

Dialogic Public and Foreign Policy Action: India's Engagement with Responsibility to Protect

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Abstract

The concept of publics and public sphere is very much part of our political reality and is integral to our discourse on world politics but it also remains elusive in the existing International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis scholarship. In this article, I argue that a focus upon publics and analytically understanding the functioning of political publics will enable scholars to better understand the dynamics of world politics, explaining some phenomena – for example, how political actors strive for discursive dominance and other areas which involve legitimization issues. I arrive at the orientation of the publics by placing it in the relational field within *three arrays of publicity* and I provide an analytical category of political publics to make sense of how *they combine the multiple arrays of publicity to deploy cultural resources*. The multiple combinations of the arrays of publicity by political publics and concomitant engagement with cultural resources serve as a useful heuristic tool to the problem of understanding the nature of dialogical interaction of political publics with the institutionalized domains of the state. I subsequently illustrate the heuristic fruitfulness of this conceptualization through a brief examination of India's engagement with the norm of Responsibility to Protect. This article's agenda is twofold. First, I show the importance of examining the dialogical relations of political public with the State and thereby bring back the concept of public to International Relations scholarship. Second, it lays the groundwork for a more systematic program for empirical research on political publics.