Super-Networks Shaping International Agreements: Comparing the Climate Change and Nuclear Weapons Arenas

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While research on transnational advocacy networks (TANs) is well established in international relations, knowledge gaps remain concerning TAN collaboration across policy fields. To address this gap, this article highlights how super-networks (networks above individual TANs) emerge across issue areas and explores the tactics utilized to achieve their objectives and shape international agreements. We develop an analytical framework that emphasizes the important interplay between political opportunity structures, mobilizing structures, and tactics in understanding how super-networks operate. We apply this framework via a comparative case study approach, analyzing the Inter-Constituency Alliance, whose advocacy brought about the inclusion of human rights language in the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, and the International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons, whose activities based on humanitarian principles resulted in the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Contributing new knowledge to TANs research, we identify that super-networks utilize multilevel advocacy activities that draw upon a package approach tactic. Via the package approach, super-networks synthesize multiple voices from different issue areas into one key message grounded in humanitarian framing, thereby enhancing their moral leverage and legitimacy, making it more difficult for states to neglect their concerns.

Podemos afirmar que, si bien la investigación en materia de Redes Transnacionales de defensa (TAN, por sus siglas en inglés) está bien establecida en el campo las Relaciones Internacionales, aún siguen existiendo lagunas de conocimiento en lo que respecta a la colaboración con las TAN en todos los ámbitos políticos. Este artículo subraya, con el fin de abordar esta brecha, cómo emergen las superredes (aquellas redes que están por encima de las TAN individuales) en todas las áreas temáticas y estudia las tácticas que utilizan para lograr sus objetivos y para dar forma a los acuerdos internacionales. Desarrollamos un marco analítico que enfatiza la importante interacción que existe entre las estructuras de oportunidad políticas, las estructuras de movilización y las tácticas con el fin de comprender cómo operan las superredes. Aplicamos este marco a través de un enfoque de estudio de caso comparativo que analiza la alianza entre diferentes grupos y organismos, cuya defensa dio lugar a la inclusión del lenguaje de derechos humanos en el Acuerdo Climático de París de 2015, y la Campaña Internacional para la Abolición de las Armas Nucleares, cuya campaña basada en principios humanitarios dio lugar al Tratado sobre la Prohibición de las Armas Nucleares de 2017. Identificamos, al aportar nuevos conocimientos a la investigación de las TAN, que las superredes utilizan actividades de promoción multinivel que se basan en una táctica de enfoque conjunto. A través de este enfoque conjunto, las superredes sintetizan múltiples voces procedentes de diferentes áreas temáticas en un mensaje clave basado en el marco humanitario, lo que mejora su influencia moral y su legitimidad, y, en consecuencia, hace que sea más difícil para los Estados descuidar sus preocupaciones.

Bien que la recherche sur les réseaux transnationaux de défense des droits (RTDD) soit bien établie en relations internationales, des lacunes persistent quant à nos connaissances sur la collaboration des RTDD dans les différents domaines politiques. Pour y remédier, cet article souligne comment les super-réseaux (les réseaux au-dessus des RTDD) émergent dans les domaines problématiques et s'intéresse aux tactiques employées pour parvenir à leurs objectifs et façonner les accords internationaux. Nous développons un cadre analytique qui souligne l'importance des interactions entre les structures d'opportunités politiques, en mobilisant les structures et les tactiques pour comprendre le fonctionnement des super-réseaux. Nous appliquons ce cadre par le biais d'une approche d'étude de cas comparative qui analyse l'Alliance entre les groupes d'intérêts (Inter-Constituency Alliance), dont le travail a permis l'inclusion de références aux droits de l'Homme dans l'Accord de Paris sur le climat de 2015, et la Campagne internationale pour l'abolition des armes nucléaires qui, en se basant sur des principes humanitaires, a débouché sur le traité sur l'interdiction des armes nucléaires de 2017. En apportant de nouvelles connaissances à la recherche sur les RTDD, nous identifions que les super-réseaux utilisent des activités de promotion à différentes échelles, qui se fondent sur une tactique d'approche ≪ par paquet ≫. Grâce à cette approche, les super-réseaux synthétisent plusieurs voix émanant de différents domaines problématiques en un seul message clé ancré dans un cadre humanitaire. Ainsi, ils accroissent leur légitimité et leur influence morale, et deviennent plus compliqués à ignorer pour les États.

1. Introduction

Although research on transnational advocacy networks (TANs) is well-established in international relations (IR), our knowledge of TAN-TAN collaboration across issue areas remains limited. Scholars criticize that empirical analyses of TANs exclusively focus on single policy areas, which "artificially enforce [boundaries]" and prevent us from understanding networks as a collective whole (Plummer, Hughes, and Smith 2020; Cheng et al. 2021, 3). While recent research suggests that intersectoral collaborations increase the power of NGOs and TANs (Mitchell, Schmitz, and Bruno-van Vijfeijken 2020), we still know little about how actors engage in collaborative arrangements between different policy fields. In the face of increased institutional complexity (Oberthür and Stokke 2011), enhanced access for civil society, and more sophisticated network-building at significant intergovernmental meetings, like the 2015 UN Summit for the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or the 2022 negotiations for a post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, further knowledge about TAN-TAN collaboration is crucially important.

To address this research gap, this article analyzes how "super-networks"[1] (Schapper 2021) are formed and how they function to shape international agreements. Our argument is that super-networks form when collaborative TANs optimize political opportunities and build new mobilization structures across policy areas to apply common cross-policy tactics. This means that instead of competing in a confined policy field (like individual TANs), super-networks (as collaborative TANs) work across policy areas to focus governmental attention on key priorities.

Networks can be understood as patterns of connections that construct social ties and meaning (Avant 2016). Advocacy networks are communicative structures in which a range of activists, guided by principled ideas and values, interact. TANs create new linkages, multiply access channels to the international system, make ideas, information, and material resources available to new actors and help to transform practices of national sovereignty by changing governmental policies (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Price 2003; Carpenter 2007). We understand collaborative TANs as advocacy networks that, temporarily or on a long-term basis, work together, also across policy fields, to achieve common objectives.

We conceptualize super-networks as network structures *above* already existing TANs. Super-networks make decisions at a higher mobilization level, not only collaborating within but also between TANs. In a super-network, multiple TANs collaborate, optimizing political opportunities to establish new mobilizing structures and more sophisticated tactics to increase power access at international negotiations. What is special about a super-network is the partnership of networks across policy fields and between TANs with diverse objectives through the agreement of a common goal and collective advocacy strategy.

What makes a super-network particularly powerful are its multilevel advocacy activities, such as using local testimonies and governmental allies at multiple levels to change national and international decision-making and the application of a package approach, utilizing one core message in all interactions with state negotiators. We argue that this package approach is a tactic unique to super-networks. Through TAN-TAN collaboration, super-networks advance a consolidated advocacy message and strategy, magnified by their unity, numbers, and the diversity of organizations involved. Super-networks are highly effective in the application of these tactics as they can rely on a higher-level mobilization structure, providing access to a wealth of information, resources, and capacities. The inclusion of multiple and diverse TANs also enhances the legitimacy of super-networks.

We explore how super-networks form and function by comparatively analyzing two in-depth case studies: (i) the Inter-Constituency Alliance (ICA) and the inclusion of human rights in the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, and (ii) the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and the adoption of humanitarian principles in the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). We consider the universe of cases of super-networks to be growing in number and meaning. We have selected the ICA and ICAN because, according to our knowledge, these were among the very first super-networks that have emerged in international politics, and there is sufficient data accessible to study both in-depth. We consider both to be crucial cases because they represent an outcome of interest (Gerring 2007a): Our empirical material demonstrates that the ICA and ICAN significantly influenced the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement and the 2017 TPNW. Therefore, we assume that both present crucial cases for testing the analytical framework that we have deductively generated. We also use the comprehensive empirical material that we have gathered to further develop this analytical framework inductively. Both cases are highly representative of other super-networks because they comprise large-scale collaborations across different TANs from various policy fields that link issue areas, e.g., human rights and climate change, and contribute to generating new order by crucially influencing new international agreements. Our selected cases also indicate that there is a high probability of super-networks being formed when political opportunities, like the negotiation of a new treaty, arise and unique mobilization structures can be established. Although both cases display important commonalities, there are also crucial variances. Therefore, we can expect to learn a lot from an in-depth comparative analysis (George and Bennett 2005).

This article provides, first, a literature review on TANs with a focus on existing research gaps, before elucidating an analytical framework to analyze super-networks. We then introduce, before comparatively analyzing, the case studies on the ICA and ICAN, drawing on the analytical framework developed. The article then concludes.

2. What Do We Know about TANs?

Whereas earlier contributions on TANs, including the seminal work by Keck and Sikkink (1998), considered TANs as actors, more recent (and critical) scholarship examines TANs as structures, investigating the relations between actors inside these networks (Cheng et al. 2021). Within TANs, international and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), foundations, the media, churches, trade unions, academics, and even members of IOs collaborate. Although a diverse range of actors can participate, networks are usually driven by advocacy-oriented NGOs that mobilize collective action (Stroup and Murdie 2012).

TANs' engagement in global governance can improve the participation, inclusiveness, and legitimacy of IOs (Steffek and Hahn 2010). The overall objective of TANs is to change

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[1]We use the Latin word "*super*" (i.e., above) here, referring to network structures *above* already existing TANs.
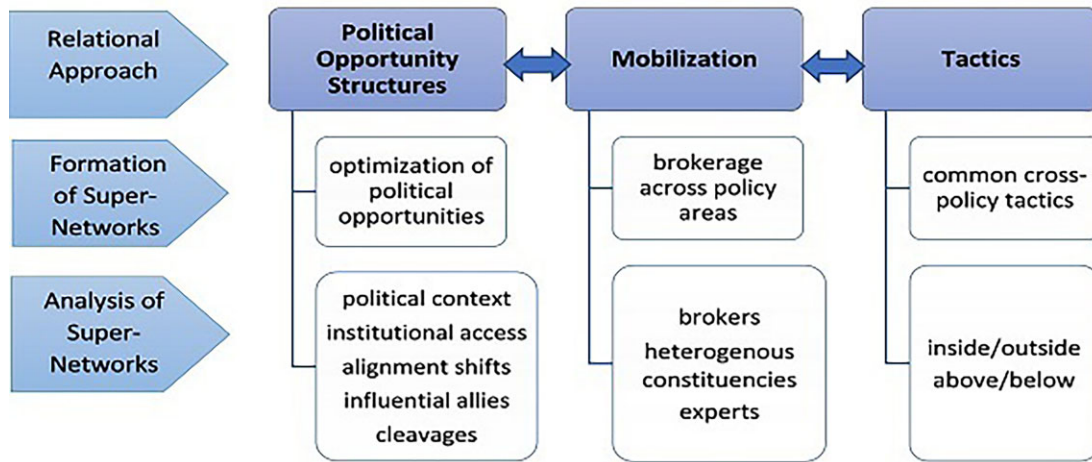
Figure 1. Analytical framework.
Source: Own compilation based on Tarrow (1996), Joachim (2003), and Dellmuth and Tallberg (2017).

the policies of states and IOs (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 9) and to transform communicative power into new legal frameworks (Fraser 2014).

Since Keck and Sikkink's pathbreaking study in 1998, a significant number of scholars have worked on TANs in a range of policy fields, including human rights (Allendoerfer, Murdie, and Welch 2020), human security (Carpenter 2014), women's rights and gender politics (Lang 2009), migration and trafficking (Noyori-Corbett 2017), labor issues (Hertel 2006), trade (Nolan García 2011), climate change (Hadden and Jasny 2019), biodiversity (Bocse 2021), cluster munitions and landmines (Bolton and Nash 2010), and nuclear disarmament (Norman 2017), and the concept of TANs still plays a significant role in IR research today.

Recent scholarship on TANs highlights their growing professionalization (Jaeger 2007; Norman 2017; Stroup and Wong 2017), describing how NGOs resemble professional political agencies to enhance opportunities for attracting funding and increasing access to IOs (Minkoff and Powell 2006, 597). TANs aim to be change agents working for long-term impact and sustainable transformations but can struggle to implement their missions due to their organizational form (Mitchell, Schmitz, and Bruno-van Vijfeijken 2020). More critical scholars discuss this professionalization as "NGOization" (Alvarez 2009; Lang 2014) and demonstrate a shift from "horizontal patterns" of networking (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 8) toward hierarchical or hybrid structures (Jordan and van Tuijl 2000; Bocse 2021) with managing directors, permanent staff positions, project managers, and fundraisers leading to depoliticization and demobilization. Professionalization through a higher degree of institutionalization, centralization, formalization and policy orientation means that TANs are more likely to manage existing political opportunity structures (POS) and resource mobilization (Joachim 2003; Norman 2017). Previous research also highlights how network structures can reinforce power asymmetries (Carpenter 2014).

TANs can compete over resources as well as over public and media attention (Bush and Hadden 2019). This means that networks confined to single-issue areas are operating in a more competitive environment than those collaborating across policy fields. Existing empirical analyses, however, tend to focus on TANs in specific fields, not on TAN-

TAN collaboration across issue areas (Cheng et al. 2021, 3). One notable exception is Murdie and Davis' (2012) cross-sectional study suggesting that NGOs from the Global North and with strong ties to IOs are more likely to collaborate with each other.

Summarized, there is a bulk of research pointing to the limitations of individual TANs and their organizational form. Our article highlights how super-networks can overcome some of those limitations. In the following, we elaborate on how super-networks as collaborative TANs form and function to focus the attention of states, instead of acting competitively and being confined to single policy fields (like individual TANs).

3. Dynamic Relationship between POS, Mobilization, and Tactics

To understand the formation and functioning of super-networks, we propose a relational understanding between POS, mobilization, and tactics. These elements have been emphasized as relevant for analyzing TANs in IR and social movement studies (Joachim 2003; Giugni and Grasso 2015; Hadden and Jasny 2019), but the relationship between them has not been sufficiently considered. Adopting a relational ontology means acknowledging that all three elements, POS, mobilizing structures, and tactics, should not be seen in isolation but in interaction. If one of these elements changes, e.g., by enhancing political opportunities at international negotiations, the other elements, i.e., mobilization and tactics of networks, can also change (figure 1, 1st level). We argue that super-networks form when collaborative TANs optimize political opportunities and build new mobilization structures across policy areas to apply common cross-policy tactics (figure 2, 2nd level). We have developed a new analytical framework to study the formation and functioning of super-networks that synthesizes insights from IR scholarship about dynamic interactions between POS and mobilizing structures (Joachim 2003), more recent studies that explore brokerage in TAN research (Goddard 2009; MacDonald 2018; Cheng et al. 2021), and tactics explaining influential transnational advocacy (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Mitchell, Schmitz, and Bruno-van Vijfeijken 2020) (figure 1, 3rd level).

POS can be understood as access to (state) institutions and the broader context that can provide opportunities or obstacles for frame resonance and political influence (Kriesi 2004). We understand the *political context* of mobilization as the social and organizational environment in which networks are embedded (Kriesi 2004). According to Tarrow (1996), POS are defined as:

> consistent—but not necessarily formal, permanent or national—signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements […] The most salient kinds of signals are four: the opening up of access to power, shifting alignments, the availability of influential allies, and cleavages within and among elites. (Tarrow 1996, 54; italic in original)

We consider all these elements of the POS, defined by Tarrow, as relevant for the analysis of super-networks and address them in the analytical framework. *Institutional access* is defined as formal admission to international negotiations for making written and oral contributions with the aim of participating in decision-making to initiate social change (Lang 2014). *Alignment shifts* are understood as a change in support for or close collaboration with a particular group, nation, or party. *Influential allies* are powerful partners/collaborators and *cleavages* are disagreements between state actors/negotiators that can be strategically used (Tarrow 1994).

Tarrow's definition emphasizes that POS contains not only consistent elements, such as institutional access, but also more fluid elements, such as alignment shifts, increasing availability of allies, or emerging cleavages. Thus, at least certain elements of the POS are dynamic and can be changed. This is an important insight that supports our claim about the relationship between POS, mobilization, and tactics. If POS can be optimized, then more powerful mobilization and application of tactics may be possible.

Mobilization comprises agency, network composition and strategic collaboration between actors involved in TANs. In this article, we refer to McAdam, McCarthy, and Mayer's (1996, 3) definition of mobilizing structures as "[…] those collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action." They can be considered as the source of criticizing and evaluating current (inter-)governmental practices, developing new ideas, and promoting normative change. Mobilizing structures, according to Joachim (2003, 251), comprise key network actors, including political entrepreneurs, a heterogenous international constituency, and experts, which we consider important for the analytical framework.

To understand how super-networks mobilize, we suggest looking at the role of *brokers* that can link TANs from different policy fields to initiate collaborative TAN activity. Brokerage is still a relatively new concept in the network literature on TANs (Cheng et al. 2021). Brokering processes are relevant as they explain the development of links between different networks that can alter network mobilizing structures. A broker can be described as an actor who connects other (previously unconnected) actors and networks. Brokers can have membership in different communities and engage in complex brokerage processes (Deloffre and Quack 2021). Wenger (1998, 105) highlights that brokering involves coordination, translation, and alignment of perspectives between different communities. Mobilization occurs when the ideas of a broker resonate and ac-

tivate or strengthen ties between different TANs (Deloffre and Quack 2021). Brokers can take on different brokerage roles (Cheng et al. 2021) and can speak to divergent audiences (Stroup and Wong 2017); brokerage positions facilitate exchanges of ideas, information, and material resources (Goddard 2009; MacDonald 2018). The role of brokers in some ways overlaps with the role of political entrepreneurs who actively promote networks, collaborative action, and campaigns (Joachim 2003, 251), but brokers go further and launch much larger super-networks by connecting TANs from different policy fields. To build strong mobilization structures, brokers and entrepreneurs aim at reaching out to *heterogenous constituencies*, thus mobilizing diverse civil society groups inside negotiations and an interested public outside the negotiations. *Experts* can further strengthen mobilizing structures as affected population groups provide local knowledge and testimonials or as part of an epistemic community (Haas 1992).

Previous studies suggest that NGO influence depends on the dynamic interaction of POS and mobilizing structures (Joachim 2003). We argue that, in order to understand how super-networks form and function, we must consider the interplay of POS, mobilizing structures and tactics. Network tactics are often based on information politics but also include symbolic politics, leverage, and accountability politics (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 16–25). We assume that collaborative TANs develop sophisticated tactics by building on both: the higher mobilization level (super-network) and the lower mobilization level (individual TANs) at the same time. They not only establish new collaborative cross-policy tactics but also rely on proven tactics of individual TANs. Thus, they exert pressure/convince governments to change decisions *from above*, i.e., via the super-network, while also interacting with them *from below*, i.e., via individual TANs, building on relationships that have been established over time at international negotiations.

Dellmuth and Tallberg (2017) suggest differentiating between *inside strategies* understood as direct interaction with, and exertion of pressure on, decision-makers in IOs, and *outside strategies* referring to indirect interaction and exertion of pressure through mobilizing an international public. Inside strategies include direct interaction with policymakers, offering information and expertise, or raising awareness on the situation of constituents (Betsill and Corell 2008). Outside strategies comprise public opinion campaigns via social media, events, or protest (Della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2017, 707). We, therefore, differentiate between *inside* and *outside tactics* (Dellmuth and Tallberg 2017) in our analytical framework.

In the following sections, we show how favorable interplay between POS and mobilization leads to the formation of super-networks and further fosters the establishment of new tactics to shape international agreements.

4. Methods and Case Studies

Empirically, we have conducted two case studies (Gerring 2007b) on (i) the ICA and the inclusion of human rights in the 2015 Paris Agreement, and (ii) the ICAN and the promotion of humanitarian principles in the 2017 TPNW. Although the case studies mainly focus on the activities of these two super-networks to shape the agreements mentioned above, this article presents a unique longitudinal qualitative analysis of collaborative transnational advocacy. Our case studies are based on forty-eight expert interviews (Meuser and Nagel 2009), participatory observations, and in-depth documentary analysis (Bowen 2009).

Participatory observations were undertaken at the strategic meetings of the ICA and other TANs at four Conferences of the Parties (COPs) before, during, and after the Paris agreement was adopted, including COP 19 (Warsaw 2013), COP 21 (Paris 2015), COP 23 (Bonn 2017), and COP 26 (Glasgow 2021–negotiating the Paris implementation guidelines). Follow-up virtual interviews were conducted with key experts between 2013 and 2022. Participating in these strategic meetings and in online coordination sessions over a period of almost ten years helped to establish key players in the ICA and to select trustworthy and credible interview partners.

Observations of ICAN relate to author research on the performance of state and non-state actors within the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review cycle spanning the period 2010–2022, including fieldwork in Geneva and New York in March 2011, May 2011, March 2015, and June 2015, comprising in-depth elite interviews with state, IO, and civil society representatives involved in NPT review negotiations. In-depth documentary analysis of ICAN's involvement in the NPT review negotiations between 2007 and 2022 was also conducted, including civil society statements and calendars of organized events, alongside the gray literature associated with ICAN's campaign. Findings were further triangulated against face-to-face and virtual interviews with key experts involved with ICAN between 2011 and 2020.

In both case studies, interviews were conducted with experts from the different constituencies involved in the ICA and ICAN, the initiator of the ICA, the ICAN international staff team (IST) and international steering group (ISG), and representatives from participating IOs, like the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). The interviews conducted were semi-structured expert interviews (Witzel and Reiter 2012) and were evaluated using a qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2014) deductively using the categories highlighted in the analytical framework. We have used NVivo qualitative data analysis software to code the interview materials according to these categories. At the same time, we have been open to inductively learn more from the empirical materials to complement the framework developed. We have also conducted a content analysis of primary documents and data, comprising policy documents and strategy papers of ICA and ICAN member organizations, UNFCCC, and TPNW texts. Analysis also draws upon the content of Twitter campaigns relating to #Stand4Rights and #nuclearban respectively,[2] as well as information circulated via email lists.[3] We then use a structured-focused comparison to highlight commonalities and differences between the two cases (George and Bennett 2005).

5. Case Study: The ICA

NGOs and TANs have a long-standing tradition of participation in climate change conferences and interact closely with governments to persuade and pressure them to negotiate, ratify, enforce, and comply with international environmen-

tal agreements (e.g., Betsill and Corell 2008). The admission of NGO observers to the climate negotiations is constantly growing, with almost 1,900 non-state observers admitted at COP 21 in Paris (2015) and nearly 3,000 non-state observers admitted at COP 26 in Glasgow (UNFCCC 2023).

At the UNFCCC, constituencies are clustered groups of officially registered NGOs that act as admitted observers in the negotiation process (UNFCCC 2020). We recognize a constituency as a TAN in which several NGOs interact. Different constituencies can follow diverse, even competing, interests, or they can decide to collaborate on shared objectives. Unprecedented, so far, is the form of cross-constituency collaboration that could be observed at the 2015 Paris negotiations: five of the nine registered clusters, including environmental NGOs (ENGO), Indigenous Peoples' Organizations (IPO), trade union NGOs (TUNGO), the women and gender constituency (WGC) and youth NGOs (YOUNGO), as well as two additional observer networks (without constituency status), i.e., faith-based organizations and the Climate Land Ambition and Rights Alliance (CLARA), built and collaborated in the so-called ICA. One of these constituencies alone, ENGO, comprised more than 600 partner organizations (UNFCCC 2020). Hence, the largest part of NGOs registered for the 2015 climate negotiations were part of the ICA.

Even prior to the 2015 Paris negotiations, some constituency representatives had established regular communicative structures on how to strengthen human rights in the climate regime. Conversations took place in the Human Rights and Climate Change Working Group (HRCCWG), established in 2009 as a hybrid cluster of experts and activists fostering links between climate change and human rights in several arenas. Via the HRCCWG, different constituency members built strong interpersonal relationships and regularly reflected on how to strengthen participation rights in the UNFCCC:

> […] there [was] a personal relationship well in advance and I'm talking about even three, four years before Paris. We were often together and caucusing and having conversations [about] our right to speak and [the] defence of our rights […]. (Interview Former Representative of TUNGO, December 2020)

Building on these informal discussions, a formal process of alliance-building started with civil society's preparations for the Paris negotiations in February 2015 (Interview Initiator ICA, March 2020). At the initial meeting in Geneva, some constituencies came together to explore the potential of using a collective human rights and sustainability frame in the negotiations. These included faith-based organizations, indigenous peoples, the women and gender constituency, and experts from the HRCCWG. By the Bonn Intersessional negotiations in June 2015, the ICA, comprising all seven constituencies, had commenced its work (Interview Initiator ICA, March 2020).

The seven partners promoted seven human rights and sustainability principles, comprising ecosystem integrity, indigenous peoples' rights, just transition of the workforce, gender equality, intergenerational justice, human rights, and food security. The alliance successfully advocated for the adoption of this framework in the 2015 Paris Agreement. Table 1 highlights the proposed and the adopted text of the Paris Agreement.

Figure 2 depicts the ICA.

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[2]We have selected tweets that were drafted, used, and retweeted by each network for a qualitative analysis. Please see the online appendix for a list that network members were asked to retweet.

[3]A comprehensive list of documents and interviews used for data analysis can be found in the online appendix.

Table 1. Human rights and sustainability principles in the Paris Agreement

| *Observer submission*	*Paris Agreement 2015*
Inter-constituency proposal	**Adopted by states**
Article 2 of the agreement "This Agreement shall be implemented […] while ensuring the **respect, protection, promotion and fulfillment of human rights**, including the **rights of indigenous peoples**; gender equality and the full and equal participation of women; **intergenerational equity**; a **just transition of the workforce** that creates decent work and quality jobs; **food security**; and the **integrity and resilience of natural ecosystems**."	**Preambulatory clauses** "[…] Recognizing the fundamental priority of safeguarding **food security**. […] Taking into account the imperatives of a **just transition of the workforce**. […] Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, **respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights,** the right to health, the **rights of indigenous peoples**, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as **gender equality,** empowerment of women and **intergenerational equity,** […].Noting the importance of ensuring the **integrity of all ecosystems**.[…]"
Inter-constituency proposal, circulated via mailing list	UNFCCC 2015
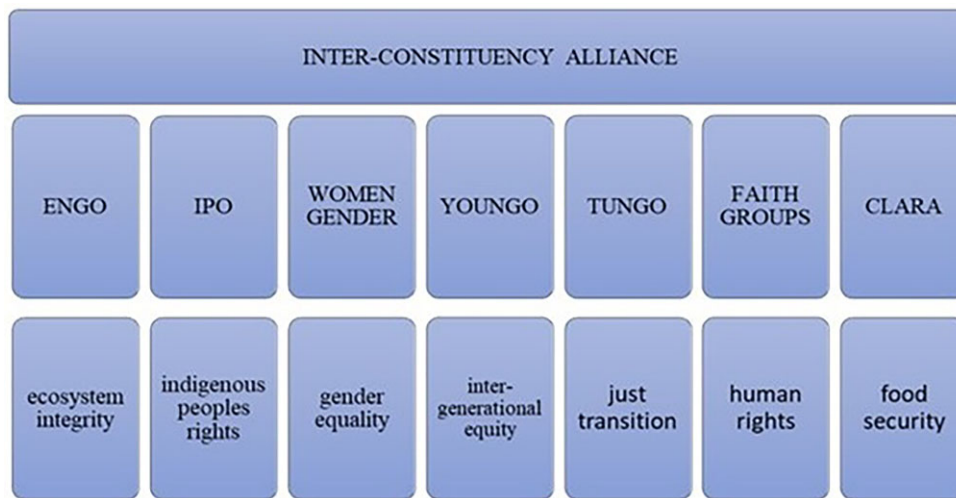
Figure 2. Inter-Constituency Alliance.

The following explains how the ICA functioned to influence the 2015 Paris Agreement. Through optimizing political opportunities and brokerage that intentionally connected and mobilized TANs from different policy fields and the development of common cross-policy tactics, the ICA was successful with its demand to incorporate human rights in the new climate agreement.

5.1 Political Opportunities around the Paris Negotiations

France, as the host country of COP21, was very open to civil society engagement, but restrictions were introduced after the Paris terrorist attacks on November 13, 2015 (*BBC 2015*). By the start of the COP on November 30, 2015, France's ongoing state of emergency limited civil society activities outside the UNFCCC but fostered a feeling of solidarity inside the negotiations. The *political context* therefore offered a favorable environment for TAN collaboration, characterized by a spirit of solidarity and a strong will to influence the outcome agreement.

Institutional access for observer organizations at UNFCCC COPs varies. As part of official constituencies, NGOs have advanced access and can provide input to the process via written submissions, organizing side events and making statements during formal proceedings (UNFCCC 2020). By collaborating within the ICA, NGOs enhanced their opportunities for institutional access. They used common statements, with each constituency repeating the same human rights and sustainability message, focusing the attention of states on this frame and increasing their overall speaking time (Interview Initiator ICA, March 2020).

Inter-constituency collaboration meant that networks with very different priorities worked closely together. Whereas trade unions, for instance, had previously focused on a green economy that protected workplaces and enabled a just transition of the workforce, indigenous peoples emphasized the greater importance of protecting natural resources. Collaboration *between* these actors strengthened civil society voices:

> The fact that a trade unionist who is coming from Illinois to a climate conference and suddenly hearing the

indigenous peoples' representative saying "oh remember, indigenous peoples rights only make sense in the context of just transition for workers". That is something that was incredibly empowering […]. (Interview Initiator ICA, March 2020)

This new solidarity and collaboration resulted in an *alignment shift* for some constituencies. Whereas it was not unusual for certain clusters to cooperate, like human rights and faith-based groups, it was a substantial change for others, such as indigenous peoples and trade unions.

A crucial success factor for the work of the ICA was their engagement with *influential allies* in IOs and among state representatives. In October 2014, in preparation for COP21, the Special Procedures mandate-holders of the HRC addressed a letter to all UNFCCC state parties demanding that "A new climate change agreement must include human rights protection for all" (OHCHR 2014). Additionally, the respective national human rights institutions pushed for human rights in the climate agreement. Eighteen governments had also initiated the *Geneva Pledge for Climate Action* ahead of the Paris negotiations, calling for enhanced institutional interaction between the UNFCCC and the OHCHR, and emphasizing that rights obligations needed to be observed in all climate-related actions. Among them were Latin American countries (e.g., Mexico, Peru, and Costa Rica), small island states (e.g., the Maldives, Kiribati, and Samoa) as well as European nations (e.g., France, Sweden, and Ireland).

As host, France became one of the frontrunners in supporting human rights in the agreement, resulting in *cleavages* within the Western European and other states regional groups when Norway opposed the rights framework. Consequently, Norway, together with Saudi Arabia and the USA, was declared "human rights deniers" in a joint press release by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch that was widely circulated by the ICA on social media[4] (Amnesty International 2015). Norway swiftly clarified that it supported the rights framework and only opposed the incorporation of human rights in Article 2 of the agreement, which would determine its main objective. Further cleavages emerged when some Annex I countries declared that they would no longer fund climate policies that adversely affected human rights. The ICA strategically used these concerns to demand human rights standards in all climate-related actions (Interview AIDA, February 2016).

Summarized, the ICA optimized existing political opportunities and influenced decision-making at the UNFCCC due to a favorable political environment, improved institutional access, and strategically shifting their alignments not only through collaboration between constituencies but also with influential state actors and representatives from IOs, further creating cleavages among state delegations in party groupings. The ICA therefore strategically used the more fluid elements of the POS, such as alignments, allies, and cleavages, to establish and mobilize a super-network.

5.2 Unique Mobilization on the Road to Paris

Several *brokerage* processes took place that linked the different constituencies across policy fields to establish the ICA. Meetings of like-minded constituencies were set up in February and June 2015 in Geneva, initiating the alliance-building process (Interview Initiator ICA, March 2020) and allowing constituency representatives to engage in a collective planning process. After the first meetings took place in Geneva, the main initiator of the ICA, who is experienced in

cross-constituency coordination, reached out to other constituency focal points (i.e., the designated contact point of each network) to foster alliance-building (Interview Initiator ICA, March 2020).

This means that we can observe different brokerage roles here: There was one coordinating broker (Cheng et al. 2021), the ICA initiator, working for an environmental rights NGO, who could build on previous experiences within different constituencies, expertise in facilitating dialogues across TANs (Interview YOUNGO, December 2020), familiarity with observer participation rights at the UNFCCC, and strong personal relationships with important governmental and nongovernmental decision-makers. In addition to this, there was a brokerage position in each constituency serving as cross-constituency "linking pins" (Schneiker and Joachim 2021). These brokers were individuals who have initiated and maintained a dialogue about strengthening participation rights in the climate negotiations over many years (Interview Former Representative of TUNGO, December 2020). Via these brokering processes, the unique mobilizing structure of the ICA was built.

Through their collaboration, the ICA could reach a *heterogenous constituency*. The ICA turned this diversity into a key strength. Because the alliance now represented everyone concerned with human rights, food security, and environmental matters alongside trade unionists, indigenous peoples, and groups of different faiths, they significantly enhanced their legitimacy (Interview TUNGO, December 2020). For many, it was the unique mobilization structure of the ICA, often described as an empowerment of the overall climate movement, that was considered a success in itself:

> If you look into the preamble, all the seven elements are there. […] it is likely that you will not have the seven if there was not the strong mobilization and the systematic […] flagging. (Interview Initiator ICA, March 2020)

In the mobilization process, *experts* also played a crucial role, including representatives of local communities whose rights were adversely affected by both climate change and climate policies. The ICA built its arguments on these grassroot experiences, personal stories, and local testimonies. Additional influential expertise was provided by the OHCHR, which produced analytical studies on the relationship between climate change and human rights (OHCHR 2009), as well as the right to health, children's and women's rights, and the rights of cross-border migrants and disabled people in the context of climate change (OHCHR 2020). Support from the former Special Rapporteur for Human Rights and the Environment, John Knox, provided the ICA with further credibility.

5.3 New Cross-Policy Advocacy Tactics

The advantage of the ICA's mobilizing structure *above* the individual constituencies or TANs was that there was an accelerated information flow inside the COP that was beneficial in shaping their common cross-policy advocacy strategy and tactics. In regular meetings, the ICA came together *inside* the negotiations for information exchange and decided what tactics were to be used by the super-network, exerting pressure and/or convincing states *from above,* and which tactics were better applied by individual TANs, exerting pressure and/or convincing states *from below* (Interview Human Rights Watch, December 2015).

A new tactic applied by the ICA as a super-network *from above* and *inside* the negotiations was the *package approach.*

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[4]See tweets listed in the appendix.

By formulating one key message that contained all the principles each participating constituency was fighting for (in one package), the alliance could successfully advocate its demands. The package approach was unusual because it meant that each constituency was not only lobbying for its own idea but also for the principles other groups had suggested. Hence, as accentuated by all interviewees that participated in the ICA, the actual package message was the most important cross-policy tactic, containing principles that were relevant in different policy areas. Networks with different objectives stood in solidarity and integrated various perspectives (Interview CLARA, June 2022; Interview CARE, November 2017):

> […] Any time any of us have interaction [with state negotiators], we mention the entire package. (Interview Initiator ICA, March 2020)

Because the alliance emphasized the package in every interaction with state delegations, it became harder for negotiators to ignore it. And as each constituency repeated the entire message during official speaking slots, it was constantly reiterated and conveyed as one ICA package message.

It is important to note that the package approach is built on demands raised at the local level by grassroots communities adversely affected by climate change and climate policies. Local testimonies, presented at side events, demonstrated that this package was part of a *multilevel advocacy* strategy translating local concerns into human rights and sustainability principles to be adopted at the international negotiations (Interview AIDA, February 2016).

Another cross-policy symbolic activity *from above*, implemented via the entire super-network, comprised representatives of all seven participating groups holding signboards with the respective principles they were advocating as part of the package approach: When one member dropped their signboard, all the others fell as well (Interview TUNGO, December 2020). This is an example of a symbolic action that took place *inside* the negotiations. It demonstrated to governmental representatives but also interested observers and the media that cross-constituency solidarity was a key strength of the ICA.

Inside and outside the UNFCCC, the strategic use of information created moral leverage and exerted pressure on governments to commit to human rights in the Paris agreement. *Inside* the negotiations, state delegations supported human rights because their governments were major funders of climate policies, including several EU countries, Switzerland, Australia, China, and Turkey, who wanted to ensure they were not financing climate policies that infringed human rights. With these states supporting the rights-based principles proposed by the ICA, material leverage was created among the recipients of climate policy funding. This resulted in certain African countries also publicly committing to the human rights framework, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Sudan, and Zambia (HRCCWG 2021). These states feared that Annex I countries would refrain from funding climate policies in their countries. Most other African states remained skeptical (Wallbott and Schapper 2017). In order to pressure and/or convince states that continuously hesitated to agree to the human rights framework, individual TANs applied tactics *from below*. Utilizing individual relationships established over the years with respective state delegations, these TANs initiated personal meetings with governments and discussed concrete text suggestions (Interview UNICEF, February 2016).

Another important tactic employed by the ICA *inside the negotiations* (*from above* and *from below*) was accountability politics. The alliance reminded state actors that they needed to adhere to their human rights commitments, albeit in a different forum. Whereas some countries, like those initiating the *Geneva Pledge for Climate Action*, felt accountable for guaranteeing rights protection in climate action, others were pressured by the ICA to uphold the legal commitments they had made in the human rights regime.

Outside the UNFCCC negotiations, information politics also played a substantial role. Alliance members strategically addressed media outlets, issued press releases, and utilized social media to mobilize an international public. Norway and Saudi Arabia, for instance, changed their behavior to publicly support the rights framework after the press release by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch was widely distributed. The Guardian published an article naming and shaming states that blocked human rights language, quoting several members of the ICA (*The Guardian* 2015). Under #Stand4Rights the alliance tweeted information about governments that argued against rights in the climate agreement. This led to wide public attention around the inclusion of the human rights framework.

Eventually, all seven principles became part of the Preamble of the Paris Agreement. Although the ICA had aimed at incorporating their rights framework in Article 2 of the text, which would define the purpose of the climate agreement, this is still the first time human rights have been incorporated into a binding environmental instrument (Atapattu and Schapper 2019).

6. Case Study: The ICAN

Similar to the climate change field, within global disarmament diplomacy, NGOs and TANs have grown in number and influence in recent decades. The role of TANs within disarmament diplomacy was first highlighted in the 1990s with the success of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the resultant Mine Ban Treaty in 1997, followed in 2008 by the Convention on Cluster Munitions (Bolton and Nash 2010). Yet, it was not until the launch of ICAN that the role of TANs within disarmament politics gained more of a foothold within the academic literature (e.g., Norman 2017), or within broader IR and security discourses (Bolton and Nash 2016).

ICAN was first conceived in 2005 by the former co-President of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) to advance "lateral thinking and a new approach to nuclear disarmament" (Hawkins, Sweeney, and Ruff 2019). The idea stemmed from the collaboration and interpersonal relationships of a small group of activists in Melbourne, Australia, working on "nuclear disarmament, nuclear free futures and environmental and human rights responsibilities" (Hawkins, Sweeney, and Ruff 2019). Their approach was "informed by and built on decades of thinking and action" (Hawkins, Sweeney, and Ruff 2019) and advanced through collaboration between the IPPNW and the Medical Association for the Prevention of War. Two years later, ICAN was formally launched as a global campaign for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

Since its launch, ICAN has evolved into a highly institutionalized super-network, as depicted in figure 3.

The IST comprises thirteen staff supported by an ISG of eleven ICAN partners with responsibility for strategic planning, financial oversight, fundraising, and pol-

Figure 3. ICAN's organizational structure.

Figure 4. ICAN's international partners.

icy formulation (ICAN 2018). The wider ICAN network is formed of multiple and highly diverse TANs, which at the time of writing included thirty-seven international partner networks—see figure 4. Each international partner is itself a TAN, representing the interests of youth, faith, women, trade unions, the press, health, law, education, science, humanitarianism, peace, and reconciliation groups, as well as regions and cities. Overall, ICAN comprises 650 individual partner organizations, spanning 110 countries.

Since ICAN's formation, a major point of focus in its campaign to eliminate nuclear weapons has been the TPNW. Approved by the UN General Assembly in 2017, the TPNW is the first legally binding international agreement to prohibit nuclear weapons with the goal of their total elimination. In

the next sections, it will be shown that by optimizing POS, brokerage that connected and mobilized ICAN as a super-network, multilevel advocacy, and cross-policy tactics, ICAN was successful in shaping the TPNW.

6.1 Optimizing POS and the TPNW

Political context is especially important for understanding ICAN's formation and subsequent mobilization as a super-network. In 2005, the NPT Review Conference (RevCon) ended in failure. *Political cleavages* are pronounced within the global nuclear nonproliferation regime between the nuclear "haves" and "have nots" (Interview Philippine Mission, March 2011). The NPT is forged on a Grand Bargain in which 185 nonnuclear-weapon states commit to not develop-

ing nuclear weapons, on the grounds that the five nuclear-weapon states (the P5) meet their obligations under Article VI of the Treaty, "to pursue negotiations in good faith … to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control" (UNODA 1968). The reality, however, is that while the P5 have reduced their stockpiles, this has not prevented them from investing in the modernization of their remaining arsenals (Interview Austrian Mission, June 2015; Interview ICAN IST, March 2011)—a trend which has continued over the course of the 2010s and 2020s (SIPRI 2020). By tapping into this political cleavage, ICAN's strategy coalesced around a ban treaty to be negotiated with or without the nuclear-weapon states (Interview ICAN IST, August 2020; Ruff 2018, 239).

ICAN's campaign was strengthened when, in 2010, the NPT RevCon agreed by consensus to a 64-point action plan, which provided "a real opening" (Interview ICAN IST, June 2020), courtesy of the inclusion of one sentence that stated for the first time that:

> "The Conference expresses its deep concern at the *catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons* and reaffirms the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law". (UNODA 2010, 19; emphasis added)

From mid-2010, ICAN's advocacy of what then became known as the "Humanitarian Initiative" gained traction (Interview ICAN ISG, March 2011). By late 2010, ICAN had established the support of a "core group" of ten[5] (Interview ICAN IST, June 2020) *influential allies*. A larger group of sixteen states then campaigned for a renewed focus upon the humanitarian consequence (later impact) of nuclear weapons (HINW) (Interview Austrian Mission, June 2015). In 2012, 2013, and 2014, three HINW intergovernmental conferences were organized, hosted by Norway, then Mexico, and Austria, which generated snowballing from a majority of nonnuclear-weapons states in favor of the Humanitarian Initiative (Interview UNODA, August 2020). Austria, in particular, had taken up the torch in favor of a nuclear-weapon prohibition treaty and, at the Vienna Conference, established the "Austrian Pledge" (Reaching Critical Will 2014) to pursue effective measures to fill this legal gap.

The Austrian Pledge was a "bombshell and really lit a fire in the discourse as [a prohibition treaty] was still a controversial point" (Interview ICAN IST, 2020). While the HINW conferences had already consolidated ICAN's status as the main civil society partner promoting the Humanitarian Initiative, the Austrian Pledge ignited an *alignment shift*. Prior to 2014, myriad TANs, such as Abolition 2020, Mayors for Peace, the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, the International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation, the IPPNW, and ICAN itself, had advocated for a comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention that would apply the same lessons and logics as the successful Chemical Weapons Convention to both prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons (Ruff 2018). Faced with the marked challenges of achieving any progress on a comprehensive convention in forums such as the NPT or Conference on Disarmament, where the consensus rule gave the nuclear-weapon states the power to block, ICAN's strategy soon "sharpened" (Hawkins, Sweeney, and Ruff 2019) around the campaign for a "ban" treaty that could still be

negotiated, signed, and ratified without the nuclear-armed states (Interview ICAN IST, August 2020). Tracing civil society statements during NPT RevCons and PrepComs between 2005 and 2015 highlights that while most NGOs and TANs continued to call for a comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention, after the Austrian Pledge there was a clear shift toward calls for a prohibition or "ban" treaty negotiated in the UN General Assembly where the nuclear-weapon states could not block. During the 2015 NPT Review Cycle, civil society statements consistently delivered the same core message of the necessity for a ban treaty to fill the legal gap (see online appendix). As one ICAN partner commented, "The word "prohibition" wasn't really mentioned at the start of TPNW … ICAN's lobbying was what turned the tide so that prohibition became the norm" (IPPNW member, ICAN virtual event, 2020).

ICAN's campaign was further enhanced through increased *institutional access*. From 2012–2015, ICAN was the official civil society coordinator for all three HINW IGCs, showcasing ICAN's credibility in the eyes of state actors (Ruff 2018, 238). Since the TPNW entered into force in January 2021, ICAN has also become the official civil society coordinator for TPNW meetings of state parties. Its enhanced institutional access also saw ICAN gain increased contacts with state representatives (Interview ICAN IST, 2020). Increased power access was further afforded after 2017 when ICAN received the Nobel Peace Prize (The Nobel Prize 2019), which enhanced ICAN's legitimacy and facilitated awareness of the campaign with different audiences. As ICAN's UN Liaison Officer stated, "we've had much more of a platform … because we have a network of people all over the world saying 'I'm part of this Nobel Prize-winning organization, please listen to me and let me tell you about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons'" (Foster and Shelden 2020, 35).

In summary, ICAN was able to optimize the POS within the nuclear weapons regime through strategic utilization of more fluid elements such as political cleavages and an alignment shift. Drawing on their enhanced power and institutional access, ICAN was able to establish and mobilize a super-network that reoriented collective civil society activism toward a ban treaty negotiated in a forum where the nuclear-armed states could not block progress.

6.2 Mobilization Approaching TPNW

As with the ICA, *brokerage* processes played a critical role in ICAN's formation. In 2006, ICAN's co-founders initiated a speaking and listening tour of Europe to broker support between the IPPNW/MAPW and other civil society networks (Hawkins, Sweeney, and Ruff 2019). The early institutionalization of ICAN further played an important brokerage role. ICAN's first member of staff was already well-known internationally for her work on nuclear disarmament through the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and was able "to connect the fledging ICAN initiative to broad and well-established international networks" (Hawkins, Sweeney, and Ruff 2019). ICAN's ISG—which included not only the IPPNW but the WILPF—was also crucial in mobilizing ICAN as a super-network. As one steering group member stated:

> Drawing on our professional network, we hosted a series of informal, small-group meetings, bringing together diplomats and other important stakeholders. These … were key to the TPNW being adopted. (Article 36, 2023)

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[5]Including Austria, Ireland, South Africa, Nigeria, Thailand, Brazil, Mexico, New Zealand, Indonesia, and Costa Rica.

IST and ISG members meet regularly, both formally for meetings and informally (Interview ICAN IST, August 2020) with representatives of each ISG partner serving as "linking pins" (Schneiker and Joachim 2021) that connect and coordinate the network, advancing the campaign with an international public as well as inside nuclear disarmament negotiations. Such brokerage has not only diversified but also intensified ICAN's campaign, facilitating a highly connected, institutionalized network spanning different constituencies within civil society.

When individual partners within the super-network then undertake their own advocacy work, "we speak for our own organization, but we often reference ICAN" (Interview ICAN ISG, August 2020). As a mobilization structure, this has proven highly effective, as "in all conversations, the human focus and the likelihood of nuclear weapons' inevitable use is the No. 1 message we are all advocating" (Interview ICAN IST, August 2020). In this way, ICAN's message of "inevitable use" and the humanitarian need to ban nuclear weapons has spread and multiplied across a vast network of different constituency groups, all speaking with the same core message of support for a prohibition treaty.

6.3 Cross-Policy Advocacy Tactics Utilized in the Campaign for TPNW

Inside NPT negotiations during the 2010 and 2015 NPT review cycles, as well as in the three HINW intergovernmental conferences, ICAN was able to mobilize *above* individual TANs to accelerate the flow of information between partners through regular coordination meetings and events. Meetings and events were facilitated in the HINW conferences through ICAN's enhanced institutional access as civil society coordinator and during NPT negotiations through ICAN's coordination with its international partners, Abolition 2020 and WILPF (who also served as civil society coordinator). As one ICAN staff member highlights, ICAN convened,

> a dozen or so campaign forums during the RevCon … We had a different chair every day … every morning we had an Ambassador come to see us, so we could prepare our approach to that government … Ambassadors … were impressed with the unity of the message about prohibiting nuclear weapons. (Wright, cited in Article 36 2011, 56)

Regular coordination *inside* negotiations has even been likened by ICAN's partners to the same process groups of state parties use to ensure unity and consistency of messaging (Interview ICAN ISG, August 2020). Akin to state coalitions that use the diplomatic network and personal relationships of individual state parties to advance a common goal with specific actors (Dee 2017), ICAN has also advanced a *multilevel advocacy strategy*, working from *below* by drawing on individual partners' own networks and personal relationships and tailoring their messaging to specific states. This strategy, pursing advocacy at local, national, and international levels, has been further amplified by the use of cross-policy tactics:

> for some states the advocacy centres on linkages to the sustainable development goals or environmental impacts. The message is slightly different depending on the State or the partner doing the work. (Interview ICAN IST, August 2020)

ICAN partners therefore continue to advocate for their own issues, from gendered dynamics to faith-based issues to prioritizing youth or indigenous populations, through their own networks (Interview ICAN ISG, August 2020), but tailor their message to highlight ICAN and support for a prohibition treaty. Such cross-policy tactics have enhanced ICAN's *legitimacy* and also noticeably served to stigmatize nuclear weapons (Interviews ICAN ISG 2020; ICAN IST 2020).

Both *inside* and *outside* negotiations, ICAN's cross-policy advocacy has centered also on symbolic politics emphasizing "the lived experience" of what nuclear weapons can do. For example, approaching the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear bombings in 2020, ICAN created a dedicated Action website with personal stories from *hibakusha*—the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—posters and other materials for hosting public exhibitions, template letters to cities and towns, parliamentarians, and financial institutions to motivate action, and a media "pitching" toolkit to help gain localized media coverage (ICAN 2020). Noticeably, the same symbolic politics were utilized by several states that timed their accession to the TPNW with the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings.

While ICAN's *inside* advocacy tactics have focused on promoting the ban treaty directly with government ministries and permanent representations, ICAN's *outside* tactics focus on mobilizing grassroots support across its network through localized and regional campaigns. The ICAN Save My City Appeal is one particular example of *multilevel advocacy activity*. Targeting city councils, mayors, and local-level coalitions, the appeal raises awareness, and puts pressure on domestic political parties, thereby raising government accountability and enhancing the campaign's moral leverage both *inside* and *outside* negotiations.

The humanitarian framing underpinning ICAN's campaign has also seen humanitarian politics deliberately harnessed to both optimize the political cleavages within the nuclear nonproliferation regime, and to rally the support of heterogeneous constituencies behind its core message. Specifically, ICAN's campaign tactic is to vocalize a clear, coherent, consistent, and, above all, common humanitarian voice capable of translating across civil society constituencies and cutting through the traditional security/deterrence frames that have hindered progress in nuclear disarmament (Interview ICAN IST, June 2020). Much as we observed in the case of the ICA, a *package approach* has similarly been harnessed by ICAN through the propagation of one common denominator speaking directly to the humanitarian foundations within and across their multiple different constituencies within its super-network. Thus,

> a deliberate effort has been made to create a broad framing that could engage different constituencies; one that framed the nuclear weapon problem in terms of moral, economic and environmental issues. (Article 36 2011, 16)

Through its mobilization at multiple levels, ICAN amplified both the message and the moral imperative for a prohibition treaty. Through a package approach focusing on humanitarian principles in nuclear disarmament, ICAN placed increasing pressure on states both inside and outside of negotiations to support the treaty or justify to their own domestic audiences why they do not. At time of writing, the TPNW has sixty-eight states parties and twenty-seven signatories.

7. Comparison

Although the ICA and ICAN have been active as super-networks in different policy arenas, a comparison of both reveals striking commonalities. We use this section to fur-

ther explore these commonalities and differences for explaining the core features and main characteristics of super-networks, including their formation and functioning. The comparison is structured along the main analytical dimensions, political opportunities, mobilization, and tactics.

7.1 Commonalities

Both super-networks in our case studies were organized around human rights and humanitarian principles. Whereas the ICA's main objective is to anchor a human rights framework in the 2015 Paris Agreement, ICAN's activism is built around the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons that require their complete elimination. In both cases, key human rights and humanitarian values constitute a strong basis for an enormous mobilization effort of very different TANs. The resulting super-networks have a strong position toward state actors because these principles and values are difficult to ignore and are in line with the state identity of many delegations negotiating in the climate and nuclear weapons regimes.

Both super-networks formed when collaborative TANs could optimize the more fluid elements of the POS, and when brokerage connected TANs from different policy fields for enhanced mobilization and the application of cross-policy tactics. Although these super-networks formed at different points in time, we find that they both began mobilizing several years prior to the negotiation of a meaningful international agreement in their respective policy area. Both networks still exist, again heightening mobilization when new opportunities arise. In both cases, we could observe how network actors increased their own success opportunities by improving the POS. ICA and ICAN underwent an alignment shift and engaged with influential allies among other NGO constituencies, state actors, and IOs, who furthered their cause and enabled better institutional access. Hence, TANs did not solely concentrate on maintaining productive relationships with state actors but shifted their attention to collaboration with other TANs at the same time. Important for the work of both super-networks was the support of a core group of states that introduced proposals in closed meetings. Emerging cleavages between allies and opposing states were strategically used to name and shame those with counter-positions.

In both, the ICA and ICAN cases, we observe how brokerage connects TANs from different policy fields. In the case of the ICA, the main broker had previous experiences in various communities, relevant personal relationships, and significant thematic expertise. ICAN's main broker, and first member of staff, was internationally known for her work on nuclear disarmament and could build on many years of professional experience and interpersonal relationships useful for connecting various networks. Inside the negotiation forum, i.e., the UNFCCC, NPT RevCon, HINW Conferences, or UNGA, the super-networks brought together a heterogenous group of TANs, and mobilized a heterogenous international public, outside the negotiations. The work of these super-networks relied on key experts, who provided the testimonies of locally affected communities or the expert knowledge of lawyers, physicians, scientists, technical IO staff, and survivors.

By employing a *package approach* as the main cross-policy tactic, speaking with one voice and conveying one key message, both super-networks made it difficult for state actors to ignore their concerns. Because both ICA and ICAN concentrated on collaboration with other TANs across issue areas, rather than competition within a confined policy field,

they had more material and immaterial resources at their disposal. Hence, super-networks use *enhanced legitimacy* (e.g., Steffek and Hahn 2010), highlighting the fact that collaborative networks speak for a broader range of civil society actors, and not only for one TAN, as a tactic. In both cases, we can see important *multilevel advocacy activities* at work. ICA and ICAN rely on information based on local experiences to transport a powerful message to the international negotiation table, using the super-network as a transnational advocacy vehicle.

Due to the bundling of resources via collaboration, the effect of previous tactics was accelerated. For instance, at meetings of the super-network, TANs could exchange important information gathered from all their individual networks. Under #Stand4Rights (ICA) and #nuclearban (ICAN), Twitter campaigns further accelerated the information flow. Because state negotiators were forced to engage in dialogue, the effect of other mechanisms highlighted by Keck and Sikkink (1998), such as symbolic events, moral leverage, and accountability politics, was stronger than it would have been in an advocacy situation in which governments could simply disregard the demands of a single TAN. Thus, similar to pressure applied via a boomerang effect (Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999), tactics could be applied from above via the super-network and from below via individual TANs, which further strengthened both campaigns. The advocacy activities of the ICA and ICAN were more visible because both combined tactics targeted at governmental delegations inside the negotiations with communication and media strategies addressed at an interested public outside the negotiations.

Both networks remain active at the time of writing. ICAN's work received new impetus recently, following the TPNW's entry into force and its first Meeting of the states parties in June 2022. The ICA became active again during COP26 when the Paris rulebook, including human rights, was finalized at the international climate conference in Glasgow (2021) and is working on the UNFCCC Global Stocktake (2021–2023) (Interview Climate Action Network, July 2022).

7.2 Differences

The differences we have observed between the two cases mainly concern the size of the relevant super-network and their degree of institutionalization. ICAN serves as the coordinator of thirteen informal constituencies and comprises 650 partner organizations. The ICA encompasses five officially registered constituencies (and two observer groups) at the UNFCCC, but one of its constituencies alone, ENGOs, comprises more than 600 partner organizations (UNFCCC 2020).

ICAN is now highly institutionalized with headquarters in Geneva, a permanent staff team, and an ISG. It publishes annual reports, adheres to a code of conduct and established practices of decision-making, and continues to expand its membership. The ICA, in contrast, is a hybrid alliance of partners, with varying contributions from each participating constituency. Decisions within the ICA are taken informally via video calls; there are coordinators but no staff members, no office, and no ISG. Therefore, we assert that the degree of institutionalization is lower in the ICA case. Previous research highlights that sustaining broad coalitions while maintaining their campaign focus can be in tension (Shiffman et al. 2016), but effective networks will be able to balance both. We find that whereas ICAN has been able to meet those challenges, the ICA's durability will need to be further observed. Previous research also highlights that

Table 2. Comparison

|	ICA	ICAN
Commonalities		
Approach	Focus on human rights and humanitarian principles	
Formation	Optimization of political opportunities, brokerage for mobilization across policy areas, and cross-policy tactics	
Political opportunity structure	Alignment shift	
	Influential allies (core group of states, IOs)	
	Strategic use of cleavages	
	Enhanced institutional access	
Mobilizing structure	Brokerage	
	Heterogenous constituency	
	Expert testimonials	
Tactics	**Package approach**	
	Multilevel advocacy activities	
	Enhanced legitimacy	
	Applied from above and below	
	Addressed at inside/outside audience	
Differences		
Achievements	Human rights framework in Paris Agreement	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Nobel Peace Prize
Degree of institutionalization	Low	High
Time frame	2014–ongoing	2007–ongoing
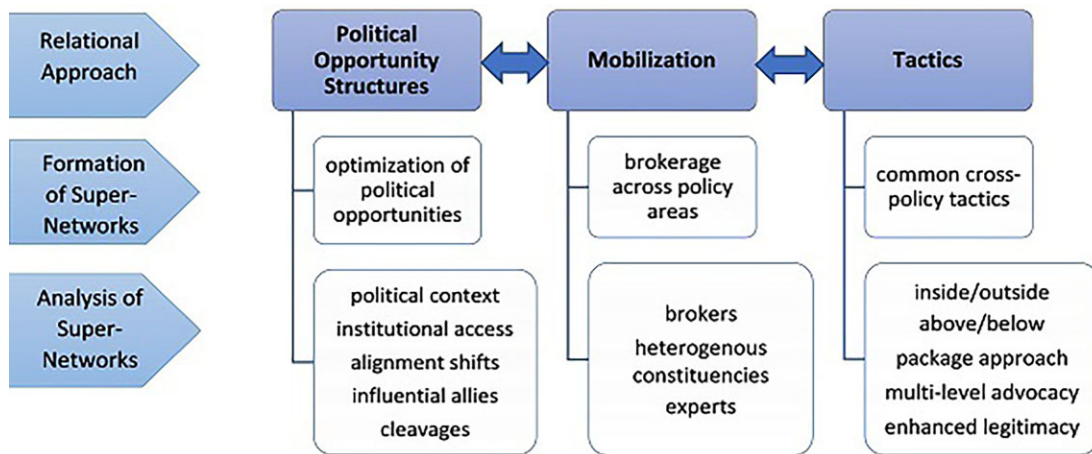
Figure 5. Revised analytical framework.

with increased institutionalization, and professionalization, there may be a risk of more hierarchical decision-making (Norman 2017). While our findings suggest that ICAN's IST and ISG have helped broker and facilitate its mobilization as a super-network, more in-depth research is needed to assess the impacts of institutionalization on ICAN decision-making. Table 2 summarizes the comparison.

We inductively find from our case study analyses that the package approach, multilevel advocacy activities, and enhanced legitimacy through diversity can be added as new tactics applied by super-networks to our analytical framework. Figure 5 presents the revised analytical framework that can be tested and applied in IR when investigating further super-networks.

8. Conclusion

This paper sets out to fill a knowledge gap in the literature surrounding the TAN-TAN collaboration. Specifically, it addressed how super-networks of collaborative TANs are formed and how they function to influence international agreements. We argue that super-networks come into existence when collaborative TANs optimize political opportunities and build new mobilization structures across policy areas to apply common cross-policy tactics.

In exploring these questions, we have developed and applied an analytical framework emphasizing the important interplay between POS, mobilizing structures, and tactics in comprehensively grasping super-networks. Through in-depth empirical analysis of two crucial cases of super-networks within the respective arenas of climate change and nuclear disarmament, the following conclusions are presented.

First, we conclude that super-networks make strategic decisions to influence the more fluid elements of the POS for enhancing their own success. The ICA and ICAN utilized alignment shifts, collaboration with powerful allies, manipulation of political cleavages, and enhanced institutional access to reinforce a unified and magnified civil society voice. Both super-networks have demonstrated a clear ability to

pragmatically adapt their POS to mobilize in a unique way and to develop sophisticated tactics.

Second, focusing on the case studies of the ICA and ICAN, we find that super-networks across issue areas form courtesy of brokers, their experiences in various communities, their thematic expertise, and their extensive interpersonal relationships both within IOs and among different civil society constituency groups. Brokers and linking pins pragmatically optimized POS to connect TAN partners, mobilize support, and advocate renewed impetus for change. We particularly highlight that super-networks form to establish networks *across* multiple and oftentimes highly diverse constituencies and issue areas. We find that the ICA and ICAN were forged as change agents, purposefully created in response to political opportunities, and intent on shifting the debate away from status quo politics to impact international agreements. By setting out to create a groundswell of support among heterogeneous constituencies, including from faith, youth, gender, trade unions, lawyers, physicians, environmental, and other groups, these super-networks presented a united civil society front that states parties could not ignore. Thus, we conclude that super-networks comprise TANs operating across and linking policy fields (Schapper 2021) by importing norms and principles from one area to another. Thereby, super-networks can shape international agreements, foster institutional interaction (Orsini 2016), a and create new order in global governance (Deloffre and Quack 2021).

Third, our research concludes that by highlighting the relationship between POS, mobilizing structures and tactics, evidence of new tactics can be identified in the actions of super-networks. We argue that a unique package approach tactic was applied by the ICA and ICAN to draw out the core strengths inherent within these super-networks. By synthesizing multiple constituency voices and their specific issues around either one single common denominator (ICAN) or integrating different principles into one core package of demands (ICA), both networks achieved an enhanced and consolidated campaign presence and voice. We further find that humanitarian and human rights framing uniquely lends itself to super-network advocacy. By employing a package approach, speaking with one voice, and conveying one key message grounded in humanitarianism itself, super-networks not only make it more difficult for state actors to neglect their concerns, but also give them considerable moral leverage and legitimacy in the advocation of their respective goals. Furthermore, by engaging in multilevel advocacy activities, super-networks utilize local testimonies and allies to change national positions and impact international agreements. Collaboration in a super-network creates additional pressure on states from above, through the collaborative network, and from below, via individual TANs. As super-networks quickly share valuable information across TANs, important tactics like information, symbolic leverage, and accountability politics (Keck and Sikkink 1998) can be accelerated. The tactics of super-networks can be effectively applied inside as well as outside the respective negotiation forum.

In presenting these findings, we not only hope to contribute new knowledge to the extant TANs literature, in particular regarding TAN collaboration, but also to signpost to a rich field for future research. Further comparative studies that consider the network-building and unique structures of these super-networks, along with more policy-specific analyses, would be just a few suggestive avenues for further development. We expect super-networks to be increasingly visible and powerful in various policy fields in

the future. In 2022, the Right to a Healthy Environment (R2HE) Coalition successfully advocated for the recognition of the human right to a healthy environment in the UN General Assembly. The R2HE coalition was purposefully modeled to mirror the ICA (Interview Initiator R2HE Coalition, September 2022). Other super-networks, such as the "Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Alliance," shaping the post-2020 biodiversity framework, or the "Campaign to Stop Killer Robots," advocating for a ban on lethal autonomous weapons, are also gaining prominence. Thus, super-networks are an increasingly relevant concept to study in IR.

Supplementary Information

Supplementary information is available at the *International Studies Quarterly* data archive.

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