

Conclusion

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This Joint Volume has sought to combine seven papers, which all incorporated the notion of transparency, in various ways, as the center piece of their research. The authors have looked at important dimensions in nowadays society and analyzed whether the notion of transparency is visible and how. As the idea of transparency is a central element in all spheres of society, the chosen topics demonstrate the wide-ranging investigation of areas of expertise. Nevertheless, all chapters sought to detect to which degree transparency is practiced in particular spheres and how this affects democratic accountability, institutional efficiency as well as social discipline. Of course next to the question of how to reach more transparency the issue of how much transparency is needed as well as desirable cannot be neglected.

The chapter on “Political Transparency and its effects on the Media: A Study of the Eurocrisis” investigates in how far political actors on the European Level can influence the information stream which they communicate to the press. Furthermore, it has been examined in how far they are, therefore, actively able to shape the debates in the media. The chapter closely looks at transparency standards in the political public relations (PPR) on the EU level by zooming into the publishing processes of the European Council (EC) and discussing six international newspapers in the light of the European Sovereign debt crisis. The information given by the EC was for the most part similar to the published newspapers articles the next day. However, the negative points were taken on by the press mostly a couple days later, creating a time-gap, thus putting the EC in a relatively favorable position to defend its standpoint. This was due to the fact that the information had to be first processed critically.

The chapter emphasizes that the notion of transparency plays an important role in the public political relations, as the EC was able to shape the debates taken on by the press. In such particular circumstance accountability to the people loses its effectiveness. This analysis highlights once more the global dimension of which the concept of transparency has become an intrinsic idea. In this case many national governments and European Institutions are drawn to accountability and openness towards a whole European people.

The next chapter “Aid Transparency in the Making – What Compliance with the International Aid Transparency Initiative Reveals about Ideational Dynamics in the Aid and Development Regime” investigates reasons for differences in the degree of transparency in public institutions on three levels: intergovernmental and supranational, national and international. The focal point of analysis was the international aid sector, in which

transparency is essential for its basic functioning as to document the flow of money from donor to the recipient institution. The author investigates whether this degree of transparency depends on the level of self-interest and the actors' underlying values. The analysis is linked to the *International Aid and Transparency Initiative* (IATI), which was launched by major development organizations and designed a set of core rules and principles in relation to "transparent" behavior.

In its conclusion the chapter concentrates on the three different types of institutions and in how far these adopt a certain degree of transparency to their behavior since the international reputations of the respective institutions and their core interest have to be considered. While the IATI seeks to standardize the degree of transparency by intruding the core principles and rules into all levels of public institutions, this features a wide gap between the degrees of their compliance to transparency norms. Their accountability is dependent on their commitment to these norms and the public is dependent on their accountability. However, the very movement of the IATI proves that the global public demands its right to the access to qualitative information. Furthermore, this chapter is a great example of how wide-ranging the idea of transparency has become. It has not only transgressed the boundaries between countries, but also all kinds of faultlines between national and international institutional structures. Here, transparency is demanded from all players in the development field: national governments, banks, public organizations and other institutions. Moreover, transparency is expected towards donors and recipients, the wider public, but also across institutions within the sphere.

The next chapter, "The EU Common Position on Arms Export Policy- Europeanizing Transparency?" set out to analyze whether the EU's efforts to harmonize Arms Export Policies within all Member States have increased the level of transparency within the field of arms towards the wider public. The analysis was done with the help of the EU Common Position and the case-study of national arms export policies and the structural arrangement of policy-making decision of Sweden, Germany and the UK. Moreover, it was important to see in how far the Member States have influenced the shaping of the EU Code of Conduct in order to establish their national degree of transparency. The chapter finds out that all three countries employed a rather high level of transparency in regard to the sphere of arms export policies before the EU Code of Conduct was put in force. With regard to the question posted before, one can assume that harmonizing efforts rather slowed down the development of the degree of transparency in the field of arms export policies in the those three countries. This must not be true for other countries, as it might appear logical that countries that performed poorer before were forced to catch up with the better-performing countries, whereas the letters could soften their regulations. This analysis underlines that transparency is an important issue also in such delicate spheres

as arms export policies. National governments are very cautious and protective in this field since they argue that national security is at risk when promoting transparency in the arms industry. However, transparency, and thus accountability, is something they have to adhere to. Furthermore, as the issue of arms export policies is taken to the European level, national governments are in a way surveyed by the entire European population.

The chapter “Corrupt Conduct- Transparency, Norms and Trust” illuminates the question whether transparency is a mean to initiative “positive” norms and trust within a democratic culture or whether transparency is a notion which automatically presumes the individuals to be opportunistic, thus requiring surveillance. The investigation focuses on the case-study of Mozambique, a young democracy with a high degree of corruption. The chapter highlights the problem that the population cannot restrict corruption by the government, as the lack of information is too big; meaning the degree of transparency is too low. Therefore, it does not trigger an augmentation in “positive” norms and trust. Surveillance becomes necessary, which strengthens the argument that the need for transparency implies that people are opportunistic and act in their self-interest. However, the author hints at the danger to assume that the concept of transparency can be applied to all countries, and advises to be cautious when testing it on young democracies which lack democratic structures. Moreover, it should be considered that the idea of transparency within a democratic culture might be so far a fundamental perception in western societies. Whereas other parts of the world civil society has mostly not demanded such high degrees of transparency.

The chapter “The Pirate Party: Tinkering with the Infrastructure of Transparency” seeks to find the rationale behind the Party’s concern to enlarge the notion of transparency, and hence accountability, of the German parties towards its electorate. Moreover, a focus on raising the level of transparency by means of information and communication technology (ICT) was taken. Information gaps and a degradation of people’s interest towards politics were found to be the Pirate Party’s stimulus for their call for more interactive engagement between the ruled, the people, and the rulers, the political parties. The Party tries to employ today’s opportunity of inexpensive and efficient ICTs by actively enlarging the political range and bringing people closer to all levels of administrative and decision-making processes. The chapter underlines the problematic that transparency is not fully embedded within the German party system, hence, means of political participation have to be broadened.

The chapter “Framing Government Transparency in the Obama Administration” has deconstructed four different frames on government transparency employed by the current US administration – ‘trust in government’, ‘improvement of policies’, ‘accountability’, and ‘implementing the Recovery Act’ – which mirror the affirmative and preventive functions of

transparency identified in the literature. The trust frame was predominant before elections, while much of the discourse and of transparency's purpose was about accountability. The administration has appropriated 'transparency' and its particular conception thereof for itself and has not let itself be challenged by WikiLeaks' counter-narrative. Though the understanding of 'government transparency' has broadened into economic and foreign affairs, over time a decline in the mobilization of 'transparency' can be observed. The study has identified the normative underpinnings of the administration's government transparency policy – democratic or liberal-democratic as well as economic efficiency concerns and the New Public Management paradigm. It has also emphasized the strategic usage of transparency. Transparency was a way to distinguish the administration from its predecessor's reputation for secrecy; in international relations it is a way to secure economic opportunities and soft power; in relation to the financial-economic crisis and the Recovery Act, transparency of process served as a proxy until positive achievements could be presented. In sum, normative and strategic functions of transparency are closely intertwined.

"Framing Transparency in the US" has investigated American public reactions to the release of classified U.S. diplomatic cables by WikiLeaks, in order to understand whether the whistle-blower organisation has influenced the perception of transparency in the USA. The chapter starts out from the assumption that new technologies alone will not make politics more transparent. They have to be accompanied by a desire and willingness of the public for higher levels of transparency. The findings suggest that this desire for more transparency has not been created in the United States. Using framing analysis, the authors have found that WikiLeaks has paradoxically led to more, rather than less support for secrecy in foreign relations and diplomacy.

Concluding, it can again be underlined that this joint volume has presented a multifarious approach of transparency in nowadays globalized world. One of the most important arguments that has been made throughout the various chapters, is that the notion of transparency becomes a necessity in a democratic society. Through the variety of chapters the volume has strongly emphasized that transparency is addressed by many stakeholders in order to reach a diversified audience and diversified objectives. In democratic societies the *demos* elects its "rulers", hence this process brings up the demand for accountability as the voters expect answers and actions to which they are entitled by the democratic structures. Transparency is a mean to achieve this accountability, thus ensuring the well-performing of any democratic entity and finding comprehension of complex societal domains. Transparency is the tool to provide answers to each citizen of a democratic society, who wishes to make use of its fundamental right to know. However, as we have seen throughout all chapters transparency is very hard to measure and comply with. Yet, there is considerable consensus from the side of the wider public and public actors demanding more openness and active participation by striving for a more transparent world.