usually defined as being stable, consistent, informed, and connected to abstract principles and values. The general conclusion among scholars is that such opinions are rare in the mass public.”¹⁹

¹⁸ On the theoretical distinctions between framing, persuasion, and priming, see Nelson and Oxley 1999; Miller and Krosnick 2000; Chong and Druckman 2007a.

¹⁹ Chong and Druckman 2007a, 103.

The implication is that public attitudes can be influenced through elite communication. Where opinions are unstable, inconsistent, uninformed, and disconnected from abstract principles, guidance from elites will be both desired and consequential. Communication by trusted elites will offer citizens cognitive shortcuts to an opinion on a topic, and citizens will respond positively to such information because it allows them to form opinions in an efficient way. This basic insight is at the heart of a sizeable literature on the effects of elite communication on public opinion. Research on priming seeks to determine the effects of media attention on opinion formation, while studies on framing evaluate how frames invoked by elites shape citizen attitudes, and work on persuasion attempts to capture more fundamental shifts in beliefs.²⁰

Our argument builds specifically on framing theory.²¹ Framing refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue.²² In more precise terms, framing theory conceptualizes attitudes as the weighted sum of a series of evaluative beliefs about an object. For example, voter attitudes toward a candidate are based on a series of evaluative beliefs, such as past record, visions for the future, and personality. When elite communication is effective, it succeeds in shifting the relative weight attached by individuals to the different evaluative beliefs that make up an attitude.²³ While still evaluating the candidate on all dimensions, the record of past achievements, for instance, will be more influential for voter attitudes after successful elite communication than before. This example suggests why framing theory often is invoked to capture the intentions and potential effects of political communication. Politicians typically attempt to mobilize voters in favor of their policies by encouraging them to think about those

²⁰ Central contributions include Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Zaller 1992; Lupia and McCubbins 1998.

²¹ For overviews, see Kinder 1998; Druckman and Lupia 2000; Althaus and Kim 2006; Chong and Druckman 2007a.

²² Chong and Druckman 2007a, 104-106.

²³ Taylor and Fiske 1978.

policies along particular lines, which is accomplished by highlighting certain features of the policy, such as its foundational principles or likely effects.²⁴

When elite communication is successful, we speak of framing effects. Research in the domestic political setting has found such effects to be prevalent and strong.²⁵ Framing effects are often established by assessing the variance in citizen attitudes produced by alternative frames on an issue, sometimes also compared to control groups without frame exposure in experimental designs.²⁶ Areas where framing effects have been identified include government spending, campaign finance, support for the Supreme Court, and attitudes toward foreign countries.²⁷ Some of these studies examine how communication frames bias the weight individuals give to various considerations on an issue; other studies how frames change individuals' overall attitudes without tracing changes in the underlying considerations.

While common in domestic politics, we expect framing effects from elite communication to be even more prominent in the international setting. Individuals are usually less knowledgeable about IOs compared to domestic political institutions.²⁸ While citizens may have heard about the largest and most powerful IOs, they rarely have a clear sense of their political mandate, decision-making procedures, and policy impact. Part of the reason is the absence or weakness of a global public sphere, in the sense of an open and pluralistic transnational public debate rooted in independent media.²⁹ Citizens therefore rarely have access to rich and varied information and debate about IOs and their policies, leaving attitudes more exposed to capture by frames invoked in elite communication.

²⁴ Chong and Druckman 2007a, 106. See also Jacoby 2000.

²⁵ Chong and Druckman 2007a, 109. See also Zaller and Feldman 1992; Ladd 2010.

²⁶ Druckman 2001a.

²⁷ Jacoby 2000; Grant and Rudolph 2003, Nicholson and Howard 2003; Brewer et al. 2003.

²⁸ Gallup International Association 2005.

²⁹ For a contrarian position, see Castells 2008.

Pioneering work on effects of elite cuing on public opinion toward the EU provide empirical support for this assumption.³⁰ Much like our framing argument, the cuing model builds on citizens' lack of knowledge to explain why they use heuristics to form opinions toward the EU. Existing research has found evidence for two forms of effects. In the absence of independent attitudes toward IOs, citizens tend to either follow the position of the national political party they favor, or use their trust in the national government as a proxy for their confidence in European-level institutions. The formation of opinions through extrapolation of trust from domestic to international institutions has subsequently found support beyond Europe as well.³¹

The general expectation derived from our argument is that citizens will be sensitive to elite communication when forming opinions about IOs. Existing research suggests that elite communication about IOs typically attempts to affect individual attitudes by invoking two alternative grounds for endorsement or criticism: the procedures and performances of IOs.³² Elite communication targets the procedures and performances of IOs because these are features citizens are expected to care about when evaluating the legitimacy of IO.³³ Procedural standards invoked in elite communication often relate to democratic aspects of IO policy-making, such as inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability, but can also relate to expertise and efficiency. Performance standards often relate to aspects of goal achievement, such as problem-solving effectiveness and collective welfare gains, but can also relate to the fairness of outcomes. Much existing literature on IO legitimacy either juxtaposes procedure and performance as sources of legitimacy, or privilege the one or the other.³⁴

³⁰ Hooghe and Marks 2005; Maier et al. 2012; Harteveld et al. 2013; Armingeon and Ceka 2014.

³¹ Dellmuth and Tallberg 2015; Schlipphak 2015.

³² Tallberg and Zürn this volume. See also Nullmeier et al. 2010; Bernauer and Gampfer 2013; Binder and Heupel 2015.

³³ Scharpf 1999; Hurd 2007; Schmidt 2013. The distinction between procedure and performance overlaps conceptually with that between input and output (Scharpf 1999). For parallels in comparative politics, see Newton and Norris 2000; Gibson et al. 2003; Bühlmann and Kunz 2012; Esaiasson et al. 2012.

³⁴ In addition to above works, see, e.g., Bernstein 2011; Ecker-Ehrhardt and Wessels 2013; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2015.

While the relative importance of procedure and performance as sources of legitimacy beliefs is an ongoing debate in the field, framing theory gives us no reason to expect that elite communication would be varyingly effective depending on the features of IOs invoked in legitimation and delegitimation attempts. If it is correct that citizens care both about the procedures and performances of IOs when forming legitimacy beliefs, then elite communication that invokes these features should be effective in both cases. We integrate this expectation into our first hypothesis about a generic effect of elite communication:

H1 Elite Communication: Elite communication affects citizens' perceptions of IO legitimacy irrespective of whether it refers to the procedures or performances of IOs, all else equal.

Next, we theorize the conditions that should shape the relative strength of framing effects. While early literature on framing presupposed that elites always enjoy extensive leeway in using frames to influence citizen attitudes, later work has sought to identify the conditions when framing effects are more or less strong. We focus on three moderating factors.

First, framing theory suggests that sources which are perceived as credible and trustworthy are more likely to be successful in shaping individual attitudes. In this view, citizens are not mindless followers of whatever elite might want to manipulate them, but turn specifically to those elites they perceive as credible for guidance on an issue.³⁵ Druckman theorizes and finds empirical support for an effect of source credibility on framing effects, and similar results have been obtained in research on persuasion and media priming.³⁶ Credibility refers to the condition that a speaker (a) is believed to have relevant knowledge

³⁵ Druckman 2001b.

³⁶ Druckman 2001b; Iyengar and Valentino 2000; Miller and Krosnick 2000.

about an issue and (b) can be expected to reveal and use that knowledge accurately.³⁷ If elites are weak on the one or the other dimension, this reduces their overall credibility. In the setting of global governance, this logic suggests that elites perceived as more credible, in terms of knowledgeable and trustworthy, should enjoy greater success in affecting citizens' legitimacy beliefs.

Second, framing theory suggests that the evaluative tone of the communicated message influences the strength of framing effects. Negatively framed messages are expected to be more effective in shaping individual attitudes than positively framed messages. Theoretically, this expectation is anchored in prospect theory, which proposes that people weigh potential losses more heavily than gains.³⁸ As Tversky and Kahneman famously showed, individuals tend to be risk averse in choice situations, meaning that negatively framed options have greater effects on people's decisions than positively framed options. Extended to the area of elite communication, this entails that messages with a negative evaluative tone weigh more heavily on citizen's attitude formation than messages with a positive evaluative tone. Empirically, it has been shown that negative elite messages indeed have stronger effects than positive messages, for instance, in shaping public opinion on European integration.³⁹ We expect this logic to hold in global governance in general, where delegitimation of IOs should be more effective than legitimation.

Third, framing theory suggests that people's familiarity with the object of messages should influence the strength of framing effects. Citizens should be more susceptible to framing on issues that are less familiar to them, where they have not acquired the information and developed the knowledge that allow attitudes to become stable.⁴⁰ Conversely, framing effects should diminish with active engagement with issues, as citizens become more

³⁷ Lupia 2000; Lupia and McCubbins 1998.

³⁸ Kahneman and Tversky 1979; Tversky and Kahnemann 1981.

³⁹ Maier et al. 2012.

⁴⁰ Chong and Druckman 2007a, 118.

knowledgeable and their opinions less open to capture. When citizens are already exposed to a broad array of arguments, they should be less susceptible to biased representations of issues in elite communication.⁴¹ This expectation has been verified empirically in studies documenting moderating impacts of knowledge and deliberation on framing effects.⁴² In the context of global governance, this means that effects of elite communication should be particularly strong when framed messages target IOs that have been less debated in the public realm and on which citizens, as a consequence, have less developed attitudes.

Taken together, attention to the credibility of elites, the evaluative tone of messages, and the familiarity of IOs yields three hypotheses.

H2 Source: The more credible elites are perceived to be by citizens, the stronger their impact on citizens' perceptions of IO legitimacy, all else equal.

H3 Message: Negative messages have a stronger impact than positive messages on citizens' perceptions of IO legitimacy, all else equal.

H4 Object: Elite communication about less familiar IOs has a stronger impact on citizens' perceptions of IO legitimacy, all else equal.

Research Design

⁴¹ Chong and Druckman 2007a, 118; Nicholson 2011; Bechtel et al. 2014.

⁴² Druckman and Nelson 2003; Karp et al. 2003.

Our empirical analysis is based on new data from a survey experiment conducted in January 2015. In the following section, we explain the choice of methodology, describe the survey design, present the experimental design, and discuss the operationalization of the hypotheses.

Methodology

We assess the impact of elite communication on popular legitimacy through a survey experiment, since this method has clear advantages in identifying causal effects compared to alternative methods.⁴³

Cross-sectional analysis and time-series analysis of survey data are known to be exposed to problems of endogeneity and omitted variables.⁴⁴ Correlations between elite communication and mass opinion may not only be the result of elite effects on public attitudes, but also the product of public opinion influencing the positions of the elite. In addition, correlations between elite communication and public opinion could result from a third, unobserved cause, such as developments in the political environment that affect both forms of opinion simultaneously. Estimating the effect of elite communication on public opinion using instrumental variables in cross-sectional or time-series analyses presents an alternative that reduces the problem of endogeneity.⁴⁵ However, identifying suitable instrumental variables is often challenging.

Experiments offer a way out of these problems. Whether conducted in a laboratory or through a survey, experiments are superior in establishing causality, since they allow for the control of all other factors. More specifically, the randomization of individuals to treatment

⁴³ See, Mutz 2011, Ch. 1, on the strength of survey experiments when the goal is to combine the internal validity of experiments with the external validity of population samples; see Chong and Druckman 2007a, 109, and Druckman 2001a, on the benefits of survey experiments as a way of assessing framing effects; and see Bernauer and Gampfer 2013 on the benefits of survey experiments in the study of the effects of elite involvement in global environmental policy for mass opinion on global climate policy. Examples of similar survey experiments on public support for the EU are Schuck and de Vreese 2006; Maier et al. 2012.

⁴⁴ For a good discussion, see Gabel and Scheve 2007, 1014-1016.

⁴⁵ Gabel and Scheve 2007.

groups and a control group ensures that there is no systematic dependence of the observed treatment differences on potentially uncontrolled influences. This has made experiments “the source of most of what has been learned so far about the empirical effects of elite communication on opinion.”⁴⁶ While the internal validity is equally high for laboratory and survey experiments, the first method usually has weak external validity, since laboratory experiments tend to rely on tests among unrepresentative groups, such as college students. We have therefore chosen a variant of the latter method – population-based survey experiments – whose external validity is higher.

The advantage of population-based survey experiments is that theories can be tested on samples that are representative of the populations to which they are said to apply, while maintaining high internal validity.⁴⁷ Like surveys, they are administered to randomly selected representative samples of the target population of interest. A sample may be representative of a national population or of a more specific population, such as a certain age cohort or ethnic group. But unlike mere observational data, population-based survey experiments have an experimental design that makes use of random assignment to establish unbiased causal inferences. The combination of the internal validity of experiments with the external validity of representative population samples makes population-based survey experiments attractive to both survey and experimental researchers. By now, population-based survey experiments have been used in a broad variety of academic disciplines.

However, survey experiments, too, come with potential weaknesses. While they can provide clear evidence of a causal effect of elite communication for a particular population, it may be unclear whether this effect travels from the survey setting to real-world communication. Respondents in the real world tend to be exposed to greater competition

⁴⁶ Gabel and Scheve 2007, 1015.

⁴⁷ Mutz 2011, Ch. 1.

among conflicting elite messages than respondents in survey experiments.⁴⁸ In addition, theories of communication sometimes privilege factors, such as general characteristics of the national political informational environment, which may be difficult to replicate in a survey experiment.⁴⁹

Survey Design

In this paper we are primarily interested in the conditions under which elite communication shapes popular perceptions of IO legitimacy. We seek to establish whether the occurrence and strength of framing effects depends on the elites engaging in communication, the messages being communicated, and the IOs to which the communication refers. While such effects could have been assessed based on a population sample from a single country, we have wanted to reduce the risk of biases from contextual country factors by conducting the survey experiment in several countries.

Our survey was conducted in Germany, the UK, and the US. We selected these countries based on three criteria. First, the selected countries should be democratic, since legitimacy for political institutions may mean different things to citizens of democratic and autocratic regimes.⁵⁰ Moreover, citizens in democracies and autocracies are likely to respond differently to public opinion surveys.⁵¹ Second, the selected countries are politically central in the selected IOs, so that elite and public opinion are most likely to matter for the prospects and consequences of global governance. Third, these are all countries with very high levels of Internet penetration (over 80 percent), increasing our confidence in the external validity of the data.⁵²

⁴⁸ Druckman 2004; Chong and Druckman 2007a, 112-114.

⁴⁹ Gabel and Scheve 2007, 1015.

⁵⁰ Jamal and Nooruddin 2010.

⁵¹ Van Deth 2013.

⁵² For a discussion of external validity concerns related to survey experiments, see Gabel and Scheve 2007.

To implement the questionnaire, we relied on samples from the YouGov online panel, a well-reputed global survey company very frequently used by social scientists and known for its high-quality panels.⁵³ YouGov relies on targeted quota sampling with the aim to achieve representative samples at the end of the fieldwork. The samples for our survey were matched to the full populations of the three countries using age, education, gender, and party identification, and are therefore generalizable to the populations of these countries.⁵⁴ A total of 3270 interviews were conducted in the UK, 3268 in Germany and 3135 in the US. YouGov invited the target group to participate in the study through e-mail, informing the respondents about the length of the study and offering monetary incentives to participate. Those deciding to participate could access the survey through a link and answer the questions online.⁵⁵

The questionnaire was about 10 minutes in length and included the survey experiment as well as some additional questions, for instance, about political awareness and education.⁵⁶ The questionnaire and survey design was pre-tested through a pilot study in Sweden in December 2014.

Experimental Design

To isolate the causal effects of elite communication, we randomly assigned individuals to groups that received different experimental treatments, and a control group that did not receive any treatment.⁵⁷ We used a completely randomized factorial design with three

⁵³ Berinsky et al. 2012.

⁵⁴ For a detailed discussion of the sampling procedure for the YouGov online panel, see Ansolabehere et al. 2014. The age span of included participants in our study is 18-74 years in Germany and the UK, and 18-89 years in the US for methodological reasons. Furthermore, an additional criterion to match the sample to the full population in the US is ethnicity.

⁵⁵ More specifically, YouGov's incentive program is points-based. Point values are determined by survey length and are allocated upon survey completion. Respondents accumulate points for completing surveys and are able to redeem these either for entries into prize draws with a wide range of prizes or towards a cash payment. See YouGov's webpages at <https://yougov.co.uk/about/panel-methodology/> for more information about their methodology.

⁵⁶ See the exact wording of the questions used to operationalize the variables in this article in online appendix A. All answer categories include a "Don't know" option.

⁵⁷ Mutz 2011, 9.

embedded factors that varied across the respondents of the survey: (a) the elite making the statement (IO, national government, or CSOs), (b) the ground for endorsement or criticism (procedure or performance), and (c) evaluative tone of the message (positive or negative). This combined into a 3 by 2 by 2 factorial design, with 12 conditions in total (see Table 1). The design was balanced, as we allocated the same number of individuals for each combination of factors.

[Table 1 about here]

We used a vignette approach to treatment, which is particularly well-suited to complex factorial experiments.⁵⁸ Vignettes are short statements of one or a few sentences that contain the treatment and precede the question of interest. The purpose of vignette treatments is to assess what difference it makes when the factors embedded in the vignette are systematically varied. We relied on hypothetical vignettes that made it possible to vary the relevant theoretical factors with great precision. While using real-world information for the frames could increase the credibility of vignettes, achieving treatments with the exact right variation and of the exact same strength is exceedingly difficult when using real-world information.

The complexity of the factorial design may imply that several experimental manipulations occurring in the same vignette lead the respondent to pay attention to only one specific manipulation, causing issues of internal validity. Moreover, the longer and more complex a treatment vignette, the greater the risk of ineffective treatments.⁵⁹ We sought to make sure that the vignette formulations were as short and straightforward as possible, and similar in strength.

⁵⁸ Mutz 2011, Ch. 4.

⁵⁹ Cf. Mutz 2011, 64-65.

This survey and experimental design allowed us to operationalize and assess the four hypotheses about elite communication effects. The survey operationalized citizens' perceptions of IO legitimacy by using a question about citizen confidence in IOs. Confidence is nowadays the established measurement of the perceived legitimacy of political institutions in survey research.⁶⁰ In our experiment, the control group received the question of how much confidence the respondent has in an IO on a scale from no confidence at all (0) to complete confidence (10). The resulting variable CONFIDENCE is quasi-continuous and ranges from 0 to 10, with higher values indicating greater confidence in an IO.

To operationalize H1, stating that we should expect framing effects irrespective of whether elites communicate about IOs' procedures or performances, we formulated vignettes about the democratic character and problem-solving effectiveness of IOs (see Table 1). Procedures are measured through the formulation "highly democratic" or "highly undemocratic." Performances are measured by the formulation "doing a very good job in trying to solve the problems it faces" and "doing a very bad job in trying to solve the problems it faces." We will test H1 by comparing the confidence of the treatment groups with those of the control group to assess whether framing effects hold independent of the grounds of endorsement or criticism.

We operationalize H2 about the supposed effects of elite credibility by focusing the vignettes on three different types of elites: CSOs, national governments, and IOs (see Table 1). We selected these elites since we know them to be important communicators about IOs in relation to citizens, and the object of extensive research on legitimation and delegitimation in global governance. In addition, the credibility of these elites as communicators about IOs should vary, if credibility involves having relevant knowledge about an IO and being

⁶⁰ E.g., Inglehart 1997; Norris 2009; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Bühlmann and Kunz 2011; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2015. Note that some studies refer to "trust" and not to "confidence" when measuring legitimacy in political institutions, such as Hartevelt et al. 2013 and van der Meer 2010.

expected to reveal that knowledge accurately.⁶¹ All else equal, CSOs should hold the highest credibility in the eyes of citizens, as well-informed and independent voices in their areas of activity; national governments medium credibility, because of their involvement as principals in IOs, combining extensive insight with vested interests; and IOs least credibility as sources of information about themselves.⁶² The survey experiment thus assesses H2 by comparing the effects of treatments involving communication by elites assumed to have different levels of credibility in the eyes of respondents.

H3 on the evaluative tone of the elite message is operationalized by designing the vignettes so that they include positive and negative statements about IOs (see Table 1). This allows us to test H3 by isolating the causal effect on confidence of positively and negatively framed messages, respectively.

H4 on the conditioning effect of citizens' familiarity with IOs was operationalized by conducting the experiment in several rounds, with each round performing the same experiment on a different IO. We selected five IOs: three at the global level (IMF, UN, and WTO) and two at the regional level (EU and NAFTA). All five IOs are known to citizens in the selected countries at a basic level, which is important when assessing effects of elite communication on popular legitimacy.⁶³ At the same time, research shows that regional IOs typically are subject to higher levels of politicization and contestation in domestic political debates, which we expect leads to more developed citizen attitudes toward these IOs.⁶⁴ Regional IOs are closer to citizens than global IOs, usually have more substantial authority,

⁶¹ Lupia 2000; Lupia and McCubbins 1998.

⁶² There are specific literatures on the credibility or trustworthiness of governments (e.g., van der Meer and Dekker 2011), CSOs (e.g., Gourevitch et al. 2012), and IOs (e.g., Torgler 2008). However, we know of no literature that compares the credibility of these elites, in general or as regards communication about IOs. We therefore operationalize elite credibility by assumption.

⁶³ Data on knowledge of IOs is scarce, yet the Gallup "Voice of the People" series offer some insights. In 2011, 85 percent of the residents in the three countries included in this study had heard of the WTO; 95 percent of the residents in the two EU member states had heard of the EU; and 95 percent of the residents in the three states had heard of the UN (Gallup International Association 2011). Knowledge of the IMF was only asked about in 2005, when more than 70 percent of the residents in the three countries had heard of the IMF (Gallup International Association 2005).

⁶⁴ Nullmeier et al. 2010; Ecker-Ehrhardt 2015; Hurrelmann and Schneider 2015; Schneider et al. this volume.

and more often have a general-purpose orientation, raising expectations on democratic and effective governance.⁶⁵ We therefore test H4 by comparing the treatment effects across global and regional IOs, expecting stronger effects for global IOs.

The experiment proceeded in four rounds: the UN, EU/NAFTA (depending on the regional belonging of the respondent's country), IMF, and WTO. Respondents were never allocated to the same treatment group twice. Respondents that were placed in the control group remained in this group throughout the four rounds.

Results

We now turn to the results of the experiment. We discuss each hypothesis in turn, first spelling out the observable implications and then discussing the findings.

Communication about Procedure and Performance

The first hypothesis predicts that elite communication has effects on citizens' confidence in IOs, and that frames pertaining to the procedures and the performances of IOs are equally effective. The observable implications are three-fold. First, the differences in means between the procedure group and the control group, as well as between the performance group and the control group, are expected to be statistically significant. Second, the differences in means in these group comparisons should be similar in size. Third, there should not be a statistically significant difference in means between the procedure group and the performance group.

To test this, we pooled the data across the four experimental rounds so that the observations on confidence in the different IOs are clustered at the level of individuals.

⁶⁵ Hooghe and Marks 2015.

Furthermore, we collapsed the vignettes for the different elites, as we are not interested in the effects of varying elites here. Collapsing the treatment groups receiving negative and positive frames is not possible.⁶⁶ Hence, we report results for: (1) negatively framed procedure; (2) positively framed procedure; (3) negatively framed performance; and (4) positively framed performance. For the purpose of the difference-in-means tests, we code a dummy variable `PROCEDURE POSITIVE` 1 if a respondent received a positively framed procedure vignette, and 0 if she belongs to the control group. The dummy variable `PROCEDURE NEGATIVE` equals 1 if a respondent received a negatively framed procedure vignette, and 0 if she belongs to the control group. The variables `PERFORMANCE POSITIVE` and `PERFORMANCE NEGATIVE` are created in a similar fashion. Finally, we create a dichotomous variable `DIFFERENCE PROCEDURE-PERFORMANCE-NEGATIVE` that takes on the value of 1 if a respondent received a negative procedure treatment and 0 in the case of a negative performance treatment. `DIFFERENCE PROCEDURE-PERFORMANCE-POSITIVE` is coded 1 if a respondent received a positive procedure treatment and 0 in the case of a positive performance treatment.

The findings reported in Table 2 strongly endorse H1.⁶⁷ Results are from differences-in-means tests using OLS regression analysis, taking into account the hierarchical nature of the data.⁶⁸ As expected, the differences in means between the control group and the four treatment groups, respectively, are statistically significant. This indicates that framing of either the procedures or the performances of IOs sways citizen confidence. This holds for

⁶⁶ Owing to different mean values for confidence in these two groups, it is not possible to calculate aggregate measures in absolute numbers or standardized *z*-scores.

⁶⁷ Table B1 in the online appendix provides descriptive statistics for all variables introduced in this section. Table B2 shows that the number of observations is relatively balanced across treatment groups. See the online appendix Table B3 for more details on the regression results.

⁶⁸ Due to the randomized allocation of respondents across treatment groups, we are able to calculate the treatment effects by using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis, where `CONFIDENCE` is the dependent variable. `PROCEDURE` and `PERFORMANCE` are entered as independent variables separately (see robustness checks where we relax the assumption of successful randomization). OLS regression analyses with one predictor are equivalent to *t*-tests of differences in means, with the advantage that the clustered and weighted nature of the data can be taken into account. See, for a discussion of how to handle clustered data from multiple experiments, Galbraith et al. 2010. All models presented in this section are estimated using robust standard errors clustered at the level of individuals.

both positive and negative frames. The coefficients for the procedure treatments are similar in size to the coefficients for the performance treatments. This suggests that frames about procedures and performances are equally effective, which is corroborated by the insignificant coefficients in the difference-in-means tests between those receiving procedure treatments and those receiving performance treatments.

[Table 2 about here]

These results are evidence of a general effect of elite communication on the popular legitimacy of IOs. In addition, they indicate that efforts to change people's opinions about IOs are not more effective if they focus on the procedures or the performance of an IO. Evidently, citizens care about both. In this respect, our results challenge the common tendency in existing research to privilege the one or the other source of popular legitimacy.

Credibility of Elites

Next, we examine H2 predicting that elite type matters for the effectiveness of elite communication. We have shown above that all three elites can be expected to have effects. H2 is based on the assumption that communication by all elites affects citizen confidence in IOs, yet predicts varying effect sizes depending on the credibility of elites. In accordance with our operationalization, we expect CSOs to be most effective, national government less effective, and IOs themselves least effective. The observable implications of H2 are thus twofold. First, the differences in means between the treatment groups for the different elite types and the control group, respectively, should be statistically significant. Second, the differences in means between the treatment groups for the different elites should be statistically significant. To explore these observable implications, we reduce the complexity of the

factorial design, collapsing the treatment groups on procedure and performance. We contrast the effects of: (1) negative framing by CSOs; (2) positive framing by CSOs; (3) negative framing by IOs; (4) positive framing by IOs; (5) negative framing by governments; and (6) positive framing by governments.

A dummy variable `CSO POSITIVE` is coded 1 if a respondent received a positively framed vignette from CSOs, and 0 if the respondent belongs to the control group. A second dichotomous variable `CSO NEGATIVE` equals 1 if a respondent received a negatively framed vignette, and 0 if she belongs to the control group. The variables `IO POSITIVE`, `IO NEGATIVE`, `GOVERNMENT POSITIVE`, and `GOVERNMENT NEGATIVE` are created in a similar fashion. Finally, we created six more dummy variables in order to examine differences in means between treatment groups. `DIFFERENCE CSO-IO-POSITIVE` is coded 1 if a respondent received a positive message from a CSO and 0 if she received a positive message from an IO. The dummy variable `DIFFERENCE CSO-IO-NEGATIVE` is coded 1 if a respondent received a negative message from a CSO and 0 if she received a negative message from an IO. We proceed in a similar fashion when creating the dummy variables `DIFFERENCE GOVERNMENT-IO-POSITIVE`, `DIFFERENCE GOVERNMENT-IO-NEGATIVE`, `DIFFERENCE CSO-GOVERNMENT-POSITIVE`, and `DIFFERENCE CSO-GOVERNMENT-NEGATIVE`.

The findings reported in Table 3 largely corroborate H2.⁶⁹ The first three rows indicate that communication by all three elite types affects citizens' confidence in IOs. Interestingly, however, the coefficient for `IO POSITIVE` is not statistically significant, suggesting that IOs cannot successfully legitimize themselves in the eyes of citizens through appeals to their democratic procedures and problem-solving performances. Moreover, the last three rows of indicate that there are differences between two of the three types of elites. The results suggest that CSOs manage to sway public confidence in IOs more than IOs themselves, irrespective of whether they seek to legitimize or delegitimize IOs. Similarly, the evidence indicates that

⁶⁹ See the online appendix Table B4 for more details on the regression results.

governments are more effective than IOs in enhancing public confidence in IOs, but not when seeking to weaken public confidence in IOs. Surprisingly, however, CSOs' legitimation or delegitimation strategies do not appear to be more effective than governments' corresponding communication.

[Table 3 about here]

We interpret these results as follows. The credibility of elites matters for their capacity to sway public perceptions of IOs. IOs cannot increase their legitimacy by framing themselves in a positive fashion. IOs are likely perceived as partial, and therefore non-credible, as a source of positive information about their own merits. Only when admitting to their own faults are IOs credible and their communication effective in shaping citizens' legitimacy perceptions. While IOs increasingly engage in discursive and institutional self-legitimation, as studied in a growing literature, our findings question the effectiveness of that strategy. Instead, they suggest that IOs have to rely on positive communication by CSOs or national governments to increase their legitimacy.⁷⁰ The evidence on CSO and government communication confirms that legitimation and delegitimation by societal and political elites matters for popular legitimacy, and underlines the importance of mapping and explaining patterns of contestation over IOs in the public realm.⁷¹ Contrary to our expectation that CSOs would be the most effective communicators, governments are equally effective, irrespective of whether they aim at legitimizing or delegitimizing IOs. This finding may be a result of respondents not associating CSOs and national governments with varying levels of credibility when communicating about IOs – either because CSOs are perceived as having political

⁷⁰ Zaum 2013; Gronau and Schmidtke 2015; Dingwerth et al. this volume; Rocabert et al this volume.

⁷¹ See Rauh and Zürn this volume; Schneider et al this volume.

agendas or organizational interests at heart, or because governments are not perceived as principals with a constitutive role and political stake in IOs.⁷²

Evaluative Tone of Message

Next, we explore H3 predicting that valence matters for the effectiveness of elite messages. The observable implications of H3 are two-fold. First, the differences in means between the group receiving negative treatments and the control group, as well as between the group receiving positive treatments and the control group, should be statistically significant. Second, the difference in means between the negative and the positive treatment groups should be statistically significant and in the direction of negative messages having stronger effects than positive messages.

Table 4 presents the results, which are in line with H3.⁷³ The effect of positive framing is smaller than the effect of negative framing, which is consistent with the expectation of prospect theory that people weigh potential losses more heavily than gains, and with earlier research in the EU setting.⁷⁴ Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate that this pattern largely holds even when we disaggregate by the grounds of endorsement or criticism and the elites making the statements. In the first two rows of Table 2, the effects of negative framing are shown to be larger than the effects of positive framing, regardless of whether elites refer to procedure or performance. The findings in the first three rows of Table 3 show a more varied pattern. In line with the expectation, they indicate that elite communication by governments and IOs is more effective when negatively framed. However, for CSOs, the effects are larger when the communication is positively framed. If we disaggregate by IOs, as we shall soon do, we find that, the statistically significant difference in effects between positive and negative framing holds for all five IOs in the survey experiment (Figures 1-3).

⁷² On the credibility of transnational NGOs, see Gourevitch et al 2012.

⁷³ See the online appendix Table B5 for more details on the regression results.

⁷⁴ Kahneman and Tversky 1979. See also Gabel and Scheve 2007; Maier et al. 2012.

Overall, these results suggest that delegitimation of IOs by their opponents is more successful in shaping citizens' legitimacy perceptions than legitimation of the same organizations by IOs themselves and their supporters. In general, people tend to be risk averse and therefore weigh criticism more heavily than endorsements when forming opinions. Criticism that IOs are undemocratic and ineffective may also play to preexisting fears and suspicions among citizens,⁷⁵ in themselves the result of historical exposure to public critique against IOs. These findings also suggest a problematic relationship in the public contestation over IOs. While public criticism against IOs often is intended to push these organizations toward improvements, rather than undermine them, such advocacy efforts are likely to have costly negative externalities in terms of reduced public confidence.⁷⁶

Familiarity of IOs

Now we turn to H4 predicting that elite communication about less familiar IOs has a stronger impact on citizens' legitimacy beliefs than communication about more familiar IOs. For these purposes, we assume that regional IOs are more familiar, given their greater proximity to citizens' everyday lives and the higher levels of public contestation surrounding most regional IOs. The observable implications are twofold. First, framing effects should be present in all IOs. Second, the observed treatment effects for global IOs should be weaker than for regional IOs.

In Figures 1-3, we depict the average treatment effects (ATE) for each IO with their respective 95 percent confidence intervals. The confidence intervals indicate that we have 95 percent certainty that the true treatment effect lies within their range – that is, there is a 5 percent margin of error. If the confidence intervals include zero, the ATE are not statistically

⁷⁵ Carey 2002.

⁷⁶ O'Brien et al. 2000.

significant indicating that an effect might happen due to chance, if at all. We thus re-examine the differences-in-means between the treatment groups and the control group presented in Tables 2-4, but now at the level of individual IOs.⁷⁷ The results are in line with H4, with some exceptions.

Figure 1 shows that the effects of elite communication overall are stronger in the context of global IOs, irrespective of whether the communication refers to IOs' procedures or performances. We observe statistically significant treatment effects in the context of the global IOs, with one exception: positive communication about the IMF's performance does not seem to impress citizens. By contrast, we find fewer such effects in the context of the regional IOs, with three exceptions. First, the results suggest that negative communication about the EU's and NAFTA's democratic credentials may indeed sway public confidence. What is more, negative communication about NAFTA's performance appears to make citizens less confident in NAFTA.

Figure 2 reveals a similar pattern. When we assess differences across IOs in the effectiveness of different types of elites, we find the effects to be stronger for global IOs with some exceptions. Comparing the treatment groups with the control group suggests that positive or negative framing by CSOs is more effective in relation to the three global IOs than the two regional IOs. However, the results from the treatments containing communication by IOs show an exceptional pattern, where positive communication never seems to work, mirroring the general ineffectiveness of IO self-legitimation, and negative communication seems to work in all instances. With regard to communication by governments, the results are more varied. Positive communication by governments about the UN and the WTO seem to sway public confidence, but not in the case of the IMF, EU, or NAFTA. Negative communication by governments works in all cases except for NAFTA.

⁷⁷ Figures 1-3 are based on a replication of the results from Tables 2-4 that we detail in the online appendix Table B6.

Figure 3, finally, shows the ATE for positive and negative messages. It demonstrates that positive framing works in all global IOs, but not in the regional IOs, in line with the expectation. However, negative framing works in the context of all IOs.

Taken together, these results point to an important difference between global and regional IOs in the effectiveness of elite communication. Although the results are somewhat mixed, they point to fewer effects in the regional IOs. This difference likely reflects the varying familiarity of global and regional IOs among citizens. While all the five IOs included in the survey experiment are familiar to citizens at a basic level, the regional IOs have been more publicly debated in the member countries. Citizens may therefore have been able to acquire more information and develop deeper knowledge about these IOs, leading attitudes to become more stable and less susceptible to elite communication.

[Figures 1-3 about here]

Robustness of the Results

We performed several robustness checks. First, we replicated all analyses for each country separately in order to check whether some of the results were driven by sample size or potentially unobserved country-specific variables. The results are similar in the different countries when including the country dummies and do not change the interpretation of our results (see Tables C1-C4 in the online appendix).

Second, the results for NAFTA are based on smaller samples than the results for the other IOs, since they are exclusively based on responses from the US. Critics may object that the results for the EU are based on two countries and therefore not comparable to the results for NAFTA. To address this potential concern, we replicated the models for the EU for

Germany and the UK separately. Table C5 shows that the results presented in Figures 1-3 remain robust.

Third, we addressed the related concern that the fewer effects for the regional IOs could be due to a lower number of respondents for these organizations compared to the global IOs. Table C6 shows that there are indeed fewer treatment effects for the regional organizations than the treatment effects for the global IOs, if we equalize the number of respondents through analyses at the country level, and thus not driven by differences in the number of responses.

Fourth, as detailed in the research design section, YouGov relies on a quota sampling procedure with the aim to attain a nationally representative sample. To take national differences in sampling procedures into account, YouGov creates a variable denoting the optimal weight that should be assigned to each observation in order to achieve nationally representative results. We re-ran all analyses using weighted data, which did not affect the results (see Table C7).

Finally, we replicated all analyses in order to check whether missing data, because of item non-response, may have biased our results. We obtained data from four randomized experiments, and each experiment yielded data on confidence in different IOs from the same individuals. However, not all respondents indicated a confidence level; some chose the “don’t know” option. This causes some missing points in our data. If the missing values for confidence contain some information about political knowledge about international politics, the cases with missing values may yield information that may be relevant for the relationship between treatment and confidence.⁷⁸ If this were true, the ATE may be biased if we were to take the difference between average treatment outcomes and average control outcomes.⁷⁹ For

⁷⁸ In Rubin’s (1976, 582) words, data are missing at random if for each possible value of a variable, “the conditional probability of the observed pattern of missing data, given the missing data and the value of the observed data, is the same for all possible values of the missing data.”

⁷⁹ See Frangakis and Rubin 1999.

this reason, we examined the causal process behind outcome missingness, although this problem is unlikely to affect the results given the very low number of missing values. In fact, we show that all results remain robust when replicating the analyses presented in Tables 2-4 while relaxing the assumption that the randomization was successful.⁸⁰

Conclusion

While popular legitimacy is central to international cooperation, previous research has provided few insights into the process through which citizens develop legitimacy beliefs vis-à-vis IOs. A growing body of research has explored legitimation and delegitimation of IOs, but the consequences of such elite communication for the popular legitimacy of IOs have been little examined. In this paper, we have sought to address this gap through a systematic and comparative assessment of the effects of elite communication. Based on a survey experiment involving almost 10,000 residents of Germany, the UK, and the US, we have established that elites' framing of the procedures and performances of IOs affect people's legitimacy perceptions. In addition, we have assessed whether the effects of elite communication vary depending on the credibility of the elite, the evaluative tone of the message, and the familiarity of the IO. The experimental results indicate that more credible (CSO and government) elites are more effective than less credible (IO) elites, negative messages more effective than positive, and communication about less familiar (global) IOs more effective than communication about more familiar (regional) IOs in swaying popular legitimacy.

We conclude by discussing four broader implications of these results. First, they support a perspective on legitimacy beliefs as formed in a social process of legitimation and

⁸⁰ See online appendix D for detailed results and a description of the steps undertaken for this robustness check.

delegitimation, where evaluative claims in the public realm interact with individual priors.⁸¹ Citizens' attitudes toward IOs are not set, but continuously evolving and open to reorientation, as individuals integrate arguments and information from trusted elites. In this process, citizens appear to be equally responsive to claims about the democratic qualities and the problem-solving effectiveness of IOs, contrary to some earlier findings.⁸² Generally, the consequentiality of elite communication highlights the importance of better understanding when and why legitimation and delegitimation become prominent in global governance.⁸³

Second, the results point to important qualifications regarding the effectiveness of legitimation and delegitimation. Taken together, these qualifications suggest an uphill-battle for elites concerned with the legitimacy of global and, especially, regional IOs. While IOs invest considerable resources in communicating information about their qualities,⁸⁴ citizens appear skeptical of attempts by IOs to talk up their legitimacy. Only when IOs admit to faults are they credible and therefore influential, but then not as hoped. This indicates that IOs' best chance of boosting their legitimacy resides in mobilizing supporters among civil society and national political elites. Yet any such efforts face the challenge that positive communication is less effective than negative in shaping citizen attitudes. Messages that criticize global governance more easily get through to citizens than those which speak to its virtues. All these difficulties are compounded in the regional setting, where IOs typically have been subject to more intense public contestation in the past and citizens formed more developed attitudes, reducing the scope for elite communication to build popular legitimacy.

Third, this paper suggests next steps in the study of elite communication and popular legitimacy in global governance. On the methodological side, this paper has highlighted the promise of survey experiments. Compared to time-series analysis, survey experiments have

⁸¹ Suchman 1995; Hurd 2007; Tallberg and Zürn this volume.

⁸² Hurd 2007; Binder and Heupel 2015; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2015.

⁸³ See Dingwerth et al this volume; Rauh and Zürn this volume; Schneider et al. this volume.

⁸⁴ Zaum 2013; Ecker-Ehrhardt 2015; Gronau and Schmidtke 2015; Dingwerth et al this volume.

advantages in identifying causal effects of elite communications, since problems of endogeneity and omitted variables can be avoided.⁸⁵ In this study, we have used a survey experiment to demonstrate the impact of elite frames in one-off messages. While significant in its own right, and an important first step, the reality is that legitimation or delegitimation attempts rarely occur in isolation. Tracking recent developments in research on political communication, future analysis should study the effects of elite communication in more complex settings, involving competing and iterated legitimation and delegitimation attempts.⁸⁶ While experimental survey designs can never fully reflect reality, we can build cumulative knowledge in a series of experiments by isolating framing effects in different kinds of settings. On the empirical side, this paper has privileged assessing communication effects comparatively across elites, messages, and IOs. The comparative dimension proved essential for isolating variation and avoiding biased conclusions. For instance, had we only focused on the EU, as existing studies in this area do, we would have underestimated the effects of elite communication. Yet, as this research area expands, natural next steps would be to examine the importance of individual-level factors, such as knowledge, and country-level factors, such as national experiences of specific IOs.

Finally, our findings raise an important normative issue: is it good or bad that citizens' evaluations of IOs are susceptible to elite communication? Rather than offering an answer, we outline the alternatives.⁸⁷ The traditional interpretation in public opinion research is to regret framing effects from a democratic perspective. If citizens' opinions on policies, politicians, and institutions can be easily manipulated by elites to serve their interests, this is bad news for democratic politics. Then citizens have no genuine interests and public preferences no stability. At the same time, elite communication and public contestation are natural and

⁸⁵ Gabel and Scheve 2007; Mutz 2011.

⁸⁶ Chong and Druckman 2010. On competing frames, see also Chong and Druckman 2007b; Hansen 2007; Druckman et al. 2010.

⁸⁷ Cf. Chong and Druckman 2007a, 120-121.

necessary components of the process through which individuals develop political attitudes. Forming an opinion involves assessing, accepting, and rejecting competing frames communicated in the public realm. Not being open to new arguments is therefore just as problematic as elite-driven fluctuations in attitudes.

References

- Anderson, Brilé, Thomas Bernauer, and Aya Kachi. This volume. Authority and Legitimacy in Global Environmental Governance.
- Althaus, Scott L., and Young Mie Kim. 2006. Priming Effects in Complex Information Environments: Reassessing the Impact of News Discourse on Presidential Approval. *Journal of Politics* 68 (4): 960–976.
- Ansolabehere, Stephen and Brian F. Schaffner. 2014. Does Survey Mode Still Matter? Findings from a 2010 Multi-Mode Comparison. *Political Analysis* 22 (3): 285–303.
- Armingeon, Klaus and Besir Ceka. 2014. The Loss of Trust in the European Union during the Great Recession since 2007: The Role of Heuristics from the National Political System. *European Union Politics* 15 (1): 82–107.
- Bechtel, Michael M., Jens Hainmueller, Dominik Hangartner, and Marc Helbling .2015. Reality Bites: The Limits of Framing Effects for Salient and Contested Policy Issues. *Political Science Research and Methods* 3(3): 683–695.
- Beetham, David. 2013. *The Legitimation of Power*. Second edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Berinsky Adam J., Gregory A. Huber, and Gabriel S. Lenz. 2012. Evaluating Online Labor Markets for Experimental Research: Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk. *Political Analysis* 20(3): 351–68.
- Bernauer, Thomas, and Robert Gampfer. 2013. Effects of Civil Society Involvement on Popular Legitimacy of Global Environmental Governance. *Global Environmental Change* 23 (2).
- Bernstein, Steven. 2005. Legitimacy in Global Environmental Governance. *Journal of International Law & International Relations* 1: 139–166.
- Bernstein, Steven. 2011. Legitimacy in Intergovernmental and Non-State Global Governance. *Review of International Political Economy* 18 (1): 17–51.
- Binder, Martin, and Monica Heupel. 2015. The Legitimacy of the UN Security Council: Evidence from Recent General Assembly Debates. *International Studies Quarterly* 59: 238-250.
- Bodansky, Daniel. 1999. The Legitimacy of International Governance : A Coming Challenge for International Environmental Law ? *American Journal of International Law* 93 (3): 596–624.
- Brewer, Paul R., Joseph Graf, and Lars Willnat. 2003. Priming or Framing: Media Influence on Attitudes toward Foreign Countries. *International Communication Gazette* 65 (6): 493–508.
- Buchanan, Allen, and Robert O. Keohane. 2006. The Legitimacy of Global Governance Institutions. *Ethics & Global Politics* 20 (4): 405–437.
- Bühlmann, Marc and Ruth Kunz. 2011. Confidence in the Judiciary: Comparing the Independence and Legitimacy of Judicial Systems. *West European Politics* 34 (2): 317–345.

- Caldeira, Gregory A. and James L. Gibson. 1995. The Legitimacy of the Court of Justice in the European Union: Models of Institutional Support. *American Political Science Review* 89 (2): 356–376.
- Carey, Sean. 2002. Undivided Loyalties: Is National Identity an Obstacle to European Integration? *European Union Politics* 3(4): 387–413.
- Castells, Manuel. 2008. The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (March): 78–93.
- Chalmers, Adam William and Lisa Maria Dellmuth. 2015. Fiscal Redistribution and Public Support for European Integration. *European Union Politics* 16(3): 386–407.
- Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman. 2010. Dynamic Public Opinion: Communication Effects over Time. *American Political Science Review* 104(4): 633–680.
- Chong, Dennis, and James N. Druckman. 2007a. Framing Theory. *Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 103–126.
- Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman. 2007b. A Theory of Framing and Opinion Formation in Competitive Elite Environments. *Journal of Communication* 57: 99–118.
- Dai, Xinyuan. 2005. *Why Comply? The Domestic Constituency Mechanism*. *International Organization* 59 (2): 363-398.
- Della Porta, Donatella, and Sidney G. Tarrow. 2005. *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Dellmuth, Lisa Maria, and Jonas Tallberg. 2015. The Social Legitimacy of International Organisations: Interest Representation, Institutional Performance, and Confidence Extrapolation in the United Nations. *Review of International Studies* 41(3): 451-475.
- De Vries, Catherine E. and Erica E. Edwards. 2009. Taking Europe to Its Extremes: Extremist Parties and Public Euroscepticism. *Party Politics* 15: 5–28.

- Dingwerth, Klaus, Henning Schmidtke, and Tobias Weise. This volume. Speaking Democracy: Why International Organizations Adopt a Democratic Rhetoric.
- Druckman, James N., Cari Lynn Hennessy, Kristi St. Charles, and Jonathan Webber. 2010. Competing Rhetoric over Time: Frames versus Cues. *Journal of Politics* 72(1): 136-148.
- Druckman, James N. and Kjersten R. Nelson. 2003. Framing and Deliberation: How Citizen Conversation Limits Elite Influence. *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (4): 729–745.
- Druckman, James N. 2004. Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir)relevance of Framing Effects. *American Political Science Review* 98 (4): 671–686.
- Druckman, James N. and Arthur Lupia. 2000. Preference Formation. *Annual Review of Political Science* (3): 1–24.
- Druckman, James N. 2001a. Evaluating Framing Effects. *Journal of Economic Psychology* 22: 91–101.
- Druckman, James N. 2001b. On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame? *Journal of Politics* 63 (4): 1041–1066.
- Ecker-Ehrhardt, Matthias. 2015. Soziale Legitimität globaler Organisationen unter den Bedingungen kosmopolitischer Politisierung – eine Einstellungsanalyse. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift, Sonderheft* 49: 157-187.
- Ecker-Ehrhardt, Matthias. 2011. Cosmopolitan Politicization: How Perceptions of Interdependence Foster Citizens' Expectations in International Institutions. *European Journal of International Relations* 18 (3): 481–508.
- Ecker-Ehrhardt, Matthias and Bernhard Wessels. 2013. Input- oder Output-Politisierung internationaler Organisationen? Der kritische Blick der Bürger auf Demokratie und Leistung. In *Die Politisierung der Weltpolitik*, edited by Michael Zürn and Matthias Ecker-Erhardt, 36–60. Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag.

- Edwards, Martin S. 2009. Public Support for the International Economic Organizations: Evidence from Developing Countries. *Review of International Organizations* 4: 185–209.
- Esaiasson, Peter, Mikael Gilljam, and Mikael Persson. 2012. Which Decision-Making Arrangements Generate the Strongest Legitimacy Beliefs? Evidence from a Randomised Field Experiment. *European Journal of Political Research* 51: 785–808.
- Frangakis, Constantine E. and Donald B. Rubin. 1999. Addressing complications of intention-to-treat analysis in the combined presence of all-or-none treatment-noncompliance and subsequent missing outcomes. *Biometrika* 86(2): 365–379.
- Gabel, Matthew, and Kenneth Scheve. 2007. Estimating the Effect of Elite Communications on Public Opinion Using Instrumental Variables. *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (4): 1013–1028.
- Gallup International Association. 2005. *Voice of the People. ICPSR04636-v1*. Zürich: Gallup International Association.
- Gibson, James L., Gregory A. Caldeira, and Lester Kenyatta Spence. 2003. Measuring Attitudes toward the United States Supreme Court. *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (2): 354–367.
- Gourevitch, Peter A., David A. Lake, and Janice Gross Stein, eds. 2012. *The Credibility of Transnational NGOs: When Virtue is Not Enough*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grant, J. Tobin and Thomas J. Rudolph. 2003. Value Conflict, Group Affect, and the Issue of Campaign Finance. *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (3): 453–69.
- Gronau, Jennifer and Henning Schmidtke. Forthcoming. The Quest for Legitimacy in World Politics – International Institutions’ Legitimation Strategies. *Review of International Studies*.

- Halliday, Terence C., Susan Block-Lieb, and Bruce G. Carruthers. 2010. Rhetorical Legitimation: Global Scripts as Strategic Devices of International Organizations. *Socio-Economic Review* 8: 77–112.
- Hansen, Kasper M. 2007. The Sophisticated Public: The Effect of Competing Frames on Public Opinion. *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30(3): 377–96.
- Harteveld, Eelco, Tom van der Meer, and Catherine E. De Vries. 2013. In Europe We Trust? Exploring Three Logics of Trust in the European Union. *European Union Politics* 14 (4): 542–565.
- Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks. 2015. Delegation and Pooling in International Organizations. *Review of International Organizations* 10: 305-328.
- Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks. 2005. Calculation, Community and Cues: Public Opinion on European Integration. *European Union Politics* 6 (4): 419–443.
- Hurd, Ian. 2007. *After Anarchy: Legitimacy and Power in the United Nations Security Council*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hurrelmann, Achim and Steffen Schneider, eds. 2016. *The Legitimacy of Regional Integration in Europe and the Americas*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Inglehart, Ronald. 1997. *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Countries*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Inglehart, Ronald and Christian Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Iyengar, Shanto and Donald R. Kinder. 1987. *News that Matter: Television and American Opinion*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Iyengar, Shanto and Nicholas A. Valentino. 2000. Who Says What? Source Credibility as a Mediator of Campaign Advertising. In *Elements of Reason: Cognition, Choice, and the*

- Bounds of Rationality*, edited by Arthur Lupia, Mathew D. McCubbins, and Samuel L. Popkin, 108–129. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jacoby, William G. 2000. Issue Framing and Public Opinion on Government Spending. *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (4): 750–67.
- Jamal, Amaney and Irfan Nooruddin. 2010. The Democratic Utility of Trust: A Cross-National Analysis. *Journal of Politics* 72 (1): 45.
- Johnson, Tana. 2011. Guilt by Association: The Link between States' Influence and the Legitimacy of Intergovernmental Organizations. *Review of International Organizations* 6: 57–84.
- Kahneman, Daniel and Amos Tversky. 2007. Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk. *Econometrica* 47 (2): 263–292.
- Kalm, Sara and Anders Uhlin. 2015. *Civil Society and the Governance of Development. Opposing Global Institutions*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Karp, Jeffrey A., Susan A. Banducci, and Shaun Bowler. 2003. To Know it is to Love it?: Satisfaction with Democracy in the European Union. *Comparative Political Studies* 36 (3): 271–292.
- Khagram, Sanjeev, James V. Riker, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds. 2002. *Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Kinder, Donald R. 1998. Communication and Opinion. *Annual Review of Political Science* 1: 167–197.
- Ladd, Jonathan McDonald. 2010. The Neglected Power of Elite Opinion Leadership to Produce Antipathy toward the News Media: Evidence from a Survey Experiment. *Political Behavior* 32 (1): 29-50.

- Lupia, Arther. 2000. Who can Persuade Whom? Implications from the Nexus of Psychology and Rational Choice Theory. In *Political Psychology*, edited by James H. Kuklinski. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lupia, Arthur and Mathew D. McCubbins. 1998. *The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need to Learn?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maier, Michaela, Silke Adam, and Jürgen Maier. 2012. The Impact of Identity and Economic Cues on Citizens' EU Support: An Experimental Study on the Effects of Party Communication in the Run-Up to the 2009 European Parliament Elections. *European Union Politics* 13 (4): 580-603.
- Martin, Lisa L. 2000. *Democratic Commitments: Legislatures and International Cooperation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Miller, Joanne M. and Jon A. Krosnick. 2000. News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations : Politically Citizens Are Guided by a Trusted Source. *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (2): 301–315.
- Moravcsik, Andrew. 1993. Introduction: Integrating International and Domestic Theories of International Bargaining. In *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics*, edited by Peter B. Evans, Harold K. Jacobson, and Robert D. Putnam, 3–42. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Morse, Julia and Robert O. Keohane. 2014. Contested Multilateralism. *Review of International Organizations* 9: 385-412.
- Mutz, Diana C. 2011. *Population-Based Survey Experiments*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Nelson, Thomas E. and Zoe M. Oxley. 1999. Issue Framing Effects on Belief Importance and Opinion. *Journal of Politics* 61 (4): 1040.

- Newton, Kenneth, and Pippa Norris. 2000. Confidence in Public Institutions: Faith, Culture or Performance? In *Disaffected Democracies: What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries?* Edited by Susan J. Pharr and Robert D. Putnam. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Nicholson, Stephen P. 2011. Polarizing Cues. *American Journal of Political Science* 56(1): 52-66.
- Nicholson, Stephen P., Robert M. Howard. 2003. Framing Support for the Supreme Court in the aftermath of Bush v. Gore. *Journal of Politics* 65 (3): 676–95
- Norris, Pippa. 2009. Confidence in the United Nations: Cosmopolitan and Nationalistic Attitudes. In *The International System, Democracy and Values*, edited by Yilmaz Esmer and Thorleif Petterson, 17–49. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis.
- Nullmeier, Frank, Dominika Biegona, Martin Nonhoff, Henning Schmidtke, and Steffen Schneider, eds. 2010. *Prekäre Legitimitäten: Rechtfertigung von Herrschaft in der postnationalen Konstellation*. Frankfurt a. M.: Campus.
- O'Brien, Robert, Anne M. Goetz, Jan A. Scholte, and Michael Williams. 2000. *Contested Global Governance: Multilateral Economic Institutions and Global Social Movements*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Putnam, Robert D. 1988. Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games. *International Organization* 42 (3): 427–460.
- Rauh, Christian and Michael Zürn. This volume. Legitimation and Delegitimation of Global Economic Governance? Civil Society Evaluations of the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO in the International Press.
- Ray, Leonard .2003. When Parties Matter: The Conditional Influence of Party Positions on Voter Opinions about European Integration. *Journal of Politics* 65(4): 978–994.

Rocabert, Jofre, Frank Schimmelfennig, Thomas Winzen, and Loriana Crasnic. This volume.

The Rise of International Parliamentary Institutions: Authority and Legitimacy.

Rubin, D. B. 1976. Inference and Missing Data. *Biometrika* 63: 581–592.

Scharpf, Fritz. 1999. *Governing in Europe: Effective and Democratic?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schlipphak, Bernd. 2015. Measuring Attitudes toward Regional Organizations outside Europe. *Review of International Organizations* 10: 351-375.

Schmidt, Vivien A. 2013. Democracy and Legitimacy in the European Union Revisited: Input, Output and ‘Throughput’. *Political Studies* 61: 2–22.

Schneider, Steffen, Henning Schmidtke, and Frank Nullmeier. This volume. From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus? Elite Discourse on the Legitimacy of International Organizations.

Schuck, Andreas R. T. and Claes H. De Vreese. 2006. Between Risk and Opportunity: News Framing and Its Effects on Public Support for EU Enlargement. *European Journal of Communication* 21 (1): 5–32.

Suchman, Marc C. 1995. Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches. *The Academy of Management Review* 20(3): 571–610.

Tallberg, Jonas and Michael Zürn. This volume. Legitimacy and Legitimation in International Organizations.

Taylor, Shelley E. and Susan T. Fiske. 1978. Saliency, Attention, and Attribution: Top of the Head Phenomena. In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 11, edited by Leonard Berkowitz, 249–288. New York: Academic Press.

Tomz, Michael .2007 Domestic Audience Costs in international relations: An experimental approach. *International Organization* 61(4): 821–840.

- Tversky, Amos and Daniel Kahneman. 1981. The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice. *Science* 211(4481): 453-458.
- Tyler, Tom R. 2006. Psychological Perspectives on Legitimacy and Legitimation. *Annual Review of Psychology* 57: 375–400.
- Van der Meer, Tom. 2010. In What We Trust? A Multi-level Study into Trust in Parliament as an Evaluation of State Characteristics. *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 76(3): 517–536.
- Van der Meer, Tom and Paul Dekker. 2011. Trustworthy States, Trusting Citizens? A Multilevel Study into Objective and Subjective determinants of Political Trust. In *Political Trust. Why Context Matters*, edited by Marc Hooghe and Sonja Zmerli, 95-116. Colchester, UK: ECPR Press.
- Van Deth, Jan W. ed. 2013. *Comparative Politics: The Problem of Equivalence*. Colchester: ECPR Press.
- Voeten, Erik. 2013. Public Opinion and the Legitimacy of International Courts. *Theoretical Inquiries in Law* 14(2): 411-436.
- Weber, Max. 1922/1978. *Economy and Society*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Zaller, John R. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zaller, John R. and Stanley Feldman. 1992. A Simple Theory of Survey Response: Answering Questions Versus Revealing Preferences. *American Journal of Political Science* 36 (3): 579–616.
- Zaum, Dominik (ed.). 2013. *Legitimizing International Organizations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zürn, Michael, Martin Binder, and Matthias Ecker-Ehrhardt. 2012. International Authority and Its Politicization. *International Theory* 4 (1): 69–106.

Tables and Figures in Text

TABLE 1. *Vignettes: Factorial design*

<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Tone</i>	<i>Ground</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Wording of vignette</i>
<i>Treatment 1</i>	+	Procedure	CSOs	As you may know, most civil society organizations praise the (IO) for being highly democratic.
<i>Treatment 2</i>	–			As you may know, most civil society organizations criticize the (IO) for being highly undemocratic.
<i>Treatment 3</i>	+	Performance		As you may know, most civil society organizations praise the (IO) for doing a very good job in trying to solve the problems it faces.
<i>Treatment 4</i>	–			As you may know, most civil society organizations criticize the (IO) for doing a very poor job in trying to solve the problems it faces.
<i>Treatment 5</i>	+	Procedure	IOs	As you may know, the (IO) prides itself for being highly democratic.
<i>Treatment 6</i>	–			As you may know, the (IO) admits to being highly undemocratic.
<i>Treatment 7</i>	+	Performance		As you may know, the (IO) prides itself for doing a very good job in trying to solve the problems it faces.
<i>Treatment 8</i>	–			As you may know, the (IO) admits to doing a very bad job when trying to solve the problems it faces.
<i>Treatment 9</i>	+	Procedure	Government	As you may know, the (COUNTRY) government praises the (IO) for being highly democratic.
<i>Treatment 10</i>	–			As you may know, the (COUNTRY) government criticizes the (IO) for being highly undemocratic.
<i>Treatment 11</i>	+	Performance		As you may know, the (COUNTRY) government praises the (IO) for doing a very good job in trying to solve the problems it faces.
<i>Treatment 12</i>	–			As you may know, the (COUNTRY) government criticizes the (IO) for doing a very poor job in trying to solve the problems it faces.

Notes: Wording of vignettes. After receiving the treatment, people were asked how much confidence they have on IOs: “How much confidence do you personally have in the UN? Answer categories range from 0 (no confidence at all) to 10 (complete confidence); don’t know”. The control group receives the question about confidence without a vignette.

TABLE 2. *Object of framing: IOs' procedures and performances*

<i>Treatment group</i>	<i>Group of comparison</i>	<i>Valence</i>	
		<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Control</i>	0.204** (0.063) N=13109	-0.329*** (0.062) N=12963
<i>Performance</i>	<i>Control</i>	0.191** (0.063) N=13225	-0.310*** (0.062) N=13132
<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Performance</i>	0.013 (0.040) N=13146	-0.019 (0.038) N=12907

Notes: Significance levels: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Difference-in-means tests using OLS regression analysis. Numbers are unstandardized regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses that are clustered at the level of individuals (see, for a discussion of reporting unstandardized regression coefficients as indicators for effect size, Breugh 2003). Note that the coefficients are based on different samples.

TABLE 3. *Elite credibility: CSOs, IOs, and national governments*

<i>Treatment group</i>	<i>Group of comparison</i>	<i>Valence</i>	
		<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
<i>CSO</i>	<i>Control</i>	0.310*** (0.066) <i>N</i> =10962	-0.259*** (0.065) <i>N</i> =10846
<i>IO</i>	<i>Control</i>	0.053 (0.066) <i>N</i> =11000	-0.386*** (0.065) <i>N</i> =10972
<i>Government</i>	<i>Control</i>	0.231*** (0.066) <i>N</i> =10966	-0.311*** (0.065) <i>N</i> =10871
<i>CSO</i>	<i>IO</i>	0.257*** (0.048) <i>N</i> =8774	-0.127** (0.047) <i>N</i> =8630
<i>Government</i>	<i>IO</i>	0.177*** (0.048) <i>N</i> =8778	0.105 (0.047) <i>N</i> =8655
<i>CSO</i>	<i>Government</i>	0.080 (0.049) <i>N</i> =8740	0.051 (0.047) <i>N</i> =8529

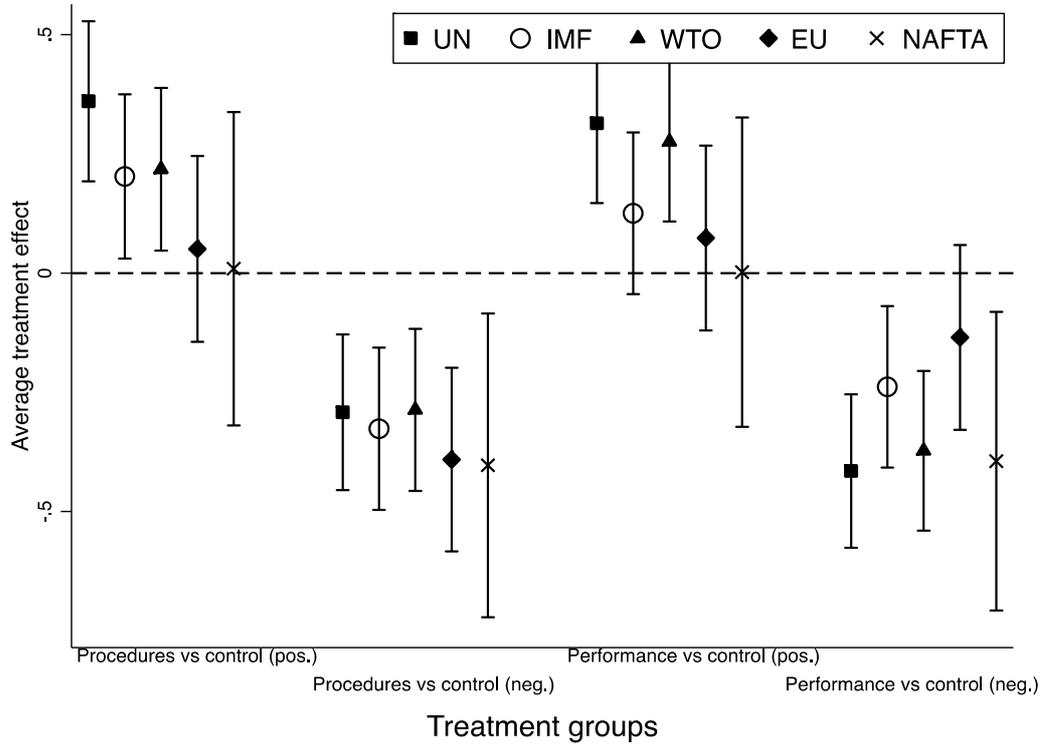
Notes: Significance levels: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Difference-in-means tests using OLS regression analysis. Numbers are unstandardized regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses that are clustered at the level of individuals. Note that the coefficients are based on different samples.

TABLE 4. *Valence: positive vs. negative framing*

<i>Treatment group</i>	<i>Group of comparison</i>	
<i>Positive</i>	<i>Control</i>	0.198*** (0.060) N=19740
<i>Negative</i>	<i>Control</i>	-0.320*** (0.059) N=19501
<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	0.517*** (0.029) N=26053

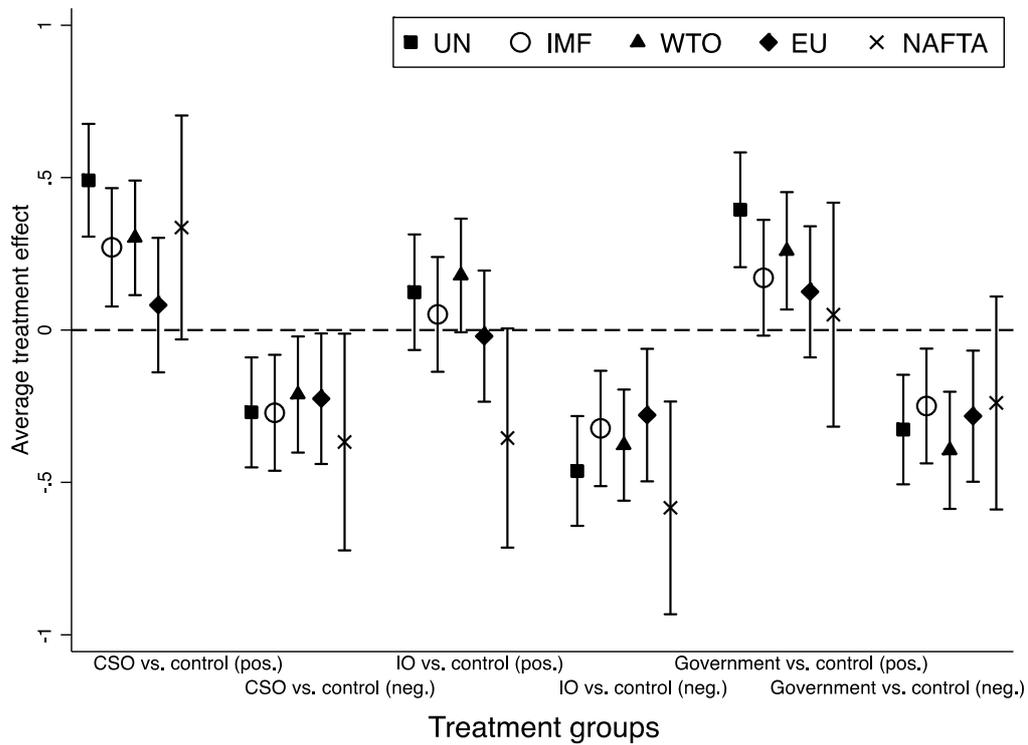
Notes: Significance levels: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Difference-in-means tests using OLS regression analysis. Numbers are unstandardized regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses that are clustered at the level of individuals. Note that the coefficients are based on different samples.

FIGURE 1. *Object of framing: IOs' procedures and performances*



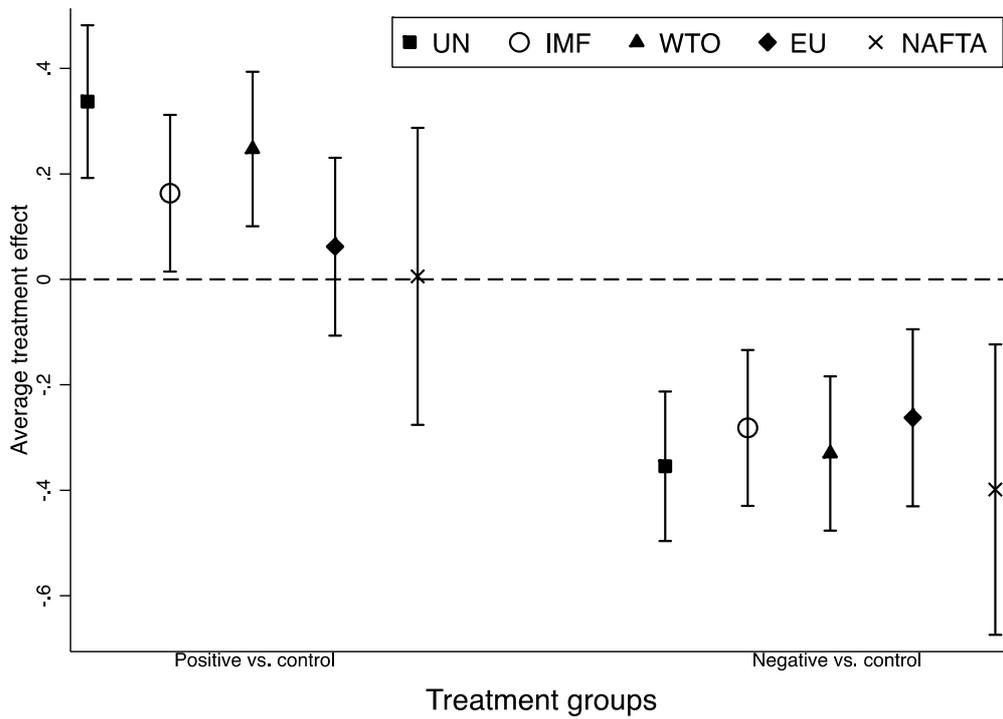
Notes: ATE with their respective confidence intervals. ATE are calculated using difference-in-means tests using OLS regression analysis. The ATE are unstandardized regression coefficients. See Table B6 in the online appendix.

FIGURE 2. Elite credibility: CSOs, IOs, and national governments



Notes: ATE with their respective confidence intervals. ATE are calculated using difference-in-means tests using OLS regression analysis. The ATE are unstandardized regression coefficients. See Table B6 in the online appendix.

FIGURE 3. Valence: positive vs. negative framing



Notes: ATE with their respective confidence intervals. ATE are calculated using difference-in-means tests using OLS regression analysis. The ATE are unstandardized regression coefficients. See Table B6 in the online appendix.