WORKING PAPERS

'Targeting Lethal Weapons'
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Transnational Disarmament Campaigns

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Abstract

We theorize the membership, target-selection, and timing of transnational advocacy campaigns as a function of longstanding professional networks between NGOs and individual professional campaigners. Unlike previous scholarship that focuses on the role of powerful "gatekeeper" NGOs whose central position within transnational issue-networks allows them to promote or block specific issues at will, we draw on recent work in sociology and organizational studies to bring into focus a wider community of individuals and organizations whose competition for professional growth and "issue-control" (Henriksen and Seabrooke 2016) shape the transnational advocacy agenda. In doing so we elaborate and qualify existing notions of gatekeeping pioneered by Bob (2005, 2010) and Carpenter (2011, 2014). Highly connected and resource-rich NGOs are often less able to "set" or "vet" agendas than previous scholarship suggests. Instead, porous organizational borders and "revolving doors" imply that advocacy agendas are shaped by professional networks that develop *between* organizations. Efforts by individual professional staff to steer the agenda towards issues that fit their personal expertise and career ambitions—rather than wider political context or longstanding organizational commitments to specific issues—play a crucial role in transnational agenda-setting.

Keywords

Transnational advocacy, humanitarian disarmament, network theory, transnational professionals.

On 23 April 2013, a human shaped "friendly" robot strolled across Parliament Square in Westminster, handing out bumper stickers with the slogan #bankillerrobots.[1] The event marked the launch of the International Campaign to Ban Killer Robots (ICSKR). The ICSKR is the latest in a series of high-profile transnational advocacy campaigns launched since 1992 with the aim of pressuring states to outlaw different weapons; from anti-personal landmines and cluster bombs, to small arms, blinding lasers, depleted uranium munitions, nuclear weapons, and the use of explosives in populated areas. Whilst they have varied in success, these campaigns have all involved a similar cast of actors and adopted similar methods of advocacy.

We seek to explain the membership, target-selection, and timing of transnational advocacy campaigns as a function of long-established professional networks between NGOs and individual campaigners. Existing international relations (IR) scholarship highlights several factors that guide the selection of campaign targets. Some explanations focus on *intrinsic* attributes of issues. For example, scholars have argued that transnational advocates are likely to focus on issues that involve direct harm to vulnerable groups, or that can be summarized as a simple, one-line message apt for mobilizing public opinion (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 27; Khagram et al. 2002; Price 2003; Tarrow 2005; Carpenter 2014). Others emphasize contextual aspects of the wider political environment, such as the "political salience" of an issue (Tarrow 2005; Betsill and Correll 2008; Carpenter 2014; Garcia 2015), or the availability of extant norms and practices to which an issue can be linked (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Price 2003, 596). A third line of argument focuses on opportunities for strategic partnerships between NGOs and "middle-power" states that facilitate access to international negotiation fora (Bower 2016, Rutherford and Matthew 2003; Bolton and Nash 2010; Garcia 2015), while a fourth stresses structural relationships between advocacy groups, highlighting the disproportionate role of powerful "gatekeeper" NGOs in shaping the transnational advocacy agenda (Bob 2005, 2010; Carpenter 2011, 2014; Carpenter et al. 2014). As regards campaign *timing*, most extant theories stress some notion of "political ripeness" triggered by the advent of high-profile political deliberations or by dramatic events such as war or famine (e.g., opcit).

Seen against this extant scholarship, the ICSKR presents a puzzle. Unlike anti-personal landmines that have been in use for centuries, or cluster munitions which have claimed tens of thousands of civilian lives since the 1990s,[2] "killer robots" (or Lethal Autonomous Weapons, LAWS) have yet to be fully developed or used. Thus, there is no readily identifiable group of vulnerable victims, and no evidence of a mounting humanitarian crisis that can mobilize public and political concern. Second, given the complexity of autonomous weapons, the case for a ban on their development cannot be stated as a simple, catchy message. Third, unlike previous successful weapons ban campaigns such as the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (fronted by Canada), or the campaigns against cluster munitions and arms transfers (supported by Norway and the UK respectively), the ICSKR so far lacks a willing state sponsor. Fourth, although LAWS share certain features with other weapons that transnational civil society has successfully campaigned against in the past (e.g., anti-personal landmines that also kill remotely, or blinding lasers which were also targeted "pre-emptively"), powerful voices within the humanitarian disarmament community suggest that robotic weapons may actually *promote* humanitarian goals by reducing collateral damage caused by human error, thereby weakening the link to existing prohibition norms (Arkin 2015; Kellenberger 2013 and authors interview, April 10, 2016.). Finally, at the time the ICSKR launched, two global weapons ban campaigns were already underway; the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW) which seeks to limit use of explosive weapons in populated areas, and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), implying that political attention and activist resources were largely absorbed by ongoing campaign activities. While some of these "unfavorable" issue features have also characterized past weapons ban campaigns,[3] their

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[1]   https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/2013/04/campaign-launch-in-london/ accessed 01-03-2018.

[2]   https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/clusterataglance.

[3]   E.g., blinding lasers were also targeted by transnational society as an emerging weapons technology.

combination makes killer robots a particularly challenging target, whose selection is not easily explained by existing theory.

So why was the ICSKR launched? Why did leading disarmament NGOs add an issue with seemingly unfavorable issue characteristics and low political salience to an already crowded disarmament agenda? To answer this question, we turn to theoretical accounts that focus on the structure of inter-organizational relationships to explain why some issues rise to the top of the advocacy agenda (Bob 2005; Carpenter 2007, 2011, 2014; Murdie 2014). But unlike previous accounts that focus on the role of powerful "gatekeeper" NGOs, whose central position within transnational issue networks allow them to promote or block specific issues at will, we broaden our focus to a wider community of individuals and organizations whose competition for professional growth and "issue-control" (Henriksen and Seabrooke 2016) shape the transnational advocacy agenda in complex and sometimes paradoxical ways. In doing so, we draw on recent work in sociology and organizational studies to elaborate and qualify existing notions of gatekeeping pioneered by Bob (2005, 2010) and Carpenter (2011, 2014). Highly connected and resource-rich NGOs are often less able to directly control agendas than these accounts suggest. Instead, porous organizational borders and "revolving doors" imply that advocacy agendas are often shaped by individual-level professional networks that develop *between* organizations. Efforts by individuals to steer the agenda towards issues that fit their personal expertise and career ambitions— rather than wider political context or long-standing organizational commitments to specific issues—are a crucial element of transnational agenda-setting.

Our argument has two levels. The first focuses on dynamics of cooperation and competition between organizations that form part of transnational issue-networks; the second on relationships between individual professionals within these organizations. At the *organizational* level, we argue that previous investments in task-specific resources prompt NGOs to focus on relatively uniform set of issues which fit their existing expertise and established working relationships, thereby introducing a high degree of path-dependency in transnational advocacy campaigns—both in terms of what alliances form between NGOs, what types of issues are targeted, and what normative frames and advocacy methods are adopted.

At the *individual* staff-level we draw on work by Henriksen and Seabrook (2016, 2018) to suggest that the porous boundaries of transnational organizations imply that agenda-setting power frequently rests with highly-connected experts or "issue-professionals" rather than with advocacy organizations as such. These expert individuals are empowered by specialized knowledge and by personal professional networks which traverse organizational boundaries and allow them to shape the stances of their organizational "hosts" in ways that play to their particular expertise (ibid.; also Goddard 2009). Extant scholarship has focused on individual campaigners in their role as "norm entrepreneurs" (e.g. Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). We instead focus attention on individuals as career professionals whose expert knowledge and high social capital allow them to shape collective agendas. In doing so, we expound the organizational processes of target selection identified in previous theoretical accounts of transnational advocacy.

To illustrate our argument, we analyze three "early" transnational disarmament campaigns—the campaigns to ban landmines, cluster munitions, and small arms—and three more recent campaigns: the International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons, the International Network against Explosive Weapons, and the ICSKR. For each campaign, we draw on a combination of different sources of information (obtained through hyperlink analysis, web-based content analysis, personal interviews with campaigners, and publicly available information about individual career paths) to ascertain to what extent issue-selection and campaign membership are influenced by previous campaigns, and/or by efforts by individual campaigners to mold the advocacy agenda to fit their specific professional expertise. In doing so, we combine standard social network analysis with *longitudinal* network analysis which allows us to observe how transnational networks are configured and reconfigured across time. Rather than provide a typical "snapshot graph" of a single campaign network which may reveal merely transitory alignments (Vedres and Stark 2010), we thus analyze the transnational disarmament community as a broader issue-network that has combined and re-combined in successive campaign

coalitions. This temporal dimension allows us to provide a detailed illustration and analysis of the path-dependent processes that shape the advocacy agenda over time.

Our analysis explicates several aspects of transnational advocacy campaigns. First is the succession of transnational campaign coalitions (TCCs) with similar organizational membership and similar normative framings despite wide variation in the issues targeted. Second is the recurrence of a small group of issue-professionals who occupy central positions as campaign managers or steering group members in successive TCCs. These highly connected individuals move frequently between organizations but stay centrally positioned in the wider issue-network thanks to their high social capital. This pattern, we argue, is best explained—not by intrinsic features of campaign issues or activists' strong moral commitment to certain issues—but rather by prior investments in professional relationships which give rise to highly specialized expertise at both the organizational and individual level.

Third, our analysis also explicates the *timing* of TCCs. In contrast to previous research which has emphasized growing political salience or "issue-ripeness" to account for the timing of advocacy campaigns (Carpenter 2014; Tarrow 1998), we find that timing depends less on when issues are political "ripe", and more (a) on when time and resources are freed up within the transnational disarmament community to address new problems, and (b) on competition between NGOs and individual professionals to establish issue-control by being first to address new issues. Finally, our analysis accounts for what we label "campaign pathologies" – situations in which fierce competition for issue-control leads NGOs to launch campaigns for which funding, organizational resources and political support are critically missing, leading to poor prospects for success and diverting attention from other causes.

The next section defines the central terms of our analysis. The following section presents our theoretical argument regarding issue-selection, campaign membership and timing, while the third section applies our framework to six global disarmament campaigns. While our empirical focus is on disarmament advocacy, our analysis has implications for transnational advocacy more broadly, which we discuss in the concluding section.

Definitions - what are we studying?

We focus on campaign activities within transnational "issue-networks" (TINs). TINs are similar to the transnational advocacy networks (TANs) popularized by Keck and Sikkink (1998, 2) in that they comprise "sets of organizations that work, directly or indirectly, on a set of related issues and are connected by dense exchanges of information." As defined by Keck and Sikkink, TANs are "bound by shared values" and "often involve individuals advocating policy changes that cannot be easily linked to rationalist understandings of their 'interests'" (1998, 9). Since we focus on individual and organizational incentives that often fit a rationalist understanding of interests, we therefore prefer the more neutral concept of a transnational *issue-network,* which we conceive simply as a network of transnational actors that work on a set of related issues (see Carpenter 2011). TINs may include diverse actors such as social movement groups, NGOs, governments, international organizations, universities, and private corporations. Thus, Carpenter (2011, 73) identifies a "global humanitarian disarmament issue-network" consisting of NGOs, specialized UN agencies, and middle-power governments that promote disarmament from a humanitarian perspective—that is, with a focus on reducing civilian harms rather than protecting national security (Docherty et al. 2018, 1).

TINs often mobilize around specific transnational campaign coalitions (TCCs), defined as "concerted efforts by multiple organizations lobbying for a specific outcome around a certain issue" (Khagram et al. 2002, 7). Whereas an issue-network is defined by informal contacts among actors working on similar issues, a TCC involves formal ties, centralized mandate articulation and coordinated tactics in pursuit of a specific purpose (ibid.) and, as such, have a specific membership and duration.

What Shapes Transnational Advocacy Campaigns?

A wide literature in IR focuses on how NGOs select issues to campaign on. Common to many perspectives within this literature is the assumption that, among myriad deserving global causes, certain causes are more likely to be picked up than others—due either to their political expediency, or to their fit with established norms and practices or with specific organizational interests. While this view does not negate an understanding of transnational advocates as motivated by moral impulses, it implies a broadly rationalistic and goal-driven approach which conceives of advocates as "principled instrumentalists" that simultaneously promote ethical and instrumental goals (Mitchell and Schmitz 2014; Prakash and Gugerty 2010).

We focus here on a specific sub-set of "principled instrumentalist" accounts which highlight structural relations between advocacy organizations as a key explanatory factor, since these are closest to our own view. Such accounts hold that, for any given issue-area in transnational society, some NGOs hold disproportionate agenda-setting power due to occupying a central position within a wider issue-network. In the realm of human rights, Bob (2005, 2010) finds that a small group of "gatekeeper" NGOs control the bulk of organizational resources (e.g., staff, funding, political access and credibility) which enables them to shape the collective agenda. Carpenter (2011, 2014) finds that humanitarian disarmament advocacy is strongly influenced by the decisions of a few powerful NGOs - specifically the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Human Rights Watch (HRW). Once these actors commit resources to an issue, she argues, others are likely to jump on board, "creating a bandwagoning effect in coalitions once one or two key players join and dampening issue-proliferation if they do not" (2011, 76) (for similar views, see Garcia 2015; Stroup and Wong 2017).

We agree that some NGOs play a larger role in transnational agenda-setting than others. However, the gatekeeping power of traditionally powerful NGOs is not as unrivalled as extant studies suggest. Rather than a steep hierarchy in which a few "superpower" NGOs control the bulk of resources and therefore can determine issue-selection, we argue that the core of the transnational disarmament issue-network comprises a relatively stable coalition of both small and large NGOs, interwoven by a sub-network of "issue-professionals" that move relatively fluidly between these organizations. The result is a more decentralized agenda-setting process in which collaboration and competition for issue-control at both individual and organizational levels determines what issues rise to the top, when.

Organizational Level: Path-Dependent Coalition Formation

When explaining the membership of TCCs, our main contention is that history matters. Building effective campaign coalitions requires large investments of time and resources to establish formal and informal ties between members, to agree joint objectives, and to create a central institution to facilitate information exchange and speak on behalf of the coalition. Once paid, these costs are not borne continuously but diminish over time, as joint procedures become routinized within individual organizations, and as bonds of trust develop across organizations, lowering costs of information-exchange. Like other types of international institutions, TCCs are therefore less costly to maintain than to create (Haddad 2013, 188; Keohane 1984).

In addition to being cheaper to maintain than to create, TCCs are subject to increasing returns to initial investments. Scholars have highlighted a range of benefits from NGO participation in TCCs, including increased access to information, economies-of-scale due to sharing and pooling resources, and increased visibility and legitimacy as a result of "speaking with one voice" (Yanacopolis 2005). The value of such benefits is likely to increase over time, as members converge on shared routines and work processes. Again, this creates incentives to keep existing coalitions active rather than disband and build new ones from scratch (Haddad 2013, 188). Although specific TCCs may come to an end after a stated goal has been achieved, rather than disperse across the wider issue-network, coalition members are likely to remain closely connected. When new issues arise, new coalitions are likely to (re)form along similar

lines to pre-existing ones. Previous ties make campaign formation easier and cheaper, since routines of collaboration are already familiar, reducing coordination costs.

Organizational Level: Path-dependent issue-selection and strategic framing

To thrive advocacy organizations must periodically select new issues to work on. Here history, in the form of accumulated experience and resources, also plays a role. Campaigning for specific issues requires NGOs to invest in issue-specific knowledge and expertise, relating, for example (in the case of disarmament) to technical standards, UN protocols, international law, military data, and procedural rules and customs of relevant diplomatic fora. This technical expertise does not disappear or lose relevance with the end of each campaign, but accumulates over time, lowering the cost of participating in new campaigns aimed at similar targets. As one TCC winds up and NGOs begin to search for new problems to target, they are thus likely look for issues that are similar to ones they have campaigned on in the past, and to address those issues in ways that resemble previous strategic frames and tactics, maximizing opportunities to draw on existence expertise.

Whilst we are not the first to argue that NGOs tend to adapt issues and strategic approaches with which they have a pre-existing "organizational fit" (e.g. Bob, 2005; Haddad 2013, 188-9), it is important to stress that our argument runs counter to several existing explanations. For example, scholars have argued that NGOs are likely to select campaign issues that resemble issues already subject to moral opprobrium, so that new norms can be "grafted on" to existing ones (Price 1998, 628; Finnemore and Sikkink 2005, 897). Others have proposed a learning process whereby a particular strategic approach (such as documenting innocent civilian victims) has been found, over time, to be particularly successful (e.g. Keck and Sikkink 1998). If such explanations were valid, we would expect to observe strong similarities in the nature of the successive disarmament problems addressed by TCCs, implying that these issues have lent themselves naturally to a "one-fits-all" strategic approach. Conversely, we expect NGOs to select campaign issues that allow recycling of previous strategies, independently of these issues' fit with pre-existing norms and practices or their immediate consonance with the wider political environment in which the campaigns unfold.

Organizational Level: Endogenously defined campaign timing

In addition to deciding what issues to target, an important choice facing transnational advocates is *when* to launch new campaigns. Individual disarmament issues are often worked on by NGOs for decades before becoming subject of coordinated campaigns (Carpenter 2014; Garcia 2015). To explain timing, scholars have emphasized issue-ripeness—the notion that "the time is right to lobby decision-makers on an issue due to its growing political salience" (Carpenter 2014, 67, 110). For example, advocates may seize windows of opportunity presented by major policy reports or legislative debates, or by catastrophic events such as war (ibid. 461). But while dramatic events have boosted some TCCs (e.g., the use of cluster bombs by Israel in the war Lebanon in 2016 provided a poignant focal point for the campaign to ban cluster munitions), the broader history of transnational disarmament advocacy provides limited support for the notion that political salience is a prerequisite for campaign activation. Carpenter's path-breaking analysis of humanitarian disarmament advocacy (2011, 80) showed that, as of 2009, depleted uranium weapons, blinding lasers, autonomous weapons, and explosive weapons had <u>zero</u> salience within the humanitarian disarmament community. No dramatic events or high level political discussions took place to thrust these issues onto the international stage. Nonetheless, within a few years of her study, TCCs were launched on all four issues.

Rather than being governed by exogenous events, we argue that campaign timing is shaped by dynamics *internal* to the disarmament issue-network, including when organizational capacity becomes available to target new issues. As one TCC winds up, advocates have their agendas freed to focus on new tasks. In considering how to commit resources they are likely to select issues that allow them to draw on pre-existing expertise, irrespective of whether these issues appear politically "ripe". A second

determinant of timing arises from incentives to control how issues are framed and who is permitted to work on them.[4] While NGOs benefit from participating in campaign coalitions that pool resources and amplify their voice, preferences often differ over how to frame specific issues, and what forms of expertise to draw on (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 10; Stroup and Wong 2017). Once a collective frame is chosen, and centralized campaign structures created to articulate common goals, it can be politically and financially costly to change tack. Thus, early involvement—as official campaign coordinators or members of a steering committee—can be vital in ensuring influence over strategic framing (Lake and Wong 2005; Carpenter 2011, 74). As a result, the end of a TCC will often trigger a rush to define and launch the next "big issue" as a way to establish issue-control.

Individual Level: The pivotal role of issue-professionals

Most scholarship on transnational advocacy networks has taken organizations as the main unit of analysis. However, a narrow focus on organizations as actors may overlook the important role of individual activists. While some disarmament NGOs specialize on specific weapons systems, many organizations work across wider sets of human security and human rights issues. For example, HRW, Women's International League For Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and Amnesty International work not only on humanitarian disarmament, but also on women's and children's rights, political discrimination, and development. In any given campaign, they do not participate with their full organizational apparatus, but with only a small segment of professionals within the organization. Thus, while TCCs may comprise of hundreds of NGOs that are formally signed up to a campaign goal, their activities and influence are often the result of professional collaboration between a small group of advocates that specialize on similar issues (Alcade 2014, 237).

A second reason for focusing on the role of individuals is that the boundaries of NGOs are porous (see Henriksen and Seabrooke 2016, 2018). Activists and other professionals may belong to one organization, but work more closely with a broader movement or issue-network (DeMars and Dijkzeul 2015). It is also common for activists to move between organizations, their professional careers being defined more strongly by working on specific issues than belonging to a specific organization (Henriksen and Seabooke 2016). Thus Alcade (2014, 237) finds that "occasionally, the same individual is part of an NGO that lobbies the diplomats, two years later is working for his or her government on this issue, and another two years later is representing UNICEF or another UN agency on this topic". An case in point is John Borrie who served as Deputy for Disarmament at New Zealand's Permanent Mission to the UN (1999-2002), then joined the Arms Division of the ICRC before becoming Chief of Research at UNIDIR.

Borrie provides an example of what Henriksen and Seabrooke (2016) label an "issue-professional"— an individual whose long experience of working on a given issue has endowed him/her with particular expertise that is not bound by specific organizations or organizational values. In addition to possessing highly specialized skills, issue-professionals are often "multiple insiders" through "shared membership or participation in events, organizations, committees, missions, expert groups, etc., through which they build their issue-specific personal networks, but also get access to varied organizational contexts" (2016, 723). This unique "social capital" means they are well placed to orchestrate collective action (Suddaby and Viale 2011, 435). Henriksen and Seabrooke highlight how issue-professionals operate across two-level professional and organizational networks to control how issues are treated (2016, 723). First, they note close ties to experts in other organizations allow issue-professionals to act as "brokers", bringing together individual and organizational resources around projects that fit their interests (2016, 18, 2018, 64; Greenwood and Suddaby 2006, 435; Goddard 2009). Second, issue-professionals may use ties to professionals in other organizations to push a specific agenda against competing factions within their own organization. For example, an issue-professional working on a specific disarmament issue in an

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[4] This notion of competition for issue-control draws closely on Henriksen and Seabrooke 2016, 2018.

NGO that focuses mainly on human rights may wish to switch attention to economic development aspects of the issue but meet opposition from human rights experts within the organization. By leveraging ties to outside organizations—say, national or UN agencies—s/he may succeed in building political support for the issue based on a developmental approach, thereby convincing skeptical colleagues to accept a different frame. If facing continued resistance within their own organizations, issue-professionals can use their multiple-insider status to move between organizations, selecting the most hospitable venue for advancing issues that fit their professional objectives (Henriksen and Seabrooke 2016, 16-7; Vedres and Stark 2010).

We expect the pivotal role of issue-professionals to lead to a narrowing of transnational advocacy agendas. While NGOs face incentives to work on related issues across time, theoretically the broad portfolios of NGOs such as HRW or WILPF affords considerable flexibility in choosing what issues to campaign on according to changing political contexts. By contrast, individual campaigners often invest heavily in acquiring specialized knowledge, and in building professional networks around specific approaches to a narrower set of issues. As one TCC winds up, rather than investing in new skills and building new professional networks, such professionals are likely to search for opportunities to draw on pre-existing competences and social ties. As a result of the influence of issue-professionals, we expect TCCs to exhibit "small world" characteristics (Watts 1999) insofar as issue-selection and campaign membership are strongly influenced by pre-established professional ties at staff-level.

Cases and Expectations

We have argued that the membership, strategic framing and timing of TCCs are shaped by instrumental incentives internal to the disarmament issue-network (such as organizational growth or individual professional career advancement), rather than by exogenous events. The observable implications of our argument are three-fold: First, we expect new campaign coalitions to form among NGOs that have worked closely together before, rather than (per se) organizations that have a long track-record of working on a given issue. Second, when targeting new issues, we expect actors to seek to frame these issues in familiar ways in order to capitalize on existing resources and expertise. This implies an element of competition among NGOs and individual professionals to control how issues are treated and who is permitted to work on them (Henriksen and Seabrooke 2016, 723). Third, we expect the timing of TCCs to be dictated by when resources become available within an issue-network to target new problems, rather than by when issues are politically "ripe".

Our argument has further implications for the micro-level processes driving transnational agenda-setting. While powerful NGOs often succeed in pushing campaign issues that fit their organizational interests (Bob 2005; Carpenter 2011), we expect the ability of centrally-positioned NGOs to "vet" the agenda to be constrained in two ways. First, competition for issue-control implies that—regardless of where in the issue-network a new idea originates—once a few NGOs begin campaigning on an issue, others may feel pressure to get involved to influence strategic framing and campaign organization. Thus, rather than less powerful NGOs tirelessly pitching issues to powerful "gatekeepers" who make authoritative judgements about whether to accept these issues (Carpenter 2011, 2014; Carpenter et al. 2014; Stroup and Wong 2017) we suggest that agenda-setting may also occur through a "bottom-up" process whereby peripheral actors launch new issues and powerful NGOs jump on the bandwagon for fear of ceding issue-control. Second, the high mobility and social capital of issue-professionals who seek to advance individual professional goals imply that transnational agendas are often defined by well-connected individuals rather than by organizations as such.

To illustrate our argument, we briefly analyse three "first-generation" TCCs (the campaigns to ban anti-personal landmines, cluster munitions and the transfer of small arms), before offering a more detailed examination of three recent campaigns; ICAN, INEW and ICSKR. These campaigns represent the six most prominent global disarmament campaigns over the past 25 years. Their temporal sequencing allows us to analyze patters of issue-selection and campaign membership across time. For each

campaign, we examine the recurrence of membership at both organizational and individual levels, and explore how incentives to reutilize existing resources combined with competition for issue-control have influenced target-selection, framing, and campaign-timing.

Methodology and Data

We combine standard social network analysis (SNA) and longitudinal analysis to analyze the structures of recent disarmament TCCs. SNA has long been used by IR scholars to identify central players within transnational networks, and to examine how resources and power are distributed across transnational networks (e.g., Lake and Wong 2005). But whereas extant studies have analyzed individual TCCs, or compared TCCs pairwise, seeking to relate structural network properties such as centralization and density to campaign success (Lake and Wong 2005; Shawki 2010; Hubert 2010; Bower 2016), we focus attention on how successive disarmament TCCs intersect due to a roll-over of organizational and individual resources from one campaign to the next, and how this influences target-selection and campaign timing.

To measure TCC membership and centrality we use a form of SNA called hyperlink analysis, which uses data extracted from page links between organizations' websites to provide a broad snapshot of coalition structures.[5] Coalition partners were identified using official partner lists on central campaign websites. These organizations' URLs were then used to construct a dataset of network ties. Through this process, we obtained a map of the most linked-to organizational websites within the TCC, by page and by site, and gathered detailed information about the presence, strength and quantity of ties between actors. This data was then analyzed using UCINET software (Borgatti et al. 2002) to measure the centrality, authority, etc., of individual nodes. Next, we followed up this information with interviews with representatives from NGOs that received high centrality scores, asking them who they perceived as important members of coalitions, at present and in the past ("snowball approach"). This allowed us to get a fuller picture of the organizational network over time, as well as to gather information about centrally placed individuals. Finally, we combined hyperlink and interview data with content analysis of official campaign materials and of individual professionals' Linked-In and Facebook profiles along with information from existing academic studies of specific disarmament campaigns. Our analysis triangulates these different sources of data to construct a detailed picture of the transnational disarmament issue-network across time.

Early Campaigns: ICBL, CMC and IANSA

Transnational disarmament advocacy has a long history, dating back to 19th century. For example, the 1868 St. Petersburg Declaration which banned exploding bullets was based on the ideas of Henry Dunant, social activist and founder of the ICRC. However, the phenomenon of broad TCCs campaigning globally to ban specific weapons began with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines in 1992. The ICBL is widely touted as a symbol of the growing power of global civil society after the cold war (Florini 1999, 166). The campaign's success has been ascribed above all to its success in framing landmine use as a *humanitarian crisis* (rather than an arms control issue) and in formulating a single, clear goal: a total ban on the production, stockpiling and use of all landmines (Price 2003; Borrie 2009, 180; Garcia 2015, 67).

The foundations for the campaign were laid in 1989 when Raphael McGrath, British expert in humanitarian response to conflict, founded the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) to address the human suffering caused by landmines in Afghanistan and Cambodia. In 1991, Bobby Muller of the Vietnam

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[5] Hyperlink analysis is commonly used to analyse transnational networks (e.g. Carpenter 2014; Kleinberg 1999). Its main benefit is that provides a method for obtaining detailed data about ties between geographically disparate actors before conducting more time-intensive snowball interviews.

Veterans of America Foundation (VVAF) hired Jody Williams to organize a wider transnational campaign, and in October 1992 six NGOs met in New York to form the ICBL Steering Committee. In addition to MAG and VVAF, the Committee included *Medico International*, *Handicap International*, *Physicians for Human Rights* and *HRW* (ICBL Timeline 2019).

Absent from the founding was the ICRC. The ICRC began to single out landmines as a weapon with grave humanitarian consequences already in the 1950s. Before 1990, the ICRC published period factual reports to demonstrate that "the human and social costs of landmines far outweighed their military value" (Garcia 2015; Price 1998, 620). The ICRC's central leadership, however, were sceptical of an outright ban on landmines, calling instead for regulation in the form of self-destruct mechanisms in anti-personnel mines so they would not endanger civilians post conflict (Borrie 2009, 28). Not until February 1994 did the ICRC officially endorse the ICBL's goal of a ban on landmines. Rather than acting as "gatekeeper", this leading authority on landmines thus effectively jumped on the bandwagon once the campaign was underway.[6] From that point, the ICBL Steering Committee—influenced and aided by the ICRC—developed its distinct humanitarian frame, using visual images to highlight the indiscriminate suffering caused by landmines, and providing factual data on annual numbers of victims, amputees and survivors, along with losses of arable land and the burden on public health systems (Garcia 2015, 67; Hubert 2000, xi; Price 2003; Borrie 2009, 180).

Once the Ottawa treaty banning landmines came into effect in 1999, the landmine coalition did not disperse, but instead decided to tackle the related problem of cluster bombs (Haddad 2013, 188). The Cluster Munitions Coalition (CMC) Steering Group which formed in 2003 as a "sister coalition" to the ICBL, comprised of the ICBL Steering Committee plus *PAX International.* The campaign was later joined by other ICBL members, like *Amnesty International, Norwegian Peoples Aid*,[7] *International Peace Bureau* and *Action on Armed Violence* (AOAV, formerly *Landmine Action*).

The ICBL and CMC provide a clear example of how TCCs, once formed, present a low-cost tool for further joint advocacy. Mary Wareham, who assisted Jody Williams in coordinating the ICBL recalls how, once the ICBL finished, cluster munitions seemed an obvious next target for the coalition as "a different weapons with similar problems to landmines" (Authors Interview, May 12, 2017). The strategic frame of the CMC closely mirrored that of the ICBL with cluster munitions depicted as a mounting humanitarian crisis (Garcia 2015; Bolton and Nash 2010). Whilst the campaign initially pressed for a moratorium on cluster bombs, it soon adopted the ICBL's formula of demanding a "complete ban on the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions".[8] For many NGO partners this was a departure from earlier strategies. Both ICRC and HRW sought to document the human suffering caused by unexploded cluster munitions in the conflict in Kosovo in 1998-99 (Borrie 2009, 28-9). But while Handicap International suggested a ban on cluster munitions as early as 1998, *HRW*, *Landmine Action* and *MAG* initially opposed a ban, calling instead for a moratorium on production and sale of cluster munitions (opcit.). HRW argued that it was difficult to push for more international humanitarian law rules when existing laws had not been implemented properly by many countries using cluster munitions (opcit). Yet, once these groups had developed a collective strategy based on presenting landmines as a mounting humanitarian crisis necessitating an urgent ban, it seemed logical to also apply this frame to cluster munitions.

A third campaign launched in 2003 targeting small arms. Both Amnesty International and HRW had sought to highlight the devastating effects of small arms in the Rwandan genocide in 1994 to build momentum for a global campaign, but found the issue had little traction in the wider issue-network where attention was fixed on landmines (Krause 2001, 17). In October 1998, following the signature of

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[6] ICRC is singled out by Carpenter (2014) as one of the two most powerful gatekeepers in the humanitarian security issue-network.

[7] https://www.npaid.org/Our-Work/Humanitarian-Disarmament/How-we-work/Networks/Cluster-Munition-Coalition

[8] https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/clusterataglance

the Ottawa Treaty, *HRW, Amnesty, British-American Security Information Council (BASIC), GRIP, International Alert, Oxfam, Pax Christi* and *Saferworld* founded the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA).[9] Tellingly, many of these NGOs who now emerged as central to the transnational disarmament issue-network—including *Amnesty, Oxfam* and *Pax Christi*—had not devoted much attention to security issues prior to joining the ICBL (Krause 2001, 23).

Once again, preferences diverged widely over issue-framing. HRW had connected international humanitarian law with arms transfers during the landmine campaign and now sought to bring that frame to the small arms campaign (Haddad 2013; Stroup and Wong 2017; Waltz 2014). Amnesty and ICRC likewise preferred a humanitarian and human rights frame focused on the "indiscriminate" effects of small arms use (Kause 2001, 24), while *Oxfam* and *Pax Christi* sought to depict small arms as a development and governance issue, and *GRIP, Saferworld, BASIC* and *International Alert* pushed a conflict prevention frame (ibid.). Participants also split on campaign objectives. Amnesty and Oxfam both called for strong treaty-based regulation of small arms transfers. However, given strong pushback from gun-lobby groups in the United States, HRW officials were wary of the political costs of pursuing a prohibition on small arms transfers (Stroup and Wong 2017). To move the project forward *Amnesty* and *Oxfam* in 2003 created the Control Arms Coalition (CAC) to campaign for an international Arms Trade Treaty (Waltz 2014, 160–64). While excluding HRW, members of CAC once again included many actors central to the ICBL such as *PAX International, Saferworld* and *WILPF*.[10] Despite the previous reservations of some of these groups, the Small Arms Campaign proceeded to replicate many of the humanitarian features of earlier campaigns. Thus a core campaign feature was the "Million Faces" petition which brought together people from around the world who had suffered from gun violence to share their stories.

The campaigns on landmines, cluster bombs and small arms illustrate how the membership, strategic framing and timing of TCCs are strongly path-dependent. Each campaign included many of the same NGOs that had worked together during the ICBL, despite the fact that some of the actors lacked prior experience in working on security issues (Figures 1-3, appendix). All three campaigns adopted a similar humanitarian framing (Borrie and Caugley 2014). While the analogous framing of the ICBL and CMC can be seen as an attempt to "graft" a new norm onto an existing one (Price 2003), this argument is less persuasive in regard to small arms which, unlike landmines and cluster munitions, are inherently discriminatory in the harm they cause and therefore not as easily linked with norms of civilian protection (Hill 2006, 2). In each case, a global campaign seemed timely partly because a coalition already existed which had recently completed its mandate—not because dramatic "trigger events" brought the issue to the front of public debate. The most plausible trigger event for a campaign against cluster bombs - the NATO-led bombing campaign in Kosovo - occurred 5-6 years prior to the launch of the CMC. The devastating effects of small arms in the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, which were highlighted by both Amnesty and HRW, similarly failed to trigger a wider campaign until active campaigning on landmines came to a halt.

The three campaigns illustrate the cohesiveness of transnational coalitions over time. As Mary Wareham, coordinator of the Landmine Monitor Initiative for HRW reflects:

> "So I started with HRW back in 1998 when we'd just got in the Landmine Treaty...And the landmine campaign forms the backbone for all of the stuff that we've done since then. The Landmine Treaty was the flagship you know. And we've got longstanding relationships with the NGOs we cooperated with in that campaign..." (Authors Interview, 12 May, 2017).

At the same time, the campaigns illustrate how target-selection and strategic framing are strongly influenced by issue-professionals who are often more closely associated with their work on specific disarmament problems than with specific organizations. According to John Borrie (2009, 57-8, 123;

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[9] https://fas.org/asmp/campaigns/smallarms/iansa.html.

[10] http://reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/att/negotiating-conference/att-monitor/6264-2-july-2012-vol-5-no-1.

Authors Interview, March 3, 2016) who then worked in the arms unit of the ICRC, three individuals—Richard Moyes (Director of Policy at *Landmine Action* and previously working at *MAG*), Thomas Nash (Assistant to New Zealand's Disarmament Ambassador during the ICBL and later coordinator of the CMC while working at *Mine Action Canada*)[11] and Raphael McGrath (*MAG*)—were central to shaping the strategy on cluster bombs between 2004-2005, convincing other Steering Committee members, such as Steven Goose (Director of the Arms Division at HRW and married to ICBL-Director Jody Williams), to adopt a similar frame and objective for cluster bombs as for landmines. Another central player was Mary Wareham who assisted Jody Williams in coordinating the ICBL while working for VVAF (1996-97), and who later worked on the cluster munitions and small arms campaigns while at Oxfam-New Zeeland (2006-08) before finally moving to HRW to coordinator the Landmines Monitor Initiative.[12] Common to these individuals is that they have remained committed to advancing a particular humanitarian disarmament approach, often moving between organizations to push their agenda. Thanks to their central positions in early campaigns coalitions, these individuals have come to play a crucial role in defining subsequent campaigns.

The International Coalition Against Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)

The call for a global campaign against nuclear weapons came from the NGO *International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War* (IPPNW) in 2006. ICAN officially launched in Vienna in April 2007 with Felicity Hill, founder of Reaching Critical Will (the disarmament section of WILPF) as campaign coordinator.[13] At first the campaign did not adopt a humanitarian framing. In the words of Beatrice Fihn, Executive Director of ICAN since 2013,[14] it "was much more focused on the traditional model of nuclear issues" (Authors Interview, Vienna, December 6, 2014). At an early ICAN rally in Melbourne, 2007, activists used traditional anti-war slogans such as "Peace Not War." Archived campaign material on ICAN's original website refers to nuclear weapons "illegal, immoral and genocidal" and highlights the unreliability of nuclear deterrence rather than using terms commonly associated with a humanitarian disarmament such "indiscriminate harm" and "disproportionate human suffering".[15]

In 2010, however, ICAN was reframed to present nuclear weapons as a humanitarian crisis. The campaign launched a "Humanitarian Initiative" to ban nuclear weapons, declaring that the "catastrophic, persistent effects of nuclear weapons on our health, societies and the environment must be at the center of all public and diplomatic discussions about nuclear disarmament".[16]At first sight, this move may seem surprising. The success of the humanitarian framing adopted by the ICBL and CMC rested firmly on campaigners' ability to document large daily numbers of civilian victims—a tactic that doesn't map easily onto nuclear weapons.

However, the move becomes more understandable when considering changes in internal campaign structures. The re-framing of nuclear weapons as a humanitarian crisis coincides with the end of active campaigning on cluster munitions. According to Thomas Nash, then coordinator of the CMC, until August 2010 when the Cluster Munition Convention came into force, CMC members were busy pressuring states to ratify the Convention and paid little attention to nuclear weapons (Authors Interview, April 6, 2016).[17] As the cluster munitions campaign wound down, however, members began to join ICAN, importing their previous professional networks and dominant humanitarian frame with them.

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[11] http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/AK1102/S00082/cluster-bomb-campaign-thanks-thomas-nash.htm.

[12] HRW: "Mary Wareham," https://www.hrw.org/about/people/mary-wareham accessed 19 March, 2018.

[13] http://www.icanw.org/campaign/campaign-overview/campaign-milestones-2013-2/

[14] http://www.icanw.org/beatrice-fihn/; https://www.linkedin.com/in/beatrice-fihn-1351bb11/

[15] ICAN, "Campaign Milestones 2007" accessed 29 Sept. 2018.

[16] http://www.icanw.org/campaign/humanitarian-initiative/

[17] This is echoed by Mary Wareham, Authors Interview, 12 May, 2017.

Nash (2016) describes how a "formal restructuring" of ICAN took place in early 2012 when a new Steering Committee was formed and a new campaign director appointed. This Steering Committee included many organizations and individuals at the core of the ICBL-CMC, such as *Norwegian People's Aid*, *PAX Christi* and the *Control Arms Coalition* which now began to function as a network node in its own right (Carpenter 2011, 85). Also involved was *Article36*—a new disarmament organization co-founded in 2011 by Thomas Nash and Richard Moyes--and *Zambian Health Workers for Social Responsibility*, led by Robert Mtonga who previously served on the boards of the ICBL-CMC. These actors now began to emphasize the humanitarian costs of nuclear weapons. Campaigners collected personal testimonies and medical reports from survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to document harms inflicted on innocent civilians, and collected data from health experts about the long term dangers of radiation (Garcia 2015, 75).[18] This approach closely mirrored tactics used by these groups in previous campaigns and secured them a central position within ICAN, as illustrated by Fig.1 (Appendix) which shows the network centrality scores of "new" Steering Committee members outstripping those of ICAN founders IPPNW and WILPF.

ICAN's trajectory confirms our theoretical expectations. The timing of a global campaign against nuclear weapons coincided closely with the end of active campaigning on cluster munitions and the resulting release of advocacy resources. There is significant overlap with previous campaigns in terms of both membership and strategic framing. Finally, as with the CMC, NGOs commonly identified as authoritative gatekeepers (HRW and ICRC) did not meaningfully "vet" the campaign. Instead, ICAN was launched as a traditional arms control campaign by IPPNW and WILPF, with other NGOs jumping on board once the campaign was underway and successfully shifting the focus to a humanitarian based discourse that played to their expertise.

The International Network against Explosive Weapons (INEW)

INEW was established on 29 March 2011 in Geneva. The Campaign, which counts about 40 NGO members is governed by a Steering Committee composed of *AOAV*, *Article36, Center for Civilians in Conflict, Handicap International, HRW*, *Norwegian People's Aid, Oxfam, PAX, Save the Children* and *WILPF*—all organizations closely involved in previous coalitions.[19] At the time of writing, the campaign is jointly coordinated by Richard Moyes and Laura Boillot on behalf of Article36. Before joining Article36, Boillot worked as Campaign Manager (2007-11) and later Director (2011-12) of the CMC, and—prior to that—as Program Officer for the Control Arms Campaign. The individuals central to running the campaign—Nash, Moyes and Boillot—thus have considerable experience in running humanitarian-based disarmament campaigns.

INEW's normative frame is familiar. Use of explosive weapons that rely on blast and fragmentation to kill and injure is depicted as a humanitarian crisis which causes "broad, substantial and ongoing harm to individual and communities" and "furthers suffering by damaging vital infrastructure".[20] To support this claim the campaign provides data on numbers of civilians killed and injured in explosive violence.[21] This choice of frame is easy to grasp. Anti-personal landmines and cluster munitions are both a type of explosive weapons. As these were recently banned on humanitarian grounds, seeking to prohibit use of other explosive weapons in populated areas seemed a logical next step (Moyes and Rappert 2010, 100), allowing reutilization of existing tactical knowledge and resources. Less obvious is the timing of the campaign. Explosive weapons have featured prominently in military conflicts for decades. The many civilian casualties of explosives in the war in Iraq in 2003 heightened political awareness of their

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[18] http://www.icanw.org/the-facts/catastrophic-harm/

[19] http://www.inew.org/about-inew/. Accessed 04-09-2019.

[20] http://www.inew.org/unacceptable-harm/. Accessed 04-09-2019.

[21] http://www.inew.org. Accessed 04-09-2019.

deleterious effects. The U.N. Secretary General's Report on the Protection of Civilians (May 2009) expressed concern about the "humanitarian impact of explosive weapons, in particular when used in densely populated areas", and urged Member States "to consider this issue further" thus providing a potential springboard of a campaign.[22] Nevertheless, the issue failed to attract attention within the wider humanitarian disarmament issue-network. Thus Carpenter's 2011 analysis of the "resonance" of different weapons systems among NGOs found that explosive weapons had zero salience within the issue-network in 2009 (2011, 80).

As in earlier campaigns, issue-professionals played a crucial role in placing explosive weapons on the agenda and framing the issue in humanitarian terms. Moyes began writing on the harms caused to vulnerable groups by use of explosive weapons in populated areas in 2009 as Director of Policy at AOAV, but found the issue has little traction within his organization. In 2011 Moyes left the AOAV to join Thomas Nash in founding Article36—an NGO focused explicitly on humanitarian control of weapons technology. The pair now used their social connections and professional skills cultivated on the landmine and cluster munition campaigns to build support for a campaign on explosive weapons in the wider issue-network (Boillot campaigning manager, Authors Interview, December 20, 2018; Carpenter 2014, 115).

Article36's leadership of INEW illustrates how issue-professionals can use their "multiple insider" status to re-configure organizational resources in ways that advance their specific interests (Greenwood and Suddaby 2006). According to Thomas Nash he and Moyes "had been working together on the campaign to ban cluster bombs and both decided that we would like to engage with some new areas related to disarmament and the protection of civilians. We couldn't see any existing organisation where we would have the flexibility to work on any weapons issue that needed attention, so we set up Article36" (Authors Interview, April 6, 2016). Using their close links to specialists in other organizations, Nash and Moyes now constructed a powerful professional network around explosive weapons, thereby sidestepping formal organizational authority in launched and framing the next big disarmament campaign. In line with our expectations, social network analysis (Fig.2) shows strong continuity with earlier TCCs despite the fact that many NGOs joining INEW (such as AOAV and HRW) had shown little appetite for a campaign on explosive weapons prior to INEW taking off.

The International Campaign to Stop Killer Robots (ICSKR)

The International Campaign to Stop Killer Robots was launched in April 2013 by Noel Sharkey and Mary Wareham, Director of the Arms Division of HRW.[23] Mirroring the ICBL and CMC, the campaign calls for an international treaty to ban "the development, production, and use of fully autonomous weapons" (HRW 2012, 5). Like previous campaigns, ICSKR adopts a clear humanitarian discourse, emphasizing that "lack of human judgement…means LAWS cannot abide by core principles of international humanitarian law" and are therefore prone to cause "unacceptable human suffering".[24]

As discussed, the timing and framing of the ICSKR seems puzzling at first sight. No obvious "trigger events" occurred prior to 2013 to build momentum for a campaign against LAWS, and the issue had low resonance within the humanitarian disarmament issue-network (Carpenter 2011, 80). Indeed, the initiative to target LAWS came from outside the issue-network. In 2007, Sharkey, a roboticist at Sheffield University with no prior advocacy experience, began to call on states to negotiate a "global code of conduct" against the acquisition and deployment of LAWS. In 2009, Sharkey and three fellow academics—Jürgen Altmann, Peter Asaro and Robert Sparrow—co-founded the *International*

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[22] UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, 29 May 2009, UN Doc. S/2009/277, p.8.

[23] https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/2013/04, "Archive April 2013". Accessed 15-06-2017.

[24] www.stopkillerrobots.org, "About." Accessed 19-12-2018.

Committee on Robot Arms Control (ICRAC) to promote regulation of robotic weapons.[25] As predicted by Bob's (2005) gatekeeper model, they first sought buy-in from powerful disarmament NGOs. However, Carpenter (2014, 2018) describes how both HRW and ICRC initially declining to target LAWS, dismissing the issue as "too science-fiction". In March 2008, Richard Moyes, then at AOAV, expressed an interest in campaigning for a ban on autonomous weapons after the end of the Cluster Munition Campaign (Marks 2008), but found little support for the issue within his organization. Thus, as of spring 2011, no NGO had autonomous weapons formally on its agenda (Carpenter 2011, 94, 2014, 1, 101, 201).

According to Carpenter things changed radically in September 2011, when ICRC President Jakob Kellenberger gave a speech in San Remo addressing the international humanitarian law implications of LAWS thereby "constituting the issue as a valid concern" for the disarmament community (2014, 2, 108, 117). And they "changed even more dramatically when HRW published a report the following year calling for a ban of LAWS". Suddenly people "started to get it" (2014, 2). To Carpenter, the launch of the ICSKR thus presents a familiar story of a deserving issue that received little global attention until powerful gatekeepers decided to promote it.

Our interpretation differs. Kellenberger's speech did not single out automated weapons as an urgent concern for the global disarmament community. After first addressing cyberwarfare and drones (both issues which failed to subsequently reverberate around the issue-network), he noted that "the central challenge with automated systems is to ensure that they are indeed capable of the level of discrimination required by international humanitarian law". This, he argued, "will depend entirely on the quality and variety of sensors and programming employed within the system" (2011, 812). Kellenberger also stressed that "while there is considerable interest and funding for research in this area, such systems [LAWS] have not yet been weaponized" before calling on the audience to "also look at their possible advantages in contributing to greater humanitarian protection…[by] caus[ing] fewer incidental civilian casualties and less incidental civilian damage compared to the use of conventional weapons." (2011, 813). In short, Kellenberger's speech was hardly a call to urgent action on LAWS, and appeared to favour regulation over a ban. This leaves the question; why did HRW decide to target LAWS in 2012/13, when two other disarmament campaigns were ongoing, and why did they propose to ban weapons not yet developed, when other organizations—such as ICRAC and ICRC—called for tighter regulation?

We suggest that the timing and framing of ICSKR are explained by competition for issue-control among NGOs, and by the role played by issue-professionals in assembling the coalition and pushing strategies that suited their personal expertise. As explained by Wareham, the issue of LAWS first appeared on an internal planning memo at HRW in October 2011 which was "passed around internally for about a year with no particular urgency" (Authors Interview, London, May 12, 2017). Then, on 5 March 2012, Article36 became the first NGO to publicly call for a ban on LAWS.[26] Soon thereafter HRW moved on the issue, beginning work to document the potentially devastating humanitarian consequences of LAWS. On 17 November, representatives from seven NGOs (*HRW*, *Article36*, *Mines Action Canada*, *PAX*, *Facing Finance*, *Peace Movement Aeotearo* and *Seguridad Humana en Latinoamerica y el Caribe*) met in New York and agreed to form a coalition. A few days later, on 19 November, HRW released its report *Losing Humanity* which introduced a strong humanitarian frame by arguing that LAWS are unable to comply with the complex and subjective rules of international humanitarian law, which require human judgment (HRW 2012). The report was edited by Steven Goose, with extensive comments provided by Jody Williams, now President of the Nobel Women's Initiative, who also coined the term "killer robots" (Authors Interview with Mary Wareham, London, May 12, 2017).

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[25] "Who We Are". ICRC. Retrieved 13 Nov. 2017.

[26] https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/action-and-achievements

Once agreement was reached on launching a campaign, Wareham describes how individuals in HRW's Arms Division began discussions with representatives of "like-minded NGOs that HRW had worked with on cluster munitions" before eventually reaching out to Noel Sharkey, inviting him to join the coalition (Authors Interview, May 12, 2017). When ICSKR launched in April 2013, the Steering Committee included eight NGOs (*HRW, Article36, MAC*, *PAX*, *Nobel Women's Initiative, WILPF, Pugwash* and *ICRAC*) seven of which were closely involved in the ICBL (or, in the case of Article36, led by individuals who were)[27] but several of which had not previously worked on LAWS.

By taking the lead on campaigning against LAWS, Article36 and HRW succeeded in establishing significant issue-control. Rather than calling for regulation of LAWS as suggested by ICRAC and indirectly supported by the ICRC, the campaign calls for a pre-emptive ban on the development and production. Campaigning for international regulation of LAWS would require activists to engage in highly technical debates about degrees of weapon autonomy, robotic programming, and military protocol, drawing on the kind of technical knowledge that ICRAC members possessed. By comparison, pushing for a pre-emptive ban on the development of LAWS on humanitarian grounds fits closely with the long-standing strategies of ICSKR's early Steering Group members. As Wareham explains about the HRW, "We don't do arms control. Arms control is about controlling weapons. What we do is humanitarian disarmament." (Authors Interview, May 12, 2017).

To ensure that this frame won out over alternatives, HRW needed to move early to shape the campaign discourse. As Wareham recalls about the ICSKR founding meeting in New York, November 2012

> "…we agreed on the goal of the campaign. We agreed that we...the NGOs sitting around the table, would establish a steering committee, a leadership body…and then we would invite other NGOs to come on board, to endorse the campaign…" (Authors interview, May 12, 2017).

ICSKR's humanitarian framing plays directly to the existing expertise and skill-sets of prominent NGOs and issue-professionals in the humanitarian disarmament issue-network. However, a humanitarian frame may be a harder sell politically. In the words of Boillot,

> "a lot of the campaigns that we have worked on previously, particularly landmines, but also cluster munitions, these have been driven by humanitarian concerns that we could illustrate and show very effectively, because a large part of our campaigning was bringing the victims' perspective into that campaigning…And we can't do that with killer robots because these weapons haven't been used" (Authors Interview, May 31, 2017).

A further problem arises from lack of state support for humanitarian-based regulation of LAWS. The UK, a crucial ally for the Small Arms Treaty, officially opposed a ban on LAWS in April 2015, stating that "international humanitarian law already provides sufficient regulation for this area."[28] Norway, an important sponsor of previous humanitarian disarmament campaigns, has also stood aside from diplomatic discussions on LAWS. Of 28 countries that have called for a ban on LAWS,[29] 26 are associated with the Non-Aligned Movement.[30] Many of these states view LAWS, not as a humanitarian challenge, but as a problem of global inequality, expressing concern that LAWS will widen the gap in military capabilities between technologically advanced and less advanced countries (Informal Expert Panel on LAWS, 2016, 4). While a humanitarian frame fits the existing practices of NGOs and individuals at the center of the campaign, it thus seems less well matched to political realities.

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[27] "Our Work: Arms Trade," PAX, Accessed June 10 2017

[28] https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/apr/13/uk-opposes-international-ban-on-developing-killer-robots; France, Israel, Russia, and the US have also ruled out negotiating new international law on autonomous weapons.

[29] As of November 22, 2018. https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/KRC_CountryViews22Nov2018.pdf

[30] http://www.stopkillerrobots.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/KRC_CountryViews_16Nov2017.pdf

Summary and Conclusions

Our case studies and social network analysis support our argument that the target selection, campaign structure and timing of TCCs are strongly influenced by the trajectory of previous advocacy campaigns.

First, we found the timing of successive disarmament campaigns to be closely shaped by developments within the disarmament community—including when time and resources are freed up from previous campaign efforts—rather than by exogenous events. For several of the campaigns analyzed, there were no obvious political "trigger events." Instead, the timing of a new campaign coincided closely with the achievement of the stated objective(s) of a previous TCC and a resulting slowdown of ongoing campaign activities.

Second, as summarized Figures 1-4 (see Appendix), we found strong evidence of path-dependent coalition building. Although transnational advocacy campaigns often involve hundreds of NGOs, successive disarmament TCCs have all featured a similar cast of NGOs as Steering Group members and campaign managers. While they share a history of working closely together, these organizations often lack strong prior records of working closely on the specific weapon systems in question. Thanks to their pre-established professional ties, however, these NGOs consistently receive high network centrality scores (see Fig. 1-3, appendix), indicating that prior investments in joint working procedures and strong social ties often trump issue-specific technical knowledge when it to comes to assembling and directing transnational disarmament campaigns.

Third, as illustrated in Fig. 5 (appendix), we found that successive TCCs have featured a similar cast of "issue-professionals" in central positions. These individuals often move between organizations to position themselves centrally in new campaign coalitions. The notion that TCCs are frequently orchestrated by individual professionals who use their high expertise and social capital to build organizational support for specific issues and strategic approaches was echoed in most of our interviews. For example, Anne Feltham, Head of *Campaign Against Arms Trade*, describes getting involved in the ICSKR as a direct result of knowing those at HRW and other organizations who were centrally involved in the ICBL (Authors Interview, London, May 12, 2017). The same goes for Daan Kayser who works in the Humanitarian Disarmament Division of PAX (Authors Interview, Utrecht, March 2017). Laura Boillot also underscored that campaign membership is crucially shaped by existing personal relationships:

> "if you know that there's a good skilled campaigner then you will reach out to them and try and get them involved in your issue…I think people learn all of the relevant experience and skill sets from doing some weapon-focused humanitarian campaign and so they're a good fit for working on the others" (Authors Interview, June 2, 2017).

Our case studies suggest that this individual-centered approach to coalition building provides a quick and relatively resource efficient way of motivating collective action across the humanitarian disarmament issue-network. However, it also has a clear downside insofar as it may result in weak organizational buy-in. Thus, several of the NGOs that are represented by high-profiled individuals on ICSKR's Steering Committee are only loosely involved in the campaign at an organizational level. For example, WILPF (a founding member of ICSKR's steering committee and the campaign member receiving the highest network centrality score, see Fig.3) demonstrates a strong preference for working on nuclear issues.[31] Similarly, when asked in 2017 about Article36's current priorities, Boillot listed explosive weapons and a nuclear ban as her organization's top concerns (Authors Interview, June 2, 2017). In short, although these NGOs have joined the ICSKR in an official capacity, they are not committing many resources to the campaign.

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[31] Website content analysis (conducted in June 2017) revealed that the top phrases used on WILPF's Reaching Critical Will website were "nuclear ban negotiations" with 228 mentions, "UNGA Nuclear non-proliferation treaty,' with 280 mentions, and 'abolish nuclear weapons,' with 28 mentions, while "killer robots" received only 28 mentions.

Lastly, we found strong evidence of path-dependency in the strategic framing of disarmament campaigns. The specific weapons NGOs have campaigned against since the early 1990s vary widely in their technical, military and political features. Nevertheless, a "one-fits-all" campaign strategy has been repeatedly chosen, modelled on the humanitarian approach pioneered in the ICBL. This has allowed advocates to draw on existing skillsets and professional networks. However, it may have reduced the political impact of some campaigns. At an "expert meeting" of humanitarian disarmament professionals at Harvard Law School in May 2018, participants highlighted the risk of the humanitarian disarmament community applying identical tactics to numerous different issues. Humanitarian disarmament should not be a "wind-up" machine, they warned (Docherty et al. 2018, 17). Participants also noted the danger that humanitarian disarmament campaigns involve many of the same individuals and organizations who often target the same governments and funders, presenting a danger of "campaign fatigue" and insufficient funding (ibid.).

Theoretical Contributions

Our analysis makes several contributions to scholarly literature on transnational advocacy. To some degree our analysis confirms the findings of extant studies of NGO gatekeeping (e.g., Bob 2005; Carpenter 2011, 2014) insofar as we find persistent and marked differences in the network centrality of different disarmament NGOs, and in their resulting ability to shape the collective agenda. Unlike previous studies, however, we do not find a few "superpower" NGOs to be unequivocally in the divers' seat when it comes to shaping the transnational disarmament agenda. Instead, we find agenda-setting to be a more complex process involving a wider community of NGOs whose strategic choices have grown strongly interconnected through working together across several decades. These NGOs both collaborate and compete for issue-control in an effort to capitalize on established resources. This has clear implications for the micro-processes of agenda-setting. According to Carpenter (2014, 33), the transnational disarmament agenda is "set" by two central players - HRW and ICRC - with other actors following closely in their footsteps. In contrast, we find that "bandwagoning" often runs in the opposite direction, with powerful organizations like HRW and ICRC adopting a "wait-and-see" approach to new issues, opting to launch or join new campaigns only once an issue has already gained substantial traction within the wider issue network, so as not to cede issue-control.

Our argument also advances previous research by highlighting the role of individual campaigners in their roles as professional career-makers and organizational brokers, rather than traditional "norm-entrepreneurs" (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, cf. Goddard 2009). Drawing on research in organizational sociology (Henriksen and Seabrooke 2016, 2018), we have demonstrated that transnational disarmament advocacy is profoundly shaped by a small network of issue-professionals who work across organizations to advance individual professional interests. This network is embedded in but partly separate from the network of NGOs working on disarmament. While some members of this professional network fit the traditional description of "norm-entrepreneurs" (e.g. Raphael McGrath on landmines and cluster bombs, and Noel Sharkey on LAWS), individuals at the center of the network tend to be more distinguishable by their high social capital and wide organizational access than by their long-term commitment to or expert knowledge of particular weapons systems (fig.5 appendix).

The centrality of issue-professionals within the global disarmament issue-network mirrors findings from other areas of transnational activity (Seabrooke and Henriksen 2018). However, the central role of issue-professionals may also reflect changes specific to the NGO world. To respond to donor demands, many NGOs have grown progressively more institutionalized and professionalized, leading to a growing emphasis on hiring professionally trained staff and decreasing reliance on volunteers. This changing NGO-model privileges a hierarchical organizational structure (Berkovitch and Gordon 2008, 885), leading to a concentration of decision-power at the higher levels of NGO leadership where issue-professionals typically reside.

A last finding regards what we call transnational "campaign pathologies". As our cases illustrate, competition for issue-control can sometimes lead NGOs to "jump the gun" on new issues in an effort to control how issues are presented and who is entitled to work on them. This may lead to "premature" campaign launch insofar as issues are targeted that are not politically "ripe", and may result in overlapping campaigns within an issue-network with the result that resources are spread thin. As Boillot observes in regard to the INEW, ICAN and ICSKR, "three parallel weapons ban campaigns operating has caused a scarcity of resources, as limited funding and attention from publics, the media and governments are spread between several distinct issues" (Authors Interview, June 2, 2017). This observation was echoed by ICSKR coordinator Mary Wareham, who noted that "funding…has just been dropping off, and we're just struggling to make sure that the necessary people are there in those organizations to keep this moving forward." (Authors Interview, May 12, 2017).

A second "pathology" arises from individual and organizational incentives to push specific strategic frames which may imply that issues are targeted and strategies chosen which have low probability of political success so long as they advance instrumental goals. Our aim in this article has not been to account for the success (or lack thereof) of individual disarmament campaigns. However, by illustrating how instrumental incentives at both individual and organizational levels may override political expediency, our analysis helps to explain why allegedly instrumental transnational advocates often select campaign issues and strategies which lack many of the characteristics identified by previous scholarship as essential to campaign success.

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