

[Katerina Linos \(00:01\)](#):

Welcome to Borderlines. Have you ever wondered what role international organizations play on the world stage? Have you wondered why we still have bodies we set up more than a century ago? Why new superpowers like the Chinese state set up new international organizations? Or why informal networks slowly solidify and take traditional forms? I'm Katerina Linos, the Tragen Professor of Comparative and International Law at UC Berkeley.

[\(00:36\)](#):

With me today to explore the future of international organizations is Professor Kristina Daugirdas. She serves as Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Academic Programming at the University of Michigan. She teaches and writes in the fields of international law and institutions and US foreign relation law. She's the leading expert on the World Health Organization, on the reputation of international organizations, and on international organization immunity.

[\(01:11\)](#):

She's won several prestigious awards including the Deák Prize and served in the US Department of State Office of the Legal Advisor. Kristina, I admire deeply the fact that you've both written about diverse international institutions and questions of international law and also that you've practiced international law, that you've worked for the US State Department, that you've advised international organizations. I'd wanted to hear a little bit about your career and where the synergy might take you in the future.

[Kristina Daugirdas \(01:46\)](#):

After graduating from law school and clerking, I worked as an attorney-adviser at the State Department. My first posting was in the Diplomatic Law and Litigation Office within the Legal Adviser's Office and my portfolio there included lawsuits that were filed against international organizations in US courts. The US government wasn't a party to this litigation, but we had treaty obligations to protect the immunity of these organizations. That work at the State Department was part of my introduction to the role of immunity to seeing some of the practical consequences of that immunity and what it meant for the organizations and for individuals seeking relief. From there, I moved to the UN Affairs Office, still within the Legal Adviser's Office, and worked primarily on Security Council sanctions. In the early 1990s, the Security Council had imposed broad-based economic sanctions on Iraq with the consequence of enormous suffering for the civilian population.

[\(03:17\)](#):

In response to those criticisms, the Security Council began moving to targeted sanctions instead of going after everybody – target the sanctions on those individuals who are the particular bad actors in any given situation. The Security Council started adopting resolutions that either created lists of targeted individuals and organizations or that delegated to a committee the task of doing so, and at the outset, the process for being added to and subtracted from this list was purely political. It was entirely behind the scenes. It was all done at a diplomatic level, and that meant that individuals who were on these lists and believed they didn't belong had no way of directly challenging the fact that they were subject to these sanctions. At the time that I was working in the UN Affairs Office, at least for the biggest sanctions program at the time, which was then focused on Al-Qaeda and the

Taliban, there was a movement to establish slowly and incrementally a more robust process for allowing designated individuals and entities to challenge their place in these sanctions regimes.

[\(04:59\)](#):

This was and remains one of the important examples of the ways that international organizations can be more sensitive to the private actors who are directly affected in quite serious ways by what the organizations do, and increasing the role of law and consistent standards in governing the conduct of international organizations. All of this work at the State Department has influenced my scholarly research since joining the faculty at the University of Michigan in 2010. That was my experience in the US government. Later in 2016, I spent a year in Geneva and during that time worked as a consultant for the Legal Office at the World Intellectual Property Organization, and that was a terrific opportunity to work on some of the issues that I had written about as an academic from the perspective of an insider to the organization. I really valued that experience as well.

[Katerina Linos \(06:28\)](#):

Kristina, let me just start with some definitions. What are international organizations and why are they important?

[Kristina Daugirdas \(06:34\)](#):

What are international organizations? The way that international lawyers talk about them, the boundaries of the category are a little bit murky, but usually they look for three features. So one is an entity that's created by States, at least primarily by States. Second, that it's created through an international instrument, usually a treaty. Part of what that means is not under international law, so not a foundation, not a corporation under national law. And the third feature has been described as sometimes the most mysterious or elusive, and that is some kind of distinct will from its member States. So the idea is that the international organization has something there that makes it an entity separate and apart from the participating States.

[\(07:34\)](#):

Sometimes this means an autonomous secretariat, an international bureaucracy that serves the mission of the organization. Sometimes it means intergovernmental bodies, so think about the UN General Assembly, for example, that have the capacity to make decisions by some kind of majority – super majority, qualified majority – decision-making rule that creates the possibility that any individual State might be outvoted.

[\(08:09\)](#):

Both of these features, an autonomous secretariat and some kind of super majority voting rule create the possibility that the organization might do something that individual Member States won't be so happy with at the end of the day. This raises the question of what's the added value that makes that risk worthwhile and why are international organizations important? To come back to your original question, the answer to both is related. I think this distinctive form of international cooperation can allow States to make headway on problems in ways that they can't replicate individually. An international secretariat, for example, to the extent that it is expert

and trusted can bring new information to resolve disputes. That information might be perceived as credible in ways that information coming from individual national governments might not be because it's biased, because it is infused by national foreign policy priorities or preferences.

[\(09:34\)](#):

Many international organizations have a secretariat that is headed by a high-profile individual. Their title is high-profile, usually "Secretary General" or "Director General" or something like that, and those individuals can advance progress towards meeting a particular goal by keeping it on the agenda long after individual States have grown weary or tired of it. They can introduce ideas that again, might be rejected out of hand if proposed by a rival national government. These are all subtle ways that international organizations might provide traction on problems that national governments can't do individually or even collectively without the existence of this type of permanent entity.

[Katerina Linos \(10:32\)](#):

So let me ask you about international organization successes and failures. I know you've written a lot about the United Nations. What's a big success? What's a big failure? You've also written a lot about the World Health Organization, very prominent in these pandemic or post-pandemic times. What is a big success of the World Health Organization and also maybe a failure?

[Kristina Daugirdas \(10:56\)](#):

When it comes to evaluating the successes and failures of international organizations, it's really important to keep in mind the implicit baseline and making it explicit because when you read the charters of these organizations, they are full of soaring language and ambitious goals, and if we evaluate these organizations against a baseline of are they achieving a hundred percent of the purposes and ambitions that are set out in the Charters, I think we're going to find that they fall quite seriously short almost all of the time. If we frame the question as, "Are we better off with them than without them?" Then the answer might be quite different. There's a quote that the United Nations wasn't created to bring us to heaven, the United Nations was created to keep us out of hell. I think it nicely captures this idea of thinking about the baseline.

[\(12:12\)](#):

The soaring ambitious language that you find in the charter of the UN or the constitution of the World Health Organization - that language has never been matched by the kinds of robust financial resources that would be needed to make serious progress on achieving those goals. When we look at the extent of States' commitments of what they are hoping to achieve, I think we need to keep in mind not only what States have said they've set out to do, but the extent to which those words have actually been matched by actions including providing financial support to these organizations. The COVID pandemic has loomed so large in all of our lives over these last couple of years. One of the World Health Organization's important successes when it came to dealing with international outbreaks of infectious diseases came in 2003 with the SARS outbreak that never reached anywhere near the proportions that the COVID pandemic has, but it very much shaped the way that the World Health Organization institutionally has responded to COVID.

[\(13:40\)](#):

In the SARS context, the World Health Organization was quite forward-leaning and willing to challenge Member States. Member States weren't entirely thrilled about the World Health Organization's activism. A travel advisory against travel to Canada, to Toronto in particular, provoked the ire of the Canadian government, for example. When it came time to revise the international instrument that governs pandemic surveillance and response, the International Health Regulations, my impression is that States were more interested in putting the brakes on an overactive World Health Organization than they were in pushing the organization to hit the accelerator when the organization was inclined to be cautious, to act cooperatively, to avoid ruffling too many feathers.

[\(14:52\)](#):

So SARS was an important success for the World Health Organization. It's also a nice reminder of some of the reasons why these organizations, although one of their defining features is having a distinct will from their Member States structurally, they're not designed to get out very far ahead of where their Member States are, and I think it's unrealistic to expect that any organization will do that. The sources of the reticence for robust action are something that we really need to keep in mind as we're evaluating what these organizations can realistically be expected to do and what they actually do when faced with a crisis.

[Katerina Linos \(15:44\)](#):

International organizations are sometimes criticized for being too bureaucratic for inaction in the face of global conflict. One alternative is national action. Another alternative is forming a network. What are some of the biggest problems with international organizations? I know you've written about UN peacekeepers contributing to cholera in Haiti. That seems like a huge disaster, but I can also think about more routine emissions and snafus and slow action that might be just as detrimental if less eye-catching.

[Kristina Daugirdas \(16:29\)](#):

Understanding some of the sources of international organizations acting too little too cautiously is really important. When we're looking at the United Nations right now, the Security Council's inability to act in Ukraine seems like an astonishing gap between what the organization is actually doing and its goal of preserving the fundamental rules of international world order, including the prohibition on the use of force and Article 2(4) of the UN Charter.

[\(17:17\)](#):

Now, there are other parts of the organization that are taking action even in the face of a paralyzed Security Council. The UN General Assembly, for example, recently condemned Russia's purported annexation of certain regions of Crimea. Russia was expelled from the UN Human Rights Council. So there's some action in other parts of the organization looking at the inaction of the Security Council, the fact that the permanent five members, including Russia, have a veto on action, emphasizes both a source of weakness and strength of the organization, right?

[\(18:06\)](#):

So the weakness is it condemns the Security Council, the most powerful body when it comes to matters of international peace and security. Condemns it to inaction whenever the permanent five members can't agree amongst themselves. On the other hand, it's an important source of the United Nations' durability over a period now of more than 70 years when the commitment of Member States, including especially prominently the United States, to multilateral institutions has wavered significantly. I think it's easy to imagine that if the United Nations had an easier time acting against the interests of the United States and the other permanent members of the Security Council, that would be a confrontation where the organization rather than the Member States would lose.

[Katerina Linos \(19:10\)](#):

So setting up a system that still exists and can still make efforts 70 years later with big shifts and global power, that's a success in itself, it sounds like. I wanted to ask about changes we might see. So in your recent work, you talk a lot about authoritarian international organizations and what it means to have a Chinese State that is not only an act of player in the system, but is designing new institutions and shifting its contributions to existing institutions. What have you noticed there? Very few people understand this new world of authoritarian international organizations.

[Kristina Daugirdas \(19:55\)](#):

The legal scholarship on international organizations has been overwhelmingly focused on a tiny subset of those organizations, and they tend to be those in the UN system and those that the US and European States participate in. But there is a vast world of other international organizations – sub-regional, regional, some cross-regional – that exist and pursue an extraordinary range of missions, some of them very technical but quite consequential. The Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa is one that is on the more obscure end of the scale.

[\(20:51\)](#):

I think understanding the full range of international organizations is imperative for the field. Partly it's a matter of understanding how these other organizations might be different, and I'm doing some work now with a co-author Tom Ginsburg at the University of Chicago Law School that shows if we're looking at the formal Charters at least, the formal language of the Charters, they're actually much more similar than different. Those symmetries which haven't been explored, I think are quite important.

[\(21:31\)](#):

There's another question, which is how are authoritarian governments interacting with the big universal organizations? China especially is becoming more active at the United Nations. It was striking to me that just in the past few years, China has become the number two funder of the UN's regular budget. That's quite a big jump in a three-year period from 5% to 15% of the regular budget, and it's coupled with a decrease of financial contributions coming from western States. What this means for the future of international organizations as a category for the big universal organizations, including the United Nations, remains to be seen. One important source of fragility for international organizations. One place where they have really been subject to a lot of criticism from scholars and advocates is on the question of

accountability to private actors who have been harmed by an act or omission of these organizations or the organization's agents.

[\(23:01\)](#):

The issue, for example, of sexual violence by UN peacekeepers has been one that periodically breaks through in the news. Cholera in Haiti is another example. There was a decision of the US Supreme Court a couple of years ago that involved the funding by the International Finance Corporation, which is a part of the World Bank group, of an electrical plant in India that caused a lot of harm to the local fishermen in the community, and in all of these cases, one of the legal features that protects the autonomy of these organizations from unilateral control by individual States is immunity, but that immunity too often means that those private individuals who have been harmed by what the organization has done have no access to recourse.

[\(24:13\)](#):

They can't go to national courts anywhere in the world because international organizations are protected by immunity. To my mind, this is a place where it's extremely important for international organizations to change their practices and to acknowledge international legal obligations. Circling back to the question of what happens in a world where authoritarian governments are more active in establishing and influencing international organizations, it makes me more pessimistic that this is a dimension along which we will see positive developments. I very much hope that I am wrong about that, but it's certainly a concern.

[Katerina Linos \(25:03\)](#):

So if we have these concerns about international organizations, if we think international organizations do too little, perhaps because they don't have the money and the authority, if we think that international organizations can harm innocent bystanders and never be amenable to suit, have we thought of alternatives? What about this network idea that was prominent at the turn of the 21st century?

[Kristina Daugirdas \(25:31\)](#):

Around the turn of the 21st century, certainly in the US and to some degree in Europe as well, there was a turn away from formal international organizations and an exploration and an embrace of various forms of alternatives. So networks, as you mentioned, were one. If one source of rigidity and caution in international organizations is the existence of a bureaucracy, well, maybe the thing to do is to cut out the middleman and have national bureaucrats cooperate with their counterparts in other countries and to do so directly and without necessarily any kind of written framework or set of rules for doing so. Another alternative that got quite a lot of attention around that time was the possibility of creating organizations under national law, so the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the Gavi Vaccine Alliance. Both of those entities were established as foundations under Swiss law rather than as international organizations by treaty, and some of the advantages of these alternative modes of cooperation were that these entities could be more nimble.

[\(27:18\)](#):

They wouldn't be bogged down by endless negotiations involving representatives of nearly 200 States around the world. Instead, those actors who were most able and willing to tackle a particular problem could cooperate with various degrees of informality to do so when it came to entities like the Global Fund that are created under national law. A big part of the appeal was more flexibility when it came to how non-State actors were involved, and this included big funders of the organization like the Gates Foundation, but it also meant individuals who were affected by the diseases that the Global Fund was seeking to target through its work. To sum up the advantages of some of these alternatives, they can act more quickly, at least in the first instance. There's a little more flexibility and room for creativity in terms of who participates and how, and that's an appeal and overall the transaction costs are quickly, right? They're the avoided costs of the slow laborious process of negotiating with an enormous group of people in a setting where those negotiations may not actually succeed at the end of the day.

[Katerina Linos \(28:56\)](#):

The Global Fund has annual reports that look a lot like business reports. They say, "We have distributed this number of nets and we have saved this number of lives," and the WHO doesn't quite have that business focus. There are other networks in the financial area, especially where again, there's just lots of celebration of what they've been able to accomplish – extraordinary measures after the financial crisis in 2008. Have networks been this unmitigated success where you can move just far more rapidly than you can through a big international bureaucracy?

[Kristina Daugirdas \(29:36\)](#):

As we learned when we dug into this question together, it turns out that over these last two decades, some of these entities that were celebrated as some of the most prominent rejections of the traditional model have actually moved much closer to it. The Global Fund, for example, which was designed at the outset to embrace a private sector model as part of this conception of an organization that would be flexible and nimble and not bureaucratic, has over the years steadily slowly started to look more and more like a traditional organization. The advantages of networks I think may seem most apparent in those early years when the alternative of negotiating a treaty seems especially cumbersome in the context of the United States. The negotiation of a treaty to establish a new international organization faces the prospect of near impossibility of Senate consent to ratification to those advantages that seem so prominent early on, I think may dissipate over time.

[\(31:10\)](#):

As you may recall, Katerina, one of our interviewees said something to the effect of, "The Global Fund was not created to improve the lives of the Swiss," and to be sure our interviewee was absolutely right about that. It means that the Global Fund, in order to do its work, has to interact with governments all over the globe and in those subsequent interactions down the line, the Global Fund's non-standard form can be a liability rather than an asset. That helps to explain why, for example, the Global Fund is now the subject of a treaty that protects its privileges and immunities. This type of treaty is quite standard for traditional international organizations, less so for these alternative forms of institutions like the Global Fund. What we can see is that non-standard institutions have to find a way to do quite a

lot of jerry-rigging to achieve outcomes that are much more accessible to organizations that conform to the traditional model of international organizations.

[Katerina Linos \(32:31\)](#):

In our research, we find that lots of international networks now have privileges and immunities for their staff. Interviewees say things like, "Well, my colleagues ears perk up when I talk about benefits like non-taxation of income." That all sounds great, but is this shift towards the standard international organization form a form of capture? Is it just good for the staff or does it have benefits for the beneficiaries of these international organizations, for their governments that set them up and for other people who might be impacted by their decisions?

[Kristina Daugirdas \(33:17\)](#):

These incremental moves towards the traditional model really can help to make these organizations more effective. For example, the Global Fund has sought and recently obtained permanent observer status at the UN General Assembly. The UN General Assembly is regularly addressing the same topics of work that the Global Fund is engaged in and is doing so not at a technocratic level, but at a level that involves foreign ministries within governments.

[\(34:00\)](#):

I think for the Global Fund to have access to that set of actors in framing and coordinating mission with that of the United Nations can really help to advance the purposes for which it was created in the first place. When it comes to the question of the optimal institutional design to tackle any particular problem, the way that a lot of scholars have thought about it, they imagine an entirely blank slate where the organization might be created from scratch, and if all you're looking at is the best way to structure one particular organization in isolation from everything else that exists in the world, the advantages that we discussed to networks and organizations under national law might seem especially prominent, but of course, these organizations don't exist in isolation from the rest of the world, from all of the other preexisting organizations that are out there.

[\(35:14\)](#):

They don't exist in isolation from non-member or non-participating States with whom they must interact, and in this world that is crowded, that is highly status conscious, conforming to the traditional model can offer important advantages.

[Katerina Linos \(35:36\)](#):

Let me ask you about an area where we don't have a global international organization; that is, the environment, and more specifically, climate change. Why don't we have an international organization for this key problem? If you were to build one, how would you build it? How do we think about this challenge?

[Kristina Daugirdas \(35:58\)](#):

This is a great question. In addition to teaching courses on international organizations, I teach international environmental law. It's a field that is of interest to me partly because it is exactly as you noted relatively under-institutionalized or maybe to use a less normatively freighted term, not under-institutionalized, but just

less institutionalized. We don't have a global environmental organization that is out there as a counterpart to the World Trade Organization and the International Labour Organization. Why not? To answer your question, I think this is a matter of historical accident. Issues of the environment came onto the international agenda in the early 1970s. This was a historical moment where there was quite a lot of skepticism about bureaucracy. Had environmental issues gained prominence at a different historical moment, there may have been greater appetite for establishing an international organization that again would be out there as a counterpart to some of the other specialized agencies that exist.

[\(37:27\)](#):

Instead, what was created was the UN Environment Programme, which is not a freestanding organization but is part of the United Nations. Here too, actually, it's quite striking to me that we have seen over time efforts to convert the UN Environment Programme into a separate freestanding international organization. Those efforts have not yet been successful, but in the meantime, what we've seen is the creation within the UN Environment Programme of some of the features that we associate with the traditional model and its original incarnation. The UN Environment Programme was governed by a Council that was made up of a subset of UN Member States. Most recently when proposals were discussed to transform the UN Environment Programme into a free-standing international organization. That didn't happen, but the governing council was replaced with the UN Environment Assembly, a body on which every UN Member State could participate.

[\(38:48\)](#):

What does that mean? It means that the actions of this body can more immediately lay claim to represent the views of all of the UN Member States. We have seen some movement in that direction. We've also seen outside of the UN Environment Programme action by former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, for example, he devoted in his final years as Secretary General, quite a lot of political capital towards getting States to become parties to the Paris Agreement on climate change. We don't know the counterfactual of how quickly parties to that treaty might have grown in the absence of his efforts, but he, I think, did play an influential role in the decisions by some States to become a party to that treaty. When we step back and look at the state of affairs, although we don't have a global environmental organization, we do have some of the bits and pieces, the building blocks you might say, of what that kind of organization might do, where it might add value.

[\(40:15\)](#):

What we don't have today is more coordination across various international efforts to address issues of pollution, issues of natural resources preservation, the possibilities of linking up climate change to other kinds of environmental problems. That might be easier with a body that was able to play a more robust coordinating role for example. It remains to be seen how this will evolve in the future, but in the meantime, there's quite a bit to learn from the way that these different multilateral environmental treaties have created mechanisms to adapt to changing conditions, to changing scientific knowledge, to changes in technology in the absence of a formal international organization.

[Katerina Linos \(41:19\)](#):

I want to ask about the idea of universal as opposed to regional international organizations. We came together after World War II and said, "We want a United Nations where every State will be represented," some with more voting and other powers than others, but still the idea was universality. To the extent new international organizations are created or existing international organizations and networks gain more power, do you see the future as a collaborative one, or do you see the US and the West taking one path, China and its allies taking another and a new Cold War conflict developing?

Kristina Daugirdas ([42:16](#)):

I think that our universal architecture will remain largely durable and will continue to organize international cooperation in at least some important ways. I think those institutions, as I had suggested earlier, risk being undermined in more subtle and less visible ways through, for example, decreases in funding that limit their ability to be effective. When it comes to the interactions between the universal organizations and regional or sub-regional organizations over time, going back to the League of Nations, the question of whether those institutional structures are compliments or whether they're in competition with one another - there's been oscillation between both views of the relationship between universal and regional or sub-regional organizations. I do think it is notable and important that Russia and China both seem committed to traditional organizations as a mode of structuring international cooperation. We can see that with China through its leadership role in establishing the Asian Infrastructure Investment bank, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization; Russia has played a big role in establishing the Eurasian Union as a counterpart to the European Union.

[\(44:13\)](#):

To the extent that the question is what kinds of organizations are going to be out there. I think this is a, like I said, a model that will prove durable. How effective it will be in tamping down conflicts among these various States is harder to say for sure. The Cold War that lasted during most of the second half of the 20th century can offer some lessons. During the Cold War, the technocratic organizations did play an important role in facilitating cooperation between the US and the Soviet Union, even when at the level of high politics, their disputes were enormously significant. We can expect some of that to continue. We talked a little bit about Ukraine and the way that Russia's invasion of Ukraine in violation of the fundamental obligation. The UN Charter is a big sign that makes it difficult to think that our existing international order can curb this egregious abuse of probably the most fundamental norm in international law.

[\(45:44\)](#):

That's a reason for some pessimism. As for how it all might play out going forward, I suspect it's going to continue to be a mixed bag. The imperatives to cooperate on at least some issues are going to persist. That driver of cooperation will continue to see it, but it is hard to be terribly optimistic at this moment about the future of international order and cooperation.

Katerina Linos ([46:21](#)):

What do you want to say about international organizations that I didn't ask you about?

Kristina Daugirdas ([46:25](#)):

Part of why I find international organizations an appealing topic as a scholar of international law - it's startling to me still how many very basic questions about the role of international organizations in the international legal system remain unsettled and contested. These are questions as basic as, what are the sources of international law that bind international organizations? Are they bound by customary international law? Do they have the capacity to make customary international law separate and apart from their Member States?

([47:17](#)):

There have been some efforts in recent years by the International Law Commission to develop the rules about what the consequences are of violations of international law by international organizations, and there's the fact of the unsettled nature of these basic legal questions. One thing that really interests me is the degree to which international organizations have not been especially eager to develop and settle the international law in this area. So I've done quite a lot of work on this question of, what are the sources of international organizations' legal obligations?

([48:10](#)):

It surprised me the extent to which it is difficult to find any explicit discussion of these issues coming from international organizations themselves. You had asked a question about what the future of "international organization" without the "s" might look like. One possible story is, as the future of international organizations becomes more contested, perhaps because authoritarian governments are starting to play a bigger role, there may be more efforts on the part of some organizations, maybe some governments, to try to constrain the evolution of international organizations, especially the evolution of organizations in which they are not participating, by trying to specify and develop the international law that applies to this category of actors.

([49:20](#)):

For example, when China was establishing the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, there was quite a lot of opposition coming from the Obama administration, and one of the objections that the Obama administration made was to say, "Look, this newcomer on the international stage is going to have lower standards when it comes to protecting the environment and vulnerable populations than the World Bank and other existing institutions have." Partly to rebut that concern and to attract membership from especially European and other States around the world, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank [AIIB] articulated new standards that emulated if didn't actually track those from the World Bank and other institutions, and this wasn't framed as "international law requires this of multilateral development banks," but one could imagine that being the next step, in States trying to shape the direction in which international organizations as a category - especially those smaller regional and sub-regional organizations - might evolve.

([50:48](#)):

We'll see what happens on that front. In the meantime, there's one other fact about the AIIB that I want to mention, which is this: While most international organizations are silent about the extent of their international obligations that come from sources other than their charters or treaties to which their party, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank has language on its website about the rule of law that, among

other things, acknowledges the applicability of customary international law to its own work. So it's perhaps an unlikely entity to be out in front of this issue, but you can see how in the jockeying among organizations, the jockeying among governments to characterize what these organizations are up to, we're getting still very incrementally, but maybe it's a preview of what's to come. But we're getting some movement in terms of the expectations for the kinds of standards that are going to govern these organizations' work.

[Katerina Linos \(52:14\)](#):

I like that a lot. I like the idea that American opposition to a Chinese-led bank did not sabotage the project, but instead led China to create a more inclusive lending institution with standards that are similar, if not higher, to those of other international organizations, and through lending, we can make progress on protecting vulnerable populations and the environment.

[\(52:46\)](#):

I hope you enjoyed this episode. If you want to hear more, look at the show notes where you'll find a link to some joint work professor [Kristina Daugirdas](#) and I have written. In our work "Back to Basics: The Benefits of Paradigmatic International Organizations," we explore some of these themes further. You might also want to listen to the Borderlines episode with Professor Tom Ginsburg, as he, and Professor Daugirdas, explore the future of authoritarian international organizations.