

The Danger of Anti-U.S. Sentiment
for World Bank Legitimacy

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ABSTRACT: Can anti-U.S. sentiment pose problems for the World Bank? I argue that it can, by undermining the institution's legitimacy. For at least two reasons, unfavorable perceptions about the United States may be correlated with perceptions of World Bank illegitimacy: 1) because formal and/or informal rules endow the U.S. with substantial capabilities to intervene in organizational activities, and 2) because the U.S. was heavily involved in designing the institution and shaping its norms and values. I hypothesize that an actor holding unfavorable perceptions of the United States likely also questions the legitimacy of the World Bank, an intergovernmental organization (IGO) largely created by the U.S. and in which the U.S. possesses substantial ability to intervene. Using assessments of IGO trustworthiness as proxies for assessments of IGO legitimacy, statistical analyses and simulations indeed find a strong positive correlation between unfavorable assessments of American influence and perceptions of World Bank illegitimacy. In a world of highly visible and possibly increasing anti-U.S. sentiment, this troubling "guilt by association" link warrants further exploration.

It has become rare to watch a news program or open a newspaper without encountering anti-U.S. sentiment: from protests to kidnappings, from flag-burning to bomb plots. According to a report released by the Pew Global Attitudes Project in the summer of 2006, favorable opinions of the United States have fallen from 2005 levels in most of the 15 countries surveyed. In Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain, and Russia, between 40 and 56 percent of respondents cited the American military presence in Iraq as a great danger to world peace. Confidence in U.S. president George W. Bush to “do the right thing in world affairs” has fallen in seven of the 11 countries where trend data from 2005 is available.¹

Anti-U.S. sentiment is prevalent, and there are indications that it is growing. But why might it matter for the World Bank? I raise the possibility of “guilt by association”: given the prominent role that the United States has played in creating and maintaining the World Bank, widespread anti-U.S. sentiment may call into question the legitimacy of the Bank, tainting its operations as well. From a policy standpoint, such an outcome would be unfortunate, in light of the myriad potential benefits this multilateral institution offers to states. In a world of highly visible and possibly increasing anti-U.S. sentiment, this troubling “guilt by association” possibility warrants further exploration.

Specifically, I hypothesize that an actor holding unfavorable perceptions of the United States likely also questions the legitimacy of the World Bank, an intergovernmental organization largely created by the U.S. and in which the U.S. possesses substantial ability to intervene. While one can find support in the international relations literature for such an association, I am unaware of any other systematic attempts to investigate whether such a link in fact exists. To begin to remedy this, I proceed in three parts: Section I provides the theoretical background for the hypothesis, Section II employs large-N statistical methods and a newly released dataset to assess the conjecture, and Section III explores the troubling implications of “guilt by association.”

I. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The Possibility of “Guilt by Association”

The World Bank is an “intergovernmental organization” (IGO), which I take to mean “a

¹ Pew Global Attitudes Project 2006, 2, 4, 12.

formal, continuous structure established by agreement between [governmental] members from two or more sovereign states with the aim of pursuing the common interest of the membership.”² To the question of whether IGOs offer benefits to states, international relations scholars resoundingly respond in the affirmative. By providing international public goods, offering information about actors’ compliance, cultivating specialized expertise, facilitating the development of reputations, providing “rules of thumb” for responding to others’ actions, and/or apportioning responsibility for decentralized rule-enforcement, institutions help states to overcome the pitfalls of one-shot Prisoners’ Dilemmas and attain otherwise inaccessible objectives.³ Neoliberal institutionalists have been especially prolific in delineating the prospective advantages of intergovernmental organizations, and while realists and constructivists might dispute *why* such opportunities exist,⁴ few deny that they *do* exist.

I take the term “legitimacy” to mean “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions.”⁵ The concept is particularly important in the realm of intergovernmental organizations, where IGOs such as the World Bank often must rely on moral suasion to obtain resources and compliance from states and other actors.⁶ It is a subjective quality, constituted not by an objective reality but by an actor’s opinion, which in turn affects behavior by influencing how the actor perceives its interests.⁷ If an actor views an IGO as a legitimate entity that ought to be obeyed, such a perception affects behavior by shaping the way

² Archer 2001, 33. Here, I avoid the more generic term “international organization,” which in some contexts includes both intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). I use the term “multilateral institution” interchangeably with “IGO.”

³ Axelrod and Keohane 1986; Garrett and Weingast 1993; Kassim and Menon 2003; Katzenstein, Keohane, and Krasner 1998; Keohane 1984; Keohane and Martin 1995; Martin and Simmons 1998. For a discussion of how institutions can help actors to avoid suboptimal outcomes even when cheaters may never again have to face those whom they have bilked, see Milgrom, North, and Weingast 1990. For a similar discussion of potential benefits, albeit when the term “regime” was used more widely than the term “institution,” see Stein 1982.

⁴ Realists generally assert that multilateral institutions merely reflect the distribution of power in the international system and therefore have no independent effects on state behavior. (See, for example, Waltz 1979; Gilpin 1981; Mearsheimer 1994/1995. For a somewhat more nuanced take on cooperation, see Glaser 1994/1995.) At the other end of the spectrum, constructivists frequently depict intergovernmental organizations as “norm entrepreneurs” and potentially autonomous entities that redefine the international social context in which states interact. (See, for example, Keck and Sikkink 1998; Finnemore and Sikkink 2001; Johnston 2001; Park 2006.) Having accepted the potential advantages of international bodies, more recent work moves on to topics such as rational design (e.g., Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2003), principal-agent approaches (e.g., Hawkins et al. 2006), and bureaucratic pathologies (e.g., Barnett and Finnemore 2004).

⁵ Suchman 1995, 574.

⁶ Karns and Mingst 2004, 9.

⁷ Hurd 1999, 381.

the actor defines its own objectives and options.⁸ By claiming to pursue the collective welfare of the international community – and sometimes by trumpeting their ostensibly neutral and technocratic approaches as well – intergovernmental organizations strive to distinguish themselves from their presumably self-serving members.⁹

In designing and maintaining IGOs, powerful states heed Rousseau’s classic admonition, “The strongest is never strong enough to be always master, unless he transforms strength into right and obedience into duty.”¹⁰ Formal rules – such as the World Bank’s weighted voting arrangements – commonly solidify the “rights” of superpowers. Meanwhile, organizational norms – such as promotion of principles derived from neoclassical economics – often delineate the “duties” of weaker members. Superpowers also attempt to use multilateral institutions to justify their dominance and to elicit greater consent and compliance from other parties.

Put differently, strong states frequently aim to use intergovernmental organizations to maintain or even increase their share of world power.¹¹ For example, recognizing that its favorable relative position will not last indefinitely, a leading state faces a choice between using its capabilities to gain the upper hand in short-term distributional conflicts or to invest in institutions that lock in favorable long-term arrangements. Potentially, the latter path prolongs the hegemon’s supremacy by binding other states into more predictable patterns of behavior and lowering the costs of keeping weaker parties in line.¹² By carefully screening which actors participate in the institutional structure, leading states may also enhance their power less directly, by strengthening allies and excluding competitors.¹³ Furthermore, with the help of IGOs, leading states offload some of the burdens of providing a stable world economy and other collective

⁸ Hurd 1999, 381, 388, 400.

⁹ Barnett and Finnemore 2004, 23. Leading states face incentives to substantiate such assertions, particularly when *untrue*, because a multilateral institution that seems impartial without actually being so is quite valuable. The hegemon can then make its initiatives more palatable to others by “laundering” activities through intergovernmental organizations that are perceived to be legitimate and ostensibly independent (Abbott and Snidal 1998, 18). For example, by formulating free-market prescriptions as the product of technocratic wisdom – and not merely the favored ideology of the U.S., the organization’s largest donor – for years the International Monetary Fund succeeded in introducing economic liberalization in troubled countries around the world. For a critique of this arrangement, see Stiglitz 2003.

¹⁰ Rousseau 1968, Chapter 3. Long-recognized as a key concern *within* states, the legitimacy of leadership is increasingly recognized as an important issue *among* states as well. See, for example, Franck 1990; Hurd 1999; Heiskanen 2001.

¹¹ Mearsheimer 1994/1995, 13.

¹² Ikenberry 2001, 51, 53, 54, 55.

¹³ Karns and Mingst 2004, 258.

goods.¹⁴

Such conditions suggest at least two reasons why World Bank legitimacy is fragile in a world of widespread anti-U.S. sentiment. First, leading states such as the U.S. confront repeated temptations to meddle in the activities of multilateral bodies, obtaining short-term gains at the expense of exposing the entities' non-independence.¹⁵ The United States possesses extensive capabilities in the international system and enjoys institutionalized mechanisms of influence – for example, the predominant share of votes, the ability to appoint an Executive Director who represents only the U.S., close proximity to the institution's headquarters in Washington D.C., and the responsibility of choosing the organization's president – within the Bank. This does not necessarily pose a serious predicament when other actors hold *positive* views of the leading state's influence but becomes more problematic amidst *negative* views. Even the fact that a state has not succumbed to temptation is no guarantee that it never will, and a hegemon faces substantial difficulties in credibly committing itself to non-interference. Such observations substantiate the following proposition:

Proposition 1: An actor holding unfavorable perceptions of the U.S., which possesses institutionalized mechanisms of influence in the World Bank, likely also questions the legitimacy of the Bank itself.

Second, even if a hegemon could credibly commit to abstention from interference, World Bank legitimacy remains tenuous for another reason: a leading state's norms and values already may be institutionalized within the organization. In the post-World War II era, the United States has played a prominent – perhaps dominant – role in creating and maintaining the World Bank. Designed to be compatible with American notions of economic and social order, the Bank provides an attractive medium for shaping the structure and rules of global governance in line with U.S. interests.¹⁶ In fact, scholars such as Robert W. Cox view IGOs as key mechanisms through which the universal norms of world hegemony are expressed. He provides five reasons for this assertion, arguing that intergovernmental organizations: 1) are products of the hegemonic world order, 2) embody rules that facilitate expansion of that order, 3) legitimize norms and

¹⁴ See, for example, Kindleberger 1973, 1981; Lake 1993. For a discussion of how the weak can exploit the strong by free-riding, see Haggard and Simmons 1987, 503.

¹⁵ Abbott and Snidal 1998, 19.

¹⁶ Karns and Mingst 2004, 16, 252.

activities of the hegemon, 4) absorb counter-hegemonic ideas, and 5) co-opt elites from peripheral countries.¹⁷ Such observations substantiate a second proposition:

Proposition 2: An actor holding unfavorable perceptions of the U.S., which prominently helped to create and maintain the World Bank, likely also questions the legitimacy of the Bank itself.

In summary, Propositions 1 and 2 offer two reasons why unfavorable perceptions about a leading state may be correlated with perceptions of World Bank illegitimacy. First, a superpower confronts repeated temptations to meddle in organizational activities and faces substantial difficulties in credibly committing itself to non-interference. U.S. influence is institutionalized through mechanisms such as weighted votes and power over key personnel appointments. Second, even if a hegemon could credibly commit to abstention from overt interference, it may exert covert influence if its norms and values already have been inculcated in an organization. The U.S. and its allies designed many IGOs to promote liberalism and other Western ideals, and the World Bank still reflects these values.¹⁸ Taken together, these notions construct the following “guilt by association” hypothesis:

“Guilt by Association” Hypothesis: An actor holding unfavorable perceptions of the United States likely also questions the legitimacy of the World Bank, an IGO largely created by the U.S. and in which the U.S. possesses substantial ability to intervene.

A hegemon, which often possesses both institutionalized and normative avenues of influence in intergovernmental organizations, faces a fundamental tension between its inclination to dominate multilateral institutions and its desire to appear not to be doing so. The United States, in particular, wields influence both formally and informally over numerous IGOs, and as a result perceptions of the U.S. and perceptions of the legitimacy of such multilateral institutions are likely to be positively correlated. Put differently, given the close association between the United States and a number of prominent intergovernmental organizations, widespread anti-U.S.

¹⁷ Cox 1993, 62 (quoted in Archer 2001, 163-164).

¹⁸ Barnett and Finnemore 2004, 15. For example, Anglo-American agreement on a set of Keynesian-inspired policy ideas made possible the creation of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund by garnering support for the postwar settlement and justifying the exercise of U.S. power (Ikenberry 1993, 58.) The compromise, which later came to be known as “embedded liberalism,” sought domestic stability amidst the pursuit of greater market openness (Ruggie 1982).

sentiment may be transposed onto these IGOs, tainting their operations as well.

The Danger of “Guilt by Association”

In a world of highly visible – and possibly increasing – anti-U.S. sentiment, the possible implications of this troubling scenario warrant further consideration. As one observer correctly points out, “The overwhelming power of American international influence means that every other actor must grapple with it... [and this process] generates as much resentment and even opposition as it does support or envy.”¹⁹ Thus, I raise the possibility of “guilt by association”: given the prominent role that the United States has played in creating and maintaining the World Bank, widespread anti-U.S. sentiment may call into question the legitimacy of the Bank.

As noted above, I take the term “legitimacy” to mean “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions.”²⁰ Although key in the international realm, where IGOs so often must rely on moral suasion to garner resources and compliance, legitimacy has no single basis. Rather, as distilled from G.C.A. Junne’s insights, the perceived legitimacy of an intergovernmental organization may derive from several sources: 1) basing policies on desirable norms and values and acting in a just and honest way (“justice”), 2) forming governance structures in accordance with the law (“correct procedure”), and/or 3) representing different societal groups in a fair way (“representation”). Conceivably, IGO leadership could be legitimate according to some of the criteria but illegitimate according to others.²¹

Since intergovernmental organizations reflect the norms and values of their creators and remain vulnerable to interference by leading states, “guilt by association” may undermine the World Bank’s legitimacy through all three channels. The fairness of representation and the justness of the organization’s value-driven behavior is jeopardized when a state that inculcated those foundational values is perceived unfavorably. Similarly, the correctness of procedures and the fairness of representation are called into question when a distrusted state possesses substantial ability to intervene in Bank activities.

According to one observer, “The worst happens when... no member state really

¹⁹ Coicaud 2001, 534.

²⁰ Suchman 1995, 574.

²¹ Junne 2001, 191.

recognizes itself in and identifies with the organization and its overall multilateral mission.”²² To the extent that the World Bank’s association with a disfavored superpower weakens other states’ willingness to participate and comply, an institution’s legitimacy issue could result in diminished effectiveness and efficiency. From a policy standpoint, such “guilt by association” outcomes would be unfortunate, in light of the myriad potential benefits that the Bank offers to states in general and to superpowers in particular. The U.S., notwithstanding its occasional disgruntlement, has played a key role in creating and maintaining this organization and retains an interest in cultivating rather than undermining its legitimacy. Other states, too, stand to lose.

II. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Data

In light of the troubling implications of the possibility of “guilt by association,” one naturally wonders whether evidence of such an association exists. For at least two reasons, unfavorable perceptions about the United States may be correlated with perceptions of World Bank illegitimacy: 1) because formal and/or informal rules endow the superpower with substantial abilities to interfere in organizational activities, and 2) because the U.S. was heavily involved in designing the institution and shaping its norms and values. Therefore, I hypothesize that an actor holding unfavorable perceptions of the United States likely also questions the legitimacy of the World Bank, an IGO largely created by the U.S. and in which the U.S. possesses substantial ability to intervene.

Assessing this claim requires information concerning evaluations of American influence (the key explanatory variable), as well as assessments of World Bank legitimacy (the dependent variable). The 2003 Asia Barometer dataset, which includes viable approximations of both types of information, provides a unique opportunity to evaluate the possibility of “guilt by association.” If the hypothesis is correct, large-N statistical analysis should uncover a positive, statistically and substantively significant correlation between the dependent and independent variables. And if such a correlation indeed exists, then subsequent case studies would be ideal for investigating to what degree the two mechanisms I propose are truly at work.

Between June and September 2003, Tokyo University scholars and their in-country teams

²² Coicaud 2001, 527.

conducted face-to-face interviews with samples of the working age (i.e., 20-59) populations in China, India, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Uzbekistan.²³ In each country, approximately 800 members of the general public were asked to assess American influence and the trustworthiness of the World Bank. In addition, the researchers recorded a great deal of other individual information (e.g., international exposure) that may affect perceptions of IGO trustworthiness. While the available data at this point is merely cross-sectional, analysis of repeated cross-sections will become possible as soon as the results of the 2004, 2005, and 2006 interviews are released.

One might question whether public opinion really matters for assessing the World Bank's trustworthiness or legitimacy.²⁴ Certainly, governmental elites frequently play an intermediary role between laypeople and the organization, and therefore these representatives' assessments are more informed by first-hand experiences and are of immediate concern to Bank personnel.²⁵ Yet individual citizens increasingly bypass governmental elites in order to access the international arena directly.²⁶ Although the Bank currently does not provide referendum channels as formal as those of the European Union, consultative relations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are becoming more common.²⁷ For example, from the 1980s, the World Bank has carried out increasingly energetic initiatives – including new dialogue structures and grants – to involve NGOs in its activities. Moreover, in an effort to influence both governmental intermediaries and the organization itself, individual citizens can and do take to the streets to

²³ The field reports and other documentation indicate that various forms of multistage, stratified, clustered, and national probability sampling were employed. The researchers sought to use random and nationally representative sampling. However, resource constraints necessitated urban-focused surveys in a few countries (e.g., geographically expansive China). For such cases, one must recognize that the results are presumably more representative of the urban population than of the population as a whole.

²⁴ Junne 2001, 191.

²⁵ Heiskanen 2001, 6.

²⁶ According to some observers, public opinion's perceived irrelevance disappeared as European integration progressed, and its impact blossomed as groups such as Amnesty International and Greenpeace mobilized the mass media and transnational pressure from citizens to influence decision-making in IGOs (Reinalda and Verbeek 2004, 243). For further discussions of the role of public opinion in international decision-making, see Niedermeyer and Sinnott 1995 or Clark 2001. Although transnational civil society in general, and non-governmental organizations in particular, are perhaps most prominent in the Western democracies, public opinion may be highly relevant even in autocracies (where constituencies, though relatively small, are nevertheless important for regime survival). For example, in order to stave off domestic unrest and mass mobilization amidst accession to the World Trade Organization, the Chinese government preemptively implemented safety nets for sectors of society (such as agricultural workers) that could be negatively affected by economic liberalization. For further discussion of China's accession to the WTO, see Lu et al. 2003.

²⁷ For further discussion of the World Bank's efforts, see World Bank 1995 and World Bank 1999. For further discussion of how World Bank norms concerning NGOs have diffused from the World Bank to other development banks, see Reiman 2006.

express their opinions about Bank activities.²⁸ In short, public opinion data is germane, because the relevant audience is plausibly composed of laypeople, not only governmental elites.

As discussed in more detail in Part III, the lack of suitable data from other parts of the globe temporarily hinders expansion of my analysis to additional regions. Nevertheless, Asia is an attractive place to begin. Unlike some areas of the world, Asia is neither uniformly rich nor uniformly poor, neither universally weak nor universally powerful. The eight sampled countries vary substantially in terms of their influence and membership duration within the World Bank, level of economic development, and regime type.²⁹ This variation enables me to examine whether the hypothesized relationship between the U.S. and the World Bank exists even after dummy variables control for these and other country-level factors.

Furthermore, the Asia Barometer is a promising yet under-utilized resource. By basing the project on face-to-face interviews rather than mail surveys, the researchers minimized non-responses. The resultant sample size of 6,479 individuals lends itself to large-N statistical analysis, a relatively expedient approach for assessing the proposed correlation between derogatory views of the United States and skepticism about World Bank legitimacy. Yet because the Tokyo University researchers carried out the fieldwork in 2003 and made the information publicly available only in late 2005, to date few publications employ this dataset.

Dependent Variables

While the Asia Barometer interviewers did not solicit opinions about institutional legitimacy *per se*, they did ask the following question: “To what extent do you trust the World Bank to operate in the best interests of society?” To be sure, the concepts of legitimacy and

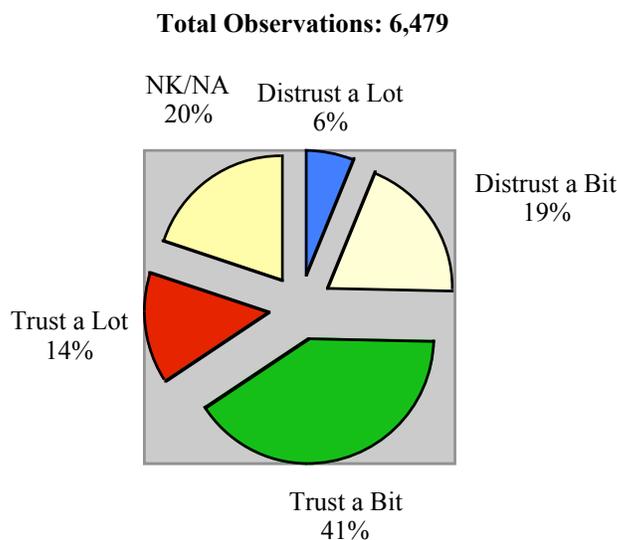
²⁸ In the language of “two-level games,” domestic publics’ perceptions of institutional legitimacy or trustworthiness – whether fully accurate or not – can dictate the set of international-level agreements that would be acceptable at the national level (Putnam 1988). One may question whether public opinion merely reflects elite opinion (due to, for example, a government’s informational campaigns). In some circumstances, this clearly is not the case: public opinion may differ markedly from elite opinion and win out, as forcefully demonstrated by the recent French and Dutch referendums concerning the proposed European constitution. Moreover, in circumstances in which public opinion indeed reflects elite opinion, then looking for evidence of “guilt by association” in public opinion data should approximate an investigation of elite opinion data.

²⁹ For instance, relatively poor China and India possess nearly three times the World Bank vote shares of South Korea, which is much wealthier. Among these eight countries, per capita gross domestic product – in 2003 U.S. dollars and adjusted for purchasing power parity – ranges from \$1,744 in Uzbekistan to \$27,967 in Japan. Polity IV regime type assessments indicate that four countries in the sample (India, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand) are quite democratic, two countries (China and Uzbekistan) are quite autocratic, and the remaining two countries (Sri Lanka and Malaysia) are somewhere in between. See Table A in the statistical appendix for further details. (Sources: Websites of the World Bank, UN Human Development Reports, CIA World Factbook, and Polity IV project.)

trustworthiness are not identical, and it is possible that a respondent distrusts the organization not because it is illegitimate but simply because it is deemed, say, ineffectual. However, given that an “IGO” has been defined as possessing *the aim of pursuing the common interest of the membership*, and that “legitimacy” necessitates that *the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate*, inquiring about trustworthiness to operate in the best interests of society captures the challenging idea of “IGO legitimacy” reasonably well. The explicit assumption is that an individual who questions the Bank’s legitimacy is also likely to distrust the institution. In other words, I find it plausible that ordinary people’s perceptions of these two abstract concepts – if both were observable – would exhibit high positive correlation. Figure 1 summarizes the 6,479 Asian interviewees’ responses to the pertinent question.

FIGURE 1: LEVELS OF TRUST FOR THE WORLD BANK (SOURCE: 2003 ASIA BAROMETER)

“To what extent do you trust [each IGO] to operate in the best interests of society? If you don’t know what to reply or have no particular opinion, please say so.”



At the extremes, around six percent express substantial *distrust*, while 20 percent of the interviewees express substantial *trust*. The majority of the responses fall in the middle: approximately 20 percent distrust the institution to a degree, and approximately 40 percent trust the institution somewhat but not entirely. While in the aggregate data over half of the respondents profess trust to *some* extent, it is nevertheless the case that about one-quarter of the

interviewees report active distrust the World Bank.

To assess the “guilt by association” hypothesis, I use a probit analysis.³⁰ The binary dependent variable, *distrustWB*, is coded 1 for responses of “distrust a lot” or “distrust a bit” and 0 for responses of “trust a lot” or “trust a bit.”³¹ At first glance, ordered probit appears to be an attractive approach, but this option is impeded by the difficulty of correctly placing “don’t know/no answer” answers in the ordering. One must exercise caution in handling such responses, because the original dataset includes three different types of individuals under this code: 1) those who were *unwilling* to answer the question, 2) those who were willing but *not familiar* enough with the Bank to answer the question, and 3) those who are familiar with the Bank but felt completely *neutral* concerning its trustworthiness. The three variants are indistinguishable from one another in the dataset and together comprise around 20 percent of the sample.

Some researchers might interpret such responses as expressions of ambivalence and re-code the data to incorporate a new neutral category. However, I elect for the more conservative approach of treating all of these responses as missing data, because I suspect that a substantial portion is caused by certain interviewees’ lack of familiarity with the organization.³² Since the proper way to code the “don’t know/no answer” responses remains unclear, however, I use a binary rather than ordered dependent variable.³³

Key Explanatory Variable

As in the case of the dependent variable, the Asia Barometer dataset does not include an

³⁰ In contrast to a linear probability model, the non-linear probit ensures that the probability is bounded between zero and one. To be sure, use of the probit rests on the assumption that the underlying non-linear function is a normal distribution, but this assumption does not appear to be unreasonable. Subsequent robustness checks show that a logit model yields results that are very similar to those of the probit.

³¹ Table B in the statistical appendix provides descriptive statistics for the dependent and independent variables used in this analysis.

³² Informing this view is the observation that people are generally familiar with and have an opinion about their own governments. Only about 4 percent of the sample is categorized as “don’t know/no answer” for the question pertaining to government trustworthiness, suggesting that only about 4 percent were unwilling to answer or were conveying complete neutrality about this topic. Therefore, I suspect that many of the “don’t know/no answer” responses pertaining to the World Bank are due to unfamiliarity with this organization.

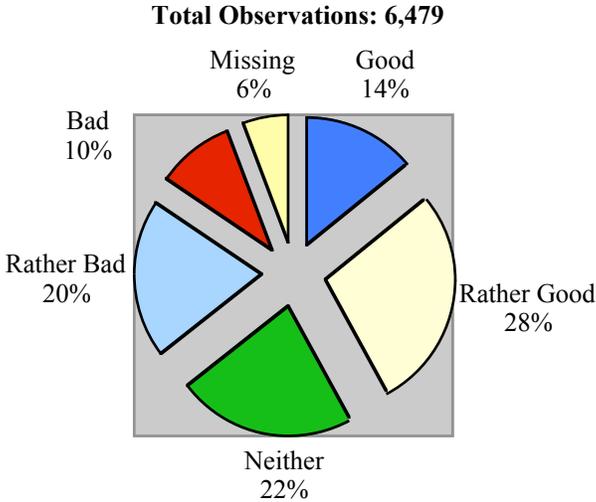
³³ Opting for the more conservative approach does not appear to drive the results. To verify this, I maintain *distrustWB* as 1 if a respondent distrusts the organization to some extent but include the “don’t know/no answer” observations as 0’s instead of allowing them to be ignored as missing data. I also recode the control *opingovt* so that higher values again indicate increasingly unfavorable assessments but now range from 0 to 4, with 2 indicating the new neutral response. The subsequent probit analysis yields coefficients that are very similar in size and significance to the estimates presented in Table 1.

exact operationalization of the hypothesized key explanatory variable. Yet although the interviewers did not solicit opinions about America’s influence over the World Bank *per se*, they did ask, “Do you think the USA has a good influence or a bad influence on your country?” The question inquires about the individual’s assessment of U.S. influence, not merely his opinion of specific U.S. *policies* – this is important, because displeasure with particular policies does not necessarily indicate the broader anti-U.S. sentiment that may color people’s perceptions of IGOs closely associated with the United States. The responses to this question comprise the key explanatory variable to be examined.

The explicit assumption is that an individual who views American influence over the World Bank unfavorably is also likely to view U.S. influence over his own country unfavorably. In other words, because I find it plausible that ordinary people’s perceptions of these two types of influence – if both were observable – would exhibit high positive correlation, I consider U.S. influence on the respondent’s own country to be an adequate proxy for U.S. influence on the Bank. Figure 2 summarizes the 6,479 Asian interviewees’ responses to the question about American influence.

FIGURE 2: ASSESSMENTS OF U.S. INFLUENCE (SOURCE: 2003 ASIA BAROMETER)

“Do you think the USA has a good influence or a bad influence on your country?”



At the extremes, about 14 percent of the interviewees say that U.S. influence is quite good, while about 10 percent say it is quite bad. As in Figure 1, the majority of the responses

fall in the middle: approximately 28 percent perceive America somewhat favorably, and approximately 20 percent perceive America somewhat unfavorably. Yet unlike the responses pertaining to the World Bank, ambivalent answers of “neither” were coded separately in the original dataset and therefore can be distinguished from missing values. The latter comprise around 6 percent, while the former comprise around 22 percent.

The value of the hypothesized key explanatory variable *opinUSA* is coded 0 for “good,” 1 for “rather good,” 2 for “neither,” 3 for “rather bad,” 4 for “bad. Higher values indicate increasingly unfavorable assessments. Therefore, *a priori* I expect a positive correlation between *opinUSA* and *distrustWB*, in line with the reasoning previously outlined.³⁴

Control Variables

In the first section, I laid out the theoretical basis for hypothesizing that an actor holding unfavorable perceptions of the United States likely also questions the legitimacy of the World Bank, an organization largely created by the U.S. and in which the U.S. possesses substantial ability to intervene. However, many factors influence individuals’ perceptions of institutional trustworthiness or legitimacy. Therefore, in order to assess the relative importance of perceptions of U.S. influence, I also control for numerous other possibilities.

First, one’s opinion of technocratic systems could be an important contributing factor. The Bank’s cultivation of specialized knowledge in reconstruction and development may enable states to obtain efficiency gains through delegation.³⁵ The organization exhibits attributes of bureaucratic entities, pursuing its missions by “technocratic” – ostensibly rational, impartial, and non-violent – means.³⁶ Yet the potential downside is vulnerability to the same path dependency, red tape, and parochialism frequently associated with domestic bureaucracies.³⁷ Therefore, I use the following question to control for dislike of technocratic governance structures: “Do you think

³⁴ I doubt that reverse causality would drive such a correlation. To be sure, portions of the scholarly literature – particularly constructivist work – raise the possibility that states and IGOs interact in a mutually constitutive environment. As such, it may be that an individual’s level of trust or distrust toward the World Bank determines his assessment of U.S. influence. However, in light of the fact that states create and maintain IGOs, it seems more likely that the primary relationship runs from states to organizations, so that an individual’s assessment of U.S. influence shapes his level of trust or distrust toward the IGO. While the former possibility receives backing mainly from constructivists, the latter possibility is supported not only in constructivist work but also in realist and neoliberal scholarship.

³⁵ See, for example, Keohane 1984, Abbott and Snidal 1998, Hawkins et al. 2006.

³⁶ Barnett and Finnemore 2004, 5.

³⁷ Weber 1978; Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 2004; Stiglitz 2003.

that a system whereby decisions affecting the country are made by experts (such as bureaucrats with expertise in a particular field), according to what they think is best for the country, would be very good, fairly good, or bad?” The variable *opin technoc* ranges from 0 to 2, with higher values indicating increasingly unfavorable assessments.

Second, a respondent may be suspicious of higher authorities or formalized governance structures in general rather than the World Bank in particular. To control for this, I use the responses to the following question: “To what extent do you trust your central government to operate in the best interests of society?” The variable *opingovt* is coded so that higher values indicate increasingly unfavorable assessments: 0 for “trust a lot,” 1 for “trust a bit,” 2 for “distrust a bit,” and 3 for “distrust a lot.”³⁸

Third, it also is possible that certain individual characteristics may prompt unfavorable views of entities – including both the U.S. and the World Bank – that transcend an interviewee’s national borders. Perhaps uninformed, consistently wary, anti-globalization, and/or less “cosmopolitan” people are more likely to have a derogatory view of American influence as well as a distrustful stance with regard to the Bank.³⁹ Or maybe certain respondents exhibit substantial nationalism and resent all foreign pressures, regardless of whether the source is an IGO or the United States.⁴⁰ If any of the conjectures are true, then the exclusion of these factors may make assessments of American influence appear to be a key explanation, when in fact *opinUSA* is at most an intervening variable.

Using other queries from the face-to-face interviews, I add controls for all five factors.⁴¹ Knowledge of current events is measured by the number of newspapers purchased per month (*ppr spermo*). Inherent wariness (*gendistrust*) is a binary variable coded 1 if the respondent agreed with the statement, “In general, you can’t be too careful in dealing with people.” Fear of globalization (*worryglobzn*) is a binary variable coded 1 if the respondent answered affirmatively to the question, “Does globalization cause you serious worry?” I measure global exposure (*globalex*) on a scale of 0 to 6, based on responses to a series of questions about forms of

³⁸ Like the dependent variables, *opingovt* possesses an ambiguous “don’t know/no answer” category, which I initially treat as missing data points and later assess in robustness checks.

³⁹ I thank colleagues at the University of Chicago for helping to point out such possibilities.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Huntington 1998 (although, admittedly, his discussion broadens “nationalism” to include civilization-wide pride).

⁴¹ Multicollinearity does not appear to be a problem, as verified by an examination of the variance inflation factor of the individual characteristics as well as the other independent variables.

international contact.⁴² To control for nationalism, I code the responses to the question, “How proud are you of being your nationality?” from 0 to 3, with higher values of *nationalism* indicating greater expressed pride.⁴³

Fourth, the interviewees differ from one another in terms of demographic characteristics. Similarly, the eight states in this sample substantially differ from one another in terms of political, economic, and social features. Factors as diverse as regime type, average per-capita income, health indicators, military expenditures, historical alliances, wealth disparities, or population growth may shape respondents’ perceptions of both the World Bank and the United States. In addition, an individual’s opinion also could be influenced by his state’s duration and level of interaction and conflict with a given multilateral institution, or by his state’s influence in a particular intergovernmental organization.⁴⁴

To control for observable and unobservable country-level factors that could affect individuals’ level of trust toward the World Bank and opinions of American influence, I add country dummies, retaining the intercept and excluding Japan for use as the reference category. Any of the country dummies could have been used for comparison, and the choice has no effect on the main results.⁴⁵ As a final set of controls, I include demographic characteristics to capture the respondent’s age (*age*), gender (*male*), educational attainment (*hsgrad*), and socioeconomic status (*whitecollar*).⁴⁶

⁴² Specifically, *globalex* is a count of how many of the following situations pertain to an individual: 1) has a relative living in another country, 2) has traveled abroad at least three times in the past three years, 3) has friends from other countries, 4) often watches foreign-produced programs on TV, 5) often communicates with people in other countries via the Internet or email, and 6) holds a job involving contact with organizations or people in other countries.

⁴³ Specifically, the coding for *nationalism* is: 0 for “not proud at all,” 1 for “not really proud,” 2 for “somewhat proud,” and 3 for “very proud.”

⁴⁴ Lee 2006.

⁴⁵ Japan is a somewhat natural choice for comparison, because it is the most economically advanced state in the sample and holds the second-largest vote share in the World Bank.

⁴⁶ The dummy variable *hsgrad* indicates whether a respondent has obtained a high school diploma. Individuals whose highest level of education is “high-school-level vocational-technical school” rather than high school per se are not included in the category of high school graduates, and robustness checks confirm that this approach does not change the main results. Unfortunately but not surprisingly, missing data affects the survey’s income queries. Instead, I attempt to control for socio-economic status with a dummy variable for white-collar workers, yet to the extent that high school completion is correlated with socio-economic status, the model may already control for this important demographic variable. As an additional check, I use ownership of a personal computer as an alternative measure of relatively high socio-economic status, and this does not change the main results.

Results

The results of the probit model are displayed in Table 1.⁴⁷ One must exercise caution here, for in this non-linear model, the coefficient's sign provides a useful indication of the direction of the correlation between each independent variable and the dependent variable. Yet the magnitude is not easy to interpret intuitively, because the effect of a change in an independent variable may differ, depending on the initial level of that variable. Consequently, in Section III, I will employ simulations to find the estimated probability of distrusting the World Bank, for various values of the independent variables.

TABLE 1: PROBIT MODEL RESULTS (DV: *DISTRUSTWB*) AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	Coefficient	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
<i>opinUSA</i>	0.166*** (0.034)	1.82	1.22	0	4
<i>opintechnoc</i>	0.132*** (0.024)	1.06	0.68	0	2
<i>opingovt</i>	0.196*** (0.027)	1.26	0.94	0	3
<i>globalexp</i>	-0.021 (0.021)	0.94	1.14	0	6
<i>pprspermo</i>	-0.000 (0.002)	16.29	13.29	0	30
<i>worryglobzn</i>	-0.082 (0.085)	0.06	0.23	0	1
<i>nationalism</i>	0.005 (0.049)	2.43	0.82	0	3
<i>gendistrust</i>	0.084 (0.052)	0.70	0.46	0	1

Country dummies, demographic controls, and the constant are not shown. See the statistical appendix (Table B) for the complete results and descriptive statistics.⁴⁸ Robust standard errors are in parentheses. For the probit model, there are 4,593 observations. * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

⁴⁷ Since interviewees are likely to share more unobservable characteristics with their fellow countrymen than with respondents from other states, I address potential heteroskedasticity with country-clustered standard errors in the simple probit models. This approach does not change the coefficient estimates themselves but merely recalculates the standard errors and therefore helps to prevent statistically insignificant coefficients from appearing to be significant (Johnston & DiNardo 1997, 164).

⁴⁸ A slightly different version of this probit analysis includes *age-squared* as well, to allow for diminishing effects of the *age* variable: it may be that middle-aged interviewees may tend to trust the World Bank, while younger and older respondents distrust it. (For example, perhaps people in their 20s fear that the IGO does not pay enough attention to environmental considerations, while people in their 50s worry that the organization's prescriptions make their jobs more insecure as they approach retirement age). However, the estimate for *age-squared* is not statistically significant even at the ten-percent level and therefore is left out of the model.

As conjectured, the coefficient on *opinUSA* is positive and statistically significant, even at the one-percent level. In other words, an individual who perceives American influence unfavorably is also likely to distrust the World Bank. Two of the control variables also display substantial correlation with the dependent variable. First, distrust toward the Bank does seem to be more likely when respondents hold unfavorable views of technocratic systems. Second, individuals who distrust higher authorities such as their own central governments tend to distrust this multilateral institution as well. Indeed, the coefficient on this variable is even larger than the coefficient on *opinUSA*.

However, few of the other controls are statistically significant. If uninformed, less “cosmopolitan,” anti-globalization, nationalistic, consistently wary people are more likely to have an unfavorable view of U.S. influence as well as a distrustful stance with regard to the World Bank, then the dependent variable will be negatively correlated with *pprspermo* and *globalexpr*, and positively correlated with *worryglobzn*, *nationalism*, and *gendistrust*. All but *worryglobzn* exhibit the conjectured signs, but the estimates are statistically insignificant even at the ten-percent level. Every included country dummy is negative and statistically significant, indicating that – vis-à-vis Japanese respondents, the excluded category – interviewees from every other country in the sample are less likely to distrust the World Bank.⁴⁹ Among the demographic controls, only *male* is statistically significant.

In summary, the positive, statistically significant correlation between *opinUSA* and the dependent variable supports the “guilt by association” hypothesis. Using assessments of IGO trustworthiness as proxies for assessments of IGO legitimacy, an actor holding unfavorable perceptions of the U.S. appears to be more likely to question the legitimacy of the World Bank, an organization largely created by the United States and in which the U.S. possesses substantial ability to intervene. In addition, two of the control variables – opinions of technocrat systems and of one’s own government – also display statistically significant correlations with distrust toward the organization.

Robustness Checks

These findings are robust to different model specifications. For one thing, the key probit

⁴⁹ Recall that Japan was excluded, but any of the country dummies could have been used as the reference category without affecting the main results.

results remain unchanged when one uses a logit or ordered probit model.⁵⁰ In addition, to check whether perceptions concerning other prominent countries would display similar relationships with the dependent variables, I add controls for respondents' opinions about the influence of China and Japan but find that the coefficients for *opinChina* and *opinJapan* are substantially smaller than the coefficient for *opinUSA* and are frequently insignificant even at the ten-percent level.⁵¹

Furthermore, multicollinearity does not appear to affect the results. The inclusion of variables with high linear correlation can inflate the standard errors and make statistically significant estimates appear to be insignificant. Some researchers – particularly those using large samples – pay little attention to multicollinearity, since this issue decreases efficiency but does not bias the coefficient estimates. Nevertheless, I re-run the model as a linear regression and obtain the variance inflation factors (VIFs), which describe how much multicollinearity increases the variance of each estimator. I find that the mean VIF hovers around 1.7, a reassuring comparison to the mean VIF of 1.0 that would result in the case of absolutely no collinearity among variables. Furthermore, as a rule of thumb, an individual VIF of ten or more signals strong linear correlation, but none exceeds 3.0 for the independent variables included in this model.⁵²

III. DISCUSSION

Estimated Probabilities

As previously noted, the coefficients in non-linear models are difficult to interpret intuitively, because the effect on the dependent variable in response to a one-unit change in an independent variable may differ, depending on the independent variable's initial value. Thus, to evaluate the relative importance of perceptions of U.S. influence, one cannot simply compare the

⁵⁰ The logit bounds the probability between zero and one but accommodates fatter tails than in the normal distribution underlying the probit model. For the ordered probit, I replace the dichotomous dependent variables with the new ordered versions *opin[IGO]*, which range from 0 for “trust a lot” to 3 for “distrust a lot.” To conserve space, the robustness checks are not shown.

⁵¹ Japan is a regional leader and its vote share in the World Bank is second only to that of the U.S. (see the website of the World Bank). Moreover, many observers believe that China is a future superpower. (For a recent, non-academic view of China's superpower potential, see Fishman 2005.) To conserve space, the robustness checks are not shown.

⁵² Gujarati 2003, 351-353, 362-363. To conserve space, the VIFs are not shown.

magnitudes of different coefficients. To overcome this, I calculate the estimated probabilities that a representative individual distrusts each IGO, given various values of the key explanatory variable *opinUSA*, as well as the two controls – *opintechnoc* and *opingovt* – that display substantial correlation with the dependent variable. Table 2 displays the results.⁵³

TABLE 2: ESTIMATED PROBABILITIES THAT *DISTRUSTWB* = 1

Values of Independent Variables	Estimated Probability that <i>distrustWB</i> = 1	Change (in percentage points) from Baseline
(1) <i>opinUSA</i> & <i>opintechnoc</i> & <i>opingovt</i> at minimum (best-case scenario), all other variables at mean values	0.11	-0.18
(2) <i>opinUSA</i> at minimum (“good”), all other variables at mean values	0.20	-0.09
(3) <i>opingovt</i> at minimum (“trust a lot”), all other variables at mean values	0.21	-0.08
(4) <i>opintechnoc</i> at minimum (“very good”), all other variables at mean values	0.24	-0.05
(5) Baseline: all variables at mean values	0.29	--
(6) <i>opintechnoc</i> at maximum (“bad”), all other variables at mean values	0.34	+0.05
(7) <i>opingovt</i> at maximum (“distrust a lot”), all other variables at mean values	0.42	+0.13
(8) <i>opinUSA</i> at maximum (“bad”), all other variables at mean values	0.42	+0.13
(9) <i>opinUSA</i> & <i>opintechnoc</i> & <i>opingovt</i> at maximum (worst-case scenario), all other variables at mean values	0.61	+0.32

NOTE: All estimates are statistically significant at the 1% level.

⁵³ The predicted probabilities are based on 1,000 simulations using the parameter estimates from the model in Table 1. The calculations were done using Clarify software (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003; King, Tomz, and Wittenberg 2000), downloadable from <http://gking.harvard.edu/stats.shtm>.

The number in each cell represents the predicted probability of distrusting the World Bank, given the independent-variable values noted in the far left column. The baseline prediction, which is obtained by setting all of the independent variables at their average values, appears in bold in Row 5. The prediction is 29 percent, roughly similar to the percentage of distrustful respondents in Figure 1.

Comparing Rows 2 and 8 further corroborates the hypothesis of “guilt by association.” Holding all other variables at their means, the predicted probability of distrusting the World Bank jumps to 42 percent when American influence is perceived to be “bad” (the most derogatory value) but falls to 20 percent when American influence is perceived to be “good” (the most approving value). A 10-percentage-point movement is considerable, particularly when one recognizes that these changes in the *opinUSA* value shift the estimated probability up and down by one-third of the baseline prediction. The key explanatory variable clearly affects the probability of distrusting the World Bank.

Although two of the control variables receive support in the regression results, the simulations reveal that only one rivals *opinUSA*’s influence on the dependent variable. Holding all other variables – including *opinUSA* – at their means, the predicted probability of distrusting the Bank jumps to 42 percent (Row 7) when national governments are considered very untrustworthy but falls to 21 percent (Row 3) when national governments are trusted a lot. The effect of *opintechnoc* is much less dramatic: the probability is around 24 percent when technocratic systems are deemed “bad” (Row 4) and around 34 percent when technocratic systems are deemed “good” (Row 6). The combined effects, shown in Rows 1 and 9, are striking. If all three of these independent variables are set at their most derogatory or most approving values, the likeliness of distrust toward IGOs shifts to 61 percent or to 11 percent, respectively.

Furthermore, the predicted probabilities seem to be affected more by negative perceptions than by positive ones. If *opingovt* is set at “trust a lot” or *opinUSA* is set at “good,” the probability of distrusting the World Bank decreases by 8 to 9 percentage points. Yet if *opingovt* is set at “distrust a lot” or *opinUSA* is set at “bad,” the probability of distrust increases by 13 percentage points. When the changes in all three variable-values are combined, the effect of overwhelmingly negative perceptions is far greater than the effect of overwhelmingly positive perceptions: a change of 32 percentage points compared to 18 percentage points, respectively.

Implications

In short, the statistical analysis indeed supports the “guilt by association” hypothesis for the World Bank, with the key explanatory variable *opinUSA* statistically significant even at the one-percent level. Using assessments of IGO trustworthiness as proxies for assessments of IGO legitimacy, an actor holding unfavorable perceptions of the United States appears to be more likely to question the legitimacy of the Bank, an organization largely created by the U.S. and in which the U.S. possesses substantial ability to intervene. Furthermore, the predicted probabilities of distrusting the institution seems to be affected more by negative perceptions of the United States than by positive ones. Only one of the controls, pertaining to assessments of the trustworthiness of one’s own government, truly rivals the explanatory power of the key independent variable *opinUSA*.

Despite its occasional displeasure with the World Bank, the U.S. has played a key role in creating and maintaining this organization and retains an interest in cultivating rather than undermining its trustworthiness and legitimacy. However, since IGOs reflect the norms and values of their creators and remain vulnerable to intervention by leading states, “guilt by association” may undermine institutional legitimacy. Given the institutionalized and normative influence of the United States on the World Bank, widespread anti-U.S. sentiment may be transposed onto this IGOs, tainting its operations as well.

As discussed in Section I, legitimacy is a subjective quality, constituted not by an objective reality but by an actor’s opinion, which in turn affects behavior by shaping how the actor views its interests. It is particularly important in the realm of intergovernmental organizations, because multilateral institutions often must rely on moral suasion to elicit compliance and enforcement from states. To the extent that an IGO’s association with a disfavored superpower weakens other states’ willingness to participate and comply, an institution’s legitimacy issue could result in diminished efficacy and efficiency.

Given the prominent role that the United States has played in creating and maintaining the World Bank, widespread anti-U.S. sentiment may call into question the legitimacy of the Bank, tainting its operations as well. When multilateral institutions – the chief legitimizing agents of global politics – are undermined, the legitimacy of the international order itself is threatened.⁵⁴ From a policy standpoint, such an outcome would be unfortunate, in light of the

⁵⁴ Cronin 2001, 113 (quoted in Karns and Mingst 2004, 257).

myriad potential benefits that multilateral institutions offer to states in general and to superpowers in particular.

To be sure, distrust toward the World Bank is not yet the majority view, at least in this sample. Although a substantial 25 percent of the interviewees actively distrust the organization, slightly more than half of the respondents profess trust to *some* extent, and the remainder is either neutral, unwilling to express an opinion, or unfamiliar with the IGOs. Furthermore, because separate analyses reveal that *favorable* evaluations of the U.S. indeed are correlated with *trust* toward the Bank,⁵⁵ it is possible that a reversal of anti-U.S. sentiment could alleviate the issue.

Nevertheless, given the prevalence of anti-U.S. sentiment, the findings elicit concern. Holding all other variables at their means, in Table 2 the predicted probability of distrusting the World Bank jumps to 42 percent when American influence is perceived to be “bad” but falls to 20 percent when American influence is perceived to be “good.” Moreover, perceptions of the organization appear to be more greatly affected by negative assessments of U.S. influence than by positive ones. As such, the dangers of “guilt by association” may outstrip the potential benefits of “honor by association,” thereby threatening the legitimacy of this institution. It is worthwhile to explore this relationship further, *before* suspicion toward the World Bank becomes the majority view.

Suggestions for Further Research

Determining the generalizability of the findings is a key avenue for future research. Would surveys of governmental elites uncover similar connections between views of the United States and of this institution?⁵⁶ Is “guilt by association” an issue only for formalized and prominent intergovernmental organizations such as the World Bank?⁵⁷ Most importantly, does the correlation between perceptions of American influence and assessments of IGO

⁵⁵ This finding was confirmed in separate analyses that are not reported here.

⁵⁶ One possible explanation for the observed positive correlation is that laypeople use perceptions of American influence as a heuristic shortcut for surmising the trustworthiness of the World Bank, which is associated with the U.S. This does not undermine the theoretical and policy relevance of the relationship, since here the method of forming opinions does not matter as much as the opinions themselves. It is plausible that the correlation would also exist in a study of governmental elites, either because they employ similar heuristics, reflect or shape public opinion, and/or possess even greater exposure to the association between this organization and the United States.

⁵⁷ Because few surveys solicit opinions about less-prominent or less-formalized IGOs, such examinations may be better suited to a case-study approach than to large-N statistical analysis.

trustworthiness or legitimacy hold in other regions of the world or in different timeframes?⁵⁸

At the time of this writing, among publicly available opinion surveys from around the world, only the 2003 Asia Barometer offered sufficiently detailed information about the legitimacy or trustworthiness of intergovernmental organizations. Some projects did not even broach the topic. For example, the 2003 and 2004 Transatlantic Trends Surveys, administered in the United States and ten European countries, solicited opinions about U.S. influence but did not ask questions about IGOs. The 2004 Global Views survey did not address the World Bank but merely asked foreign policy elites whether America should comply with rulings by the United Nations and World Trade Organization. The 1999-2001 Afro Barometers solicited trust assessments only for domestic institutions, while recent Latin Barometers measured respondents' familiarity with – but not perceptions of – various multilateral organizations.

Other surveys broached the topic but did not provide a fully satisfactory measure of the dependent variable. Studies conducted in Mexico and South Korea in 2004 employed IGO “feeling thermometers,” which for present purposes are somewhat ambiguous. Unlike the Asia Barometer, which provides a proxy for legitimacy by explicitly instructing respondents to consider whether the World Bank can be trusted to operate in the best interests of society, feeling-thermometer questions do not specify which aspect of the intergovernmental organization is to be evaluated. Similarly, the Worldviews 2002 project asked Europeans whether various multilateral institutions should be strengthened, but linking such feedback to trust or legitimacy remains tenuous. It is unclear whether a respondent favors bolstering an institution because she already finds it legitimate and trustworthy, or because she does not.

The good news is that such data limitations are likely to be alleviated in the future, thereby enabling further analyses across regions and timeframes. The Asian research project is a recent addition to a larger family of “barometer” initiatives taking place in Latin America, western and eastern Europe, and Africa. Efforts at format-standardization across these initiatives are ongoing, so that subsequent datasets from around the world may provide finer-grained information about individuals' perceptions of intergovernmental organizations.

Furthermore, although the results are not yet publicly available, the Asia Barometer has

⁵⁸ Particularly from a policy standpoint, it would also be interesting to identify the main factors shaping non-Americans' perceptions of U.S. influence. The ongoing war in Iraq is a prominent candidate, along with numerous other possibilities (e.g., trade and investment relations, military alliances, humanitarian aid, international tourism, etc.). As the key factors probably vary greatly by state, country specialists may be best equipped to pursue this line of inquiry.

been completed in 2004, 2005, and 2006, and has even expanded to additional countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines.⁵⁹ Since assessments of U.S. influence may have deteriorated or improved in the years following the initiation of the war in Iraq, time-series data will be valuable in tracking the relationship between views of the United States and the World Bank over time. If further statistical analyses also uncover the positive correlation implied by the “guilt by association” hypothesis, then subsequent case studies would be ideal for investigating to what degree the two mechanisms I propose are truly at work in this particular IGO.

Summary

Can anti-U.S. sentiment pose problems for the World Bank? Yes, I argue. “Guilt by association” may threaten institutional legitimacy, tainting the operations of the Bank as well. For at least two reasons, unfavorable perceptions about a leading state may be correlated with perceptions of IGO illegitimacy: 1) because formal and/or informal rules endow the state with substantial capabilities to interfere in organizational activities, and 2) because the state was heavily involved in designing the institution and shaping its norms and values. The U.S., in particular, has played a prominent role in creating numerous IGOs and possesses a number of means for intervening those organizations. Therefore, I hypothesize that an actor holding unfavorable perceptions of the United States likely also questions the legitimacy of the World Bank, an IGO largely created by the U.S. and in which the U.S. possesses substantial ability to intervene. While the international relations literature implies this association, I am unaware of any other systematic attempts to investigate whether such a link in fact exists.

If the proposition is correct, large-N statistical analyses and simulations should uncover a positive, statistically and substantively significant correlation between evaluations of American influence (the key explanatory variable) and legitimacy assessments (the dependent variable) for the World Bank. The 2003 Asia Barometer dataset – comprising the results of face-to-face surveys with 6,479 laypeople in China, India, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Uzbekistan – includes viable approximations of both types of information. To assess the “guilt by association” hypothesis, I use probit analyses and include a number of control variables.

⁵⁹ Indonesia (as the world’s most populous Muslim country) and the Philippines (as a former colony of the United States) will be particularly useful in examining the relationship between derogatory views of the U.S. and distrust toward intergovernmental organizations.

Although determining the generalizability of the findings is a key avenue for future research, the statistical analysis and simulations indeed support the “guilt by association” hypothesis for the World Bank. Using assessments of IGO trustworthiness as proxies for assessments of IGO legitimacy, an actor holding unfavorable perceptions of American influence appears to be more likely to question the legitimacy of the World Bank. The estimate for the key explanatory variable *opinUSA* is statistically significant even at the one-percent level, is robust to different model specifications, and does not appear to be affected by multicollinearity. Furthermore, the predicted probabilities of distrusting the IGO seem to be affected more by negative perceptions of the U.S. than by positive ones. Only one of the controls, pertaining to assessments of the trustworthiness of one’s own government, truly rivals the explanatory power of the key independent variable *opinUSA*.

Why should we be concerned? Given the power-driven, institutionalized, and normative influence of the U.S. over the World Bank, widespread anti-U.S. sentiment may be transposed onto this institution, tainting its operations as well. To the extent that the Bank’s association with a disfavored superpower weakens other states’ willingness to participate and comply, the institution’s legitimacy issue could result in diminished efficacy and efficiency. From a policy standpoint, such an outcome would be unfortunate, in light of the myriad potential benefits that intergovernmental organizations such as the World Bank offer to states. In a world of highly visible and possibly increasing anti-U.S. sentiment, this troubling “guilt by association” link warrants further exploration. In the meantime, at least one implication is clear: America’s need to “win hearts and minds” extends beyond the war on terror, and it remains to be seen how the country will fare on this front.

STATISTICAL APPENDIX

Table A: Variation across Countries in the 2003 Asia Barometer Dataset

SOURCES: WEBSITES OF THE WORLD BANK, CIA WORLD FACTBOOK, AND POLITY IV PROJECT

	World Bank Vote Share	GDP Per Capita	Polity IV Score	World Bank Accession Year
China	2.78	5,003	-7	1945
India	2.78	2,892	+9	1945
Japan	7.86	27,967	+10	1952
Malaysia	0.52	9,512	+3	1958
South Korea	0.99	17,971	+8	1955
Sri Lanka	0.25	3,778	+6	1950
Thailand	0.41	7,595	+9	1949
Uzbekistan	0.17	1,744	-9	1992

Table B: Complete Probit Results (Probability that *distrustWB=1*) and Descriptive Statistics

SOURCE: 2003 ASIA BAROMETER

	Coefficient	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
<i>opinUSA</i>	0.166*** (0.034)	1.82	1.22	0	4
<i>opintechnoc</i>	0.132*** (0.024)	1.06	0.68	0	2
<i>opingovt</i>	0.196*** (0.027)	1.26	0.94	0	3
<i>SKorea</i>	-0.759*** (0.031)	0.13	0.34	0	1
<i>China</i>	-1.512*** (0.046)	0.12	0.31	0	1
<i>Thailand</i>	-1.126*** (0.078)	0.12	0.33	0	1
<i>Malaysia</i>	-1.236*** (0.095)	0.12	0.33	0	1
<i>India</i>	-1.601*** (0.059)	0.13	0.33	0	1
<i>SriLanka</i>	-0.643*** (0.090)	0.12	0.33	0	1
<i>Uzbekistan</i>	-1.278*** (0.085)	0.12	0.33	0	1
<i>globalexpr</i>	-0.021 (0.021)	0.94	1.14	0	6
<i>pprspermo</i>	-0.000 (0.002)	16.29	13.29	0	30
<i>worryglobzn</i>	-0.082 (0.085)	0.06	0.23	0	1
<i>nationalism</i>	0.005 (0.049)	2.43	0.82	0	3
<i>gendistrust</i>	0.084 (0.052)	0.70	0.46	0	1
<i>age</i>	0.004 (0.003)	37.31	11.00	20	59
<i>hsgrad</i>	0.065 (0.061)	0.67	0.47	0	1
<i>whitecollar</i>	0.005 (0.044)	0.32	0.47	0	1
<i>male</i>	0.094*** (0.029)	0.49	0.50	0	1
Constant	-0.428* (0.225)	--	--	--	--
<i>distrustWB</i>	--	0.24	0.43	0	1

Robust standard errors are in parentheses beneath the coefficient estimates. For the probit model, there are 4,593 observations. * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

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