Recapturing Public Power: Is Investment Arbitration’s Engagement of the Public Interest Contributing to the Democratic Deficit?

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has changed the way sovereign states regulate their societies. The effect of globalization has been the creation of several international agreements that transfer decision-making from the national to the international level. An important subset of these agreements is international investment treaties; an estimated 2,500 of these treaties have been entered into worldwide by a number of states, especially in the last ten to twelve years. As these agreements almost always contain arbitration clauses, the number and scope of arbitrations handling disputes under these investment agreements have grown exponentially. Arbitrators governing these disputes are now regularly reviewing domestic public interest issues due to their expanded role. In fact, in some cases arbitrators are effectively striking down national regulations. The breadth of the regulatory powers of arbitrators in their review of national state decisions, regulations, and legislation has even caused some scholars to characterize investment arbitration as part of the evolving concept of global administrative law. Concerns also arise with investment arbitration’s curtailment of democratic expression through its ability to counter a state’s sovereign decision-making authority.

This Article seeks to address these issues, initially by positing that the efficacy of investment arbitration decisions on public interest issues is limited by the lack of public participation. The Article identifies in greater detail the

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features of investment arbitration, the elements of democracy and the democratic deficit, and the process and outcomes of investment arbitration that have implicated public interest issues. It then explores suggested solutions to increase public participation in and accountability for the investment arbitration process, and to infuse non-investment related concerns into the outcomes of the traditionally private domain of investment arbitration.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I. **INTRODUCTION** ................................................................. 777
A. Investment Treaties: From Shield to Sword ........... 779
B. Investment Arbitration as an Instigator of the Democratic Deficit................................. 782
   1. Democracy and the Democratic Deficit ........... 783
   2. The Impact of Investment Arbitration on the Democratic Deficit ....................... 784
      a. The Investment Arbitration Process ............. 785
      b. The Outcomes of Investment Arbitration... 789
         i. Public Interest Issues ......................... 791
            (1) Regulatory Expropriations through the Lens of Environmental Issues .... 792
            (2) Non-Expropriatory Regulatory Interferences with Investments ........... 797
            (3) Public Services.................................. 798
               (a) Water Services ............................. 799
               (b) Health Care and Other Subsidized Public Services .......... 801
            (4) Idiosyncratic Public Interest Issues .. 803
         ii. Investment Arbitration, the Public Interest, and Democracy ..................... 807
II. **SOLUTIONS FOR BALANCING PUBLIC INTEREST WITH INVESTMENT ARBITRATION** ....................................................... 807
   A. Process Changes ................................................... 808
      1. Transparency .................................................... 809
         a. Public Access .......................................... 810
         b. Amici Curiae ............................................. 814
      2. Accountability of Arbitrators ....................... 818
   B. Outcome Changes .................................................... 821
      1. The Margin of Appreciation and Article 1 of the ECHR.................................... 823
      2. Ascertaining Intent .......................................... 827
III. **CONCLUSION** ............................................................... 830
I. INTRODUCTION

The sovereignty of a state signifies its independence. Independence in regard to a portion of the globe, in turn, signifies the right to exercise therein the functions of a state, to the exclusion of any other state. Thus, a state’s sovereignty dictates that it may legislate and regulate at will issues of concern to its constituents, including issues of public interest. States should therefore be free to set national regulations concerning environmental safety, human rights, affirmative action, or state emergencies in exercising their independence.

Globalization, however, challenges the idea of the state as the sovereign guardian of the public interest. The effect of globalization has been the creation of several international agreements that transfer decision making from the national to the international level. The increased use of these agreements has raised concerns regarding the transfer of a state’s public power to an international institution. Constraints on the ability of a state to exercise its public power are particularly apparent in the area of investment arbitration. Since 1959, states have entered into international treaties that permit foreign investors to initiate direct actions against a host state for disputes arising from the state’s treatment of the foreign investment. Until the early 1990s, international investment treaties were used primarily by European nations and to a lesser extent by the United

2. Id. at 838.
3. Thomas G. Weiss & Don Hubert, THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT: RESEARCH, BIBLIOGRAPHY, BACKGROUND: SUPPLEMENTARY VOLUME TO THE REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON INTERVENTION AND STATE SOVEREIGNTY 6 (Supp. 2001) (explaining that sovereignty includes the right of a state to choose its “political, economic, social, and cultural systems and to formulate its foreign policy”).
4. Id.
5. In this Article, globalization refers to the “denationalization of clusters of political, economic, and social activities that undermine the ability of the sovereign state to control activities on its territory. . . .” Karsten Nowrot, Legal Consequences of Globalization: The Status of Non-Governmental Organizations Under International Law, 6 IND. J. GLOBAL LEGAL STUD. 579, 586 (1999).
6. Examples include the World Trade Organization, the International Criminal Court, and the European Union, although all enforceable international agreements, to some extent, transfer decision-making from the national to the international level.
9. In 1959, the Federal Republic of Germany entered into the first ever bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with Pakistan to protect German investments in Pakistan. Id. at 24; see also Giorgio Sacerdoti, Bilateral Treaties and Multilateral Instruments on Investment Protection, 269 RECUEIL DES COURS 255, 299 (1997).
States.\textsuperscript{10} However, in the last ten to twelve years, the use of international investment treaties has exploded, and it is now estimated that almost 2,500 of these treaties have been entered into worldwide by a number of states.\textsuperscript{11} As a result, arbitrations arising from disputes governed by these international investment treaties have expanded exponentially.\textsuperscript{12}

The growth in investment arbitration has also extended the powers of the international bodies governing these disputes.\textsuperscript{13} In particular, the arbitrators governing these disputes are now regularly reviewing domestic public interest issues due to their expanded role.\textsuperscript{14} In fact, in some cases arbitrators are effectively striking down national regulations.\textsuperscript{15} The breadth of the regulatory powers of arbitrators in their review of national state decisions, regulations, and legislation has even caused some scholars to characterize investment arbitration as part of the evolving concept of global administrative law.\textsuperscript{16}

Concerns also arise with investment arbitration’s curtailment of democratic expression through its ability to counter a state’s sovereign decision-making authority.\textsuperscript{17} State parties to investment agreements can no longer legislate at will in the public interest without concern that an arbitral panel will determine that the legislation constitutes interference with an investment.\textsuperscript{18} Thus, investment arbitration may result in an overall loss of state

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10} Rudolf Dolzer & Magrete Stevens, Bilateral Investment Treaties xii (1995).
\item \textsuperscript{14} See, e.g., discussion infra Part I.B.2.b.i; see also Peterson & Gray, supra note 13.
\item \textsuperscript{15} See Peterson & Gray, supra note 13 (discussing that in Ethyl Corp. v. Canada, the initiation of an investment arbitration claim was enough to cause the Canadian government to reverse a public interest law it had promulgated).
\item \textsuperscript{18} Id. at 231–32.
\end{itemize}
independence and sovereignty, which has implications for democratic governance.¹⁹

Nevertheless, it could be argued that, as a system of private international governance, investment arbitrators are not “guardians of the public interest” and therefore should not decide investment disputes that implicate broader political and economic issues.²⁰ At the same time, the question arises whether state exercises of public authority should be adjudicated by foreigners, largely on the basis of commercial principles, when the adjudicators are unconcerned with the wider effects of their decisions.²¹

The democratic implications of public interest issues further complicate this dichotomy of investment arbitration. If democratically elected governments enact public interest regulations in response to public concerns or to address democratic ideals, how can investment arbitrators make decisions affecting such regulations without public input? Moreover, by allowing investment arbitrators to rule on public interest regulations without input from the affected populace, does investment arbitration contribute to the ever-growing democratic deficit that has plagued many international bodies?

This Article seeks to address these issues, initially through the thesis that the efficacy of investment arbitration decisions on public interest issues is limited by the lack of public participation. The Article begins in Part I by identifying in greater detail the features of investment arbitration, the elements of democracy and the democratic deficit, and the process and outcomes of investment arbitration that have implicated public interest issues. In Part II, the Article explores suggested solutions to increase public participation in and accountability for the investment arbitration process, and to infuse non-investment related concerns into the outcomes of the traditionally private domain of investment arbitration.

A. Investment Treaties: From Shield to Sword

Foreign investment constitutes the single largest source of external finance for developing countries.²² Accordingly, developing countries have sought ways to encourage this form of financing from

¹⁹ This is particularly apt in democratic societies where the state acts as the framework through which its population exercises freedom and democracy. Marc F. Plattner, Sovereignty and Democracy, POL’Y REV., Dec. 2003 & Jan. 2004, at 3.
²² DOLZER & STEVENS, supra note 10, at xi.
foreign investors. At the same time, foreign investors have identified developing countries as a source of beneficial financial returns and as a means of establishing themselves in future key markets. This circumstance has incited considerable interest in foreign investment.

However, foreign investors have continually expressed concern over investing in states where they are subject to the state’s lawmaking authority but are unable to participate in the state’s political or public policy processes. As a result, disputes stemming from foreign investments have warranted a unique process. Traditionally, foreign investment disputes were settled by force. Colonial powers would resolve an investment dispute by imposing implied or actual force on their subjected colonies in a process termed “gunboat diplomacy.”

Around the nineteenth century, however, states moved from gunboat diplomacy to actual diplomacy, in the form of treaties of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation (FCN treaties). Originally intended only to facilitate trade and shipping, FCN treaties increasingly began to include provisions protecting foreign investments. The treaties emphasized the protection needed for individual investors engaged in trade and included provisions for most-favored nation treatment and the guarantee of prompt, adequate, and effective compensation for an expropriation. Nevertheless, FCN treaties did not provide for direct dispute resolution, and international law generally barred foreign investors

23. Id.
27. Id. at 532.
29. Id.
30. SORNARAJAH, supra note 25, at 209 (citing KENNETH J. VANDEVELDE, UNITED STATES INVESTMENT TREATIES: POLICY AND PRACTICE (1992)).
32. Most-favored nation treatment requires a state to treat investors from the most favored state no less favorably than investors from another state or a non-party state. See infra note 118.
from initiating a direct cause of action against a state.\textsuperscript{34} Rather, aggrieved investors were forced to rely on politicking, in hopes that their home state’s government would take up the claim on their behalf.\textsuperscript{35} Alternatively, investors were forced to litigate against the host government in its own national courts.\textsuperscript{36} However, neither option proved very fruitful for investors because the first option did not guarantee investors any compensation, even if the host government’s actions were found illegal, and investors rarely found success litigating against the host state in its own courts.\textsuperscript{37}

In the 1960s, states began to develop bilateral investment treaties (BITs) in order to create more favorable investment climates.\textsuperscript{38} An integral aspect of these post-FCN investment treaties was the introduction of a direct dispute-resolution forum for a foreign investor against the host state.\textsuperscript{39} The post-FCN treaties no longer required the investor to seek aid from her home government nor, in most cases, to exhaust local remedies.\textsuperscript{40} Today, an aggrieved investor can, after consultation and negotiation with the host state, submit her claim against the host state for resolution under the auspices of an arbitral body, such as the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) or the rules under the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).\textsuperscript{41}

Modern investment treaties also provide for general consent by a host state to future investment disputes.\textsuperscript{42} In effect, states provide
an undated, blank check to foreign investors.\textsuperscript{43} This limitless general consent allows investors to easily initiate claims against states for alleged breaches of the treaty.\textsuperscript{44} In fact, in some cases investors either bypass or give insignificant attention to the consultation and negotiation phase of the dispute and proceed directly to arbitration.\textsuperscript{45} As a result, the general consent feature of investment treaties exposes states to a broad range of claims by foreign investors related to the states’ exercise of public authority.\textsuperscript{46} Thus, investment treaties, which initially were aimed at reducing the risk of investing abroad, have now been transformed into tools with which to assail an extensive range of a host state’s governmental activity.

B. Investment Arbitration as an Instigator of the Democratic Deficit

Since their inception, investment treaties have gradually grown in scope.\textsuperscript{47} Although initially created as a protectionist measure against the arbitrary and capricious acts of a host state, investment treaties have gradually transformed into weapons with which investors can “attack” the acts of host states.\textsuperscript{48} Public interest regulations promulgated by host states have been particularly vulnerable to attacks from investors.\textsuperscript{49} However, investment arbitration claims involving public interest regulations also raise democratic concerns. Public interest regulations are promulgated by elected officials to protect the welfare of the state’s citizens and nationals.\textsuperscript{50} Thus, interference with these regulations by unelected and unappointed arbitrators is not consistent with basic principles of democracy.
1. Democracy and the Democratic Deficit

Democracy, at its core, involves representation; that is, a democratic government is a government by and for the people. However, democracy is also based on participation in the form of a citizen’s right to have knowledge of and participate in decisions that will affect their interests. Thus, democracy can be characterized both by principles of public participation and accountability.

Principally, democracy involves citizens participating in the lawmaking process via public elections. In this way, elected officials act as the voices of their constituents at the legislative or executive level. Accordingly, the effectiveness of public law requires the availability of processes and forums through which citizens can participate in shaping the policies and structures of their regulatory regimes. Thus, public participation seeks to fulfill the aims of open public debate and access for individuals and groups to all levels of public institutions. Effectively, democracy requires that citizens be provided with sufficient information to make informed decisions and engage in meaningful political debate.

Democracy is also characterized by accountability because elected officials are directly responsible to the citizens that elected them. Accountability signifies the control that the governed exercise over their representatives. It also provides a check on the majoritarian excess of elected officials and their subordinates through the rule of law. The rule of law requires an independent judiciary that protects basic rights and liberties. By constraining the acts of executive and legislative authorities, the rule of law also ensures that the fundamental rights of citizens are given effect through public law.

52. See generally Carole Pateman, Participation and Democratic Theory (1970).
53. Id.
54. Stein, supra note 7, at 493.
57. Stein, supra note 7, at 493.
58. Id.
61. Id.
62. Id.
63. Id.; see also Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy 699 (Robert Audi gen. ed. 1995) (providing a definition of the rule of law by Philip Soper, which notes that the
The presence of core democratic principles, such as public participation and accountability, in a decision-making process also confers legitimacy upon a system of governance. The legitimacy stems from the public's ability to participate in and evaluate the outcomes of the governance process. Thus, a governance system that curtails public participation, including the public's ability to hold decision makers accountable, will always be vulnerable to attacks based on its legitimacy. Moreover, a system that curtails democratic principles—by, for example, removing issues that directly affect citizens to a system that is inaccessible and structurally isolated from public input—creates a democratic deficit.

Globalization has become an instigator of the democratic deficit and a threat to democratic accountability. The effect of globalization has been to disperse political authority throughout the world and to allow state public policy to be shaped by the international system. In addition, the international system tends to operate in a more insular fashion than parallel domestic systems. International policy decisions are thus made without the scrutiny of legislatures and courts, making citizen participation even more remote. Accordingly, international decision-making systems are often bereft of such core democratic principles as public participation and accountability. Ultimately, those who are affected by an international body's norms and decisions do not feel as if they had a meaningful say in the creation and application of those norms, thereby propelling the democratic deficit.

2. The Impact of Investment Arbitration on the Democratic Deficit

Investment arbitration is vulnerable to the many critiques associated with globalization and the democratic deficit because it, in

rule of law includes “the largely formal or procedural properties of a well-ordered legal system . . . ; a prohibition of arbitrary power . . . ; and tribunals (courts) that are reasonably accessible and fairly structured to hear and determine legal claims”).

64. Stein, supra note 7, at 493–94.
66. See id. at 1309.
68. Falk & Strauss, supra note 67, at 213.
69. Id.; see also discussion infra Part I.B.2.b.i.
70. Falk & Strauss, supra note 67, at 213.
71. Stein, supra note 7, at 490.
effect, operates as an international system devoid of core democratic principles.\textsuperscript{74} In both its process and its outcomes, investment arbitration appears to contribute to the democratic deficit.\textsuperscript{75}

a. The Investment Arbitration Process

The investment arbitration process begins with the investor’s initiation of a claim.\textsuperscript{76} Notice of the claim is sent to the host government, after which negotiations and consultations between the parties often follow.\textsuperscript{77} After initiation of the claim, the parties proceed to selection of the arbitrators.\textsuperscript{78} The arbitral tribunal typically comprises three arbitrators, one chosen by each of the two parties and one chair arbiter selected by either the two chosen arbitrators or the arbitral institution.\textsuperscript{79} Once the arbitral tribunal is selected, the parties begin the exchange of pleadings.\textsuperscript{80} The exchange of pleadings may be followed by meetings or conferences to marshal the evidence, but they generally lead up to a short oral hearing.\textsuperscript{81} Issues raised at the oral hearing may then be addressed in post-hearing briefs.\textsuperscript{82} Finally, the tribunal issues an award.\textsuperscript{83}

Although the investment arbitration process parallels the domestic adjudicative process in many ways, there are a number of important differences.\textsuperscript{84} First, public participation is severely limited


\textsuperscript{75} Atik notes that democracy refers both to process and political outcomes. Atik, supra note 67, at 453.


\textsuperscript{77} ICSID Convention, supra note 41, art. 36; ICC Rules, supra note 76, art. 4; UNCITRAL Rules, supra note 76, art. 3.

\textsuperscript{78} ICSID Convention, supra note 41, art. 37; ICC Rules, supra note 76, art. 4; UNCITRAL Rules, supra note 76, art. 3–6.

\textsuperscript{79} ICSID Convention, supra note 41, art. 37; ICC Rules, supra note 76, arts. 8–9; UNCITRAL Rules, supra note 76, arts. 5–8.

\textsuperscript{80} Franck, supra note 24, at 1543–44.


\textsuperscript{82} Post-hearing briefs may be submitted at the discretion of the tribunal. See Post-Hearing Brief, Malaysian Historical Salvora Sdn Bhd v. Malaysia , ICSID Case No. ARB/05/10, at 2 (noting that the post-hearing brief was filed in accordance with the directions of the tribunal).

\textsuperscript{83} ICSID Convention, supra note 41, arts. 48–49; ICC Rules, supra note 76, art. 25; UNCITRAL Rules, supra note 76, § IV.

\textsuperscript{84} See Franck, supra note 24, at 1544–45.
in investment arbitration. Unlike many other adjudicative processes, investment arbitration is marked by its confidentiality. The genesis of the investment arbitration process is the international commercial arbitration process, which is designed to mediate disputes of a commercial nature between private consenting parties. Accordingly, international commercial arbitration emphasizes confidentiality and secrecy. Moreover, given the orientation of the international commercial arbitration process toward commercial needs, the process discourages transparency and democratic participation.

Investment arbitration embodies the confidential and secretive nature of the international commercial arbitration process. Neither the pleadings nor the oral hearings are typically made available or accessible to the public, and the final decisions of the tribunal are released only with the consent of the parties. As a result, the public is often unaware of pending or ongoing arbitrations. Although public participation in the form of amicus involvement or open public hearings has been invited in limited cases, critics still cite the lack

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86. See, for example, discussion infra note 90.
87. States may be parties to international commercial arbitration disputes; however, in these circumstances states are treated as private parties because the issues generally concern contractual or other commercial issues as opposed to exercises of public authority. Franck, supra note 24, at 1538–45.
88. This is due, in part, to parties’ wishes not to publicize some or all of the following: certain allegations, such as bad faith and incompetence; a “loss,” if they lose the arbitration; adverse positions; and confidential or sensitive information. Cindy G. Buys, *The Tensions between Confidentiality and Transparency in International Arbitration*, 14 AM. REV. INT’L ARB. 121, 123 (2003).
89. Bernasconi-Osterwalder, supra note 74, at 4.
90. Alvarez & Park, supra note 85, at 383–86.
91. Forcense, supra note 55, at 318; Peterson & Gray, supra note 13, at 26.
93. For example, portions of the oral hearings were simultaneously broadcast and opened to the public in both the *Methanex* and *UPS* cases. See United Parcel Serv. of Am., Inc. v. Canada (U.S. v. Can.), Decision of the Tribunal on Petitions for Intervention and Participation as Amici Curiae (NAFTA Ch. 11 Arb.) (2001), available at http://naftaclaims.com/Disputes/Canada/UPS/UPSDecisionReParticipationAmiciCuriae.pdf [hereinafter *UPS Petitions for Amici Curiae*]; Methanex Corp. v. United States, Decision of the Tribunal on Petitions from Third Persons To Intervene as “Amici Curiae,” 17 WORLD TRADE & ARBITRATION MATERIALS 61 (NAFTA Ch. 11 Arb.) (2005), available at http://naftaclaims.com/Disputes/USA/Methanex/MethanexDecisionReAuthorityAmicus.pdf [hereinafter *Methanex Petitions for Amici Curiae*]; see also discussion infra Part II.A.1.b.
of transparency in the arbitration process. Public involvement in the arbitration process is more often the exception than the norm. Modeling the investment arbitration process on international commercial arbitration, therefore, raises serious concerns about lack of democratic input.

A second difference is the lack of independence of the adjudicative body. Whereas in many judicial systems, the hallmarks of an independent judiciary are tenure and financial security, investment arbitration has neither. Although arbitrators are generally highly respected individuals who are well-versed in the area of international law, the market for appointments as an arbitrator is highly competitive and arbitral fees are very lucrative, heightening the need for arbitrators to be concerned about their reputations in order to ensure reappointment. Moreover, because arbitrators lack judicial tenure, many continue parallel careers as practicing attorneys. Accordingly, it is not uncommon for an arbitrator to preside over one dispute while acting as counsel in another. Because of this, arbitrators may seek to define investment terms expansively as a means of ensuring the continued viability of investment arbitration.

A final difference that raises democratic concerns is that, despite parallels between the functions of investment arbitral tribunals and administrative agencies, certain democratic restraints on administrative agencies do not apply to investment arbitral tribunals. Like administrative agencies, investment arbitral


95. OECD Report, supra note 94.


100. Rau, supra note 96, at 521–22.

101. Id. at 517.


103. van Harten & Loughlin, supra note 16, at 148; see also infra note 167.

panels operate below the formal legislative level but serve an
adjudicatory and standard-setting function that affects the economic
and social values of ordinary citizens.105

Administrative law generally requires that an elected legislature
both delegate the implementation of a specific statute to an
administrative body and provide for independent judicial review of
the administrative body’s decisions to ensure that the administrative
body is acting within the purview of its delegated statutory
authority.106 However, although investment arbitral tribunals
exercise the adjudicatory and rule-making functions of domestic
administrative bodies, for the most part their decisions lack a review
mechanism to ensure they are acting within their delegated
authority.107 In some cases limited review is provided for by the
arbitral institutions or by the courts at the situs of the arbitration,
but the judiciary of the affected state often is unable to constrain the
actions of the investment arbitral tribunal.108

Without domestic court review of its decisions, investment
arbitration is permitted to operate negatively—effectively it can
strike down a state’s national regulation if the regulation is
inconsistent with provisions in the relevant investment treaty.109 At
the same time, investment arbitral tribunals are reluctant to consider
the public policies supporting a state’s regulations.110 As a result, the
outcomes of investment disputes are often heavily weighted against
state interests.

Overall, adjudicative bodies are thought to be less democratically
sound than elected bodies.111 Nevertheless, this “counter-
majoritarian" aspect of adjudicative bodies, particularly courts, can be checked by a legislative override.\(^{112}\) In contrast, decisions rendered by investment arbitral tribunals cannot be overridden.\(^{113}\) A state faced with an adverse decision by an investment arbitral tribunal can choose to disregard the decision and retain the offending regulation; however, it must still compensate the investor who brought the action, and it faces possible lawsuits from other similarly situated investors.\(^{114}\) As a result, investment arbitration may be a form of judicial lawmaking, as its decisions can effectively lead to repeals of state regulations or result in exorbitant compensatory awards that make maintenance of the offending regulation highly problematic.\(^{115}\) In this sense, the international arbitration system enjoys a form of undemocratic supremacy as its decisions are not subject to a legislative check.

b. The Outcomes of Investment Arbitration

The procedural shortcomings of investment arbitration represent only one source of the system’s democratic deficiency. Investment arbitration may also impinge upon democracy when tribunal decisions have


\(^{113}\) The lack of a legislative override has caused some commentators to note that arbitrators are effectively preventing domestic governments from being able to govern at will. See Lucien J. Dhooge, *The North American Free Trade Agreement and the Environment: The Lessons of Metalclad Corporation v. United Mexican States*, 10 Minn. J. Global Trade 209, 273 (2001); Jones, supra note 26, at 545; see also Charles N. Brower & Lee A. Steven, *Who Then Should Judge?: Developing the International Rule of Law under NAFTA Chapter 11*, 2 Chi. J. Int’l L. 193, 198 (2001) ([P]rivate corporate interests . . . ’undermine’ legitimate governmental regulations in a ‘supranational’ forum insulated from the usual domestic political and legal processes.’).

\(^{114}\) Generally, the scope of a final investment arbitral award is limited to monetary damages. Thus, an award against a state generally will not include an order to remove the domestic regulation found to have interfered with the investment. See *Metalclad Award*, supra note 110, ¶ 131; Cia del Desarrollo de Santa Elena SA v. Costa Rica, ICSID Case no. ARB/96/1, ¶ 111 (2000). In both awards, although the tribunal found the environmental regulations to be contrary to the states’ investment treaty obligations, the awards only ordered the states to compensate the investors with monetary damages.

decisions address issues whose scope extends beyond investment disputes.116

At its core, investment arbitration involves issues related to investments.117 Claims generally center on allegations of expropriation, a state’s failure to accord national treatment,118 a state’s failure to grant most-favored nation treatment,119 or a state’s failure to accord an investor “fair and equitable” treatment.120 All investment-related disputes are considered arbitrable under the treaty, and most treaties define investment broadly.121 However, given that a state’s laws and regulations generally attend to the public interest, arbitral decisions that effectively invalidate state

116. See Atik, supra note 67, at 455.
117. See, for example, infra notes 121–24.
118. For example, Article II(1) of the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Honduras Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investments states:

With respect to the establishment, acquisition, expansion, management, conduct, operation and sale or other disposition of covered investments, each Party shall accord treatment no less favorable than it accords, in like situations, to investments in its territory of its own nationals or companies (national treatment) or to investments in its territory of nationals or companies of a third country (most-favored-nation treatment), whichever is most favorable (national and most-favored-nation treatment). Each Party shall ensure that its state enterprises, in the provision of their goods or services, accord national treatment and most-favored-nation treatment to covered investments.


119. Id.
120. See generally Barnali Choudhury, Evolution or Devolution?—Defining Fair and Equitable Treatment in International Investment Law, 6 J. WORLD TRADE & INVESTMENT 297 (2005).
121. For example, the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Bolivia Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment defines “investment of a national or company” as comprising

every kind of investment owned or controlled directly or indirectly by that national or company, and includes investment consisting or taking the form of: (i) a company; (ii) shares, stock, and other forms of equity participation, and bonds, debentures, and other forms of debt interests, in a company; (iii) contractual rights, such as under turnkey, construction or management contracts, production or revenue sharing contracts, concessions, or other similar contracts; (iv) tangible property, including real property; and intangible property, including rights, such as leases, mortgages, liens and pledges; (v) intellectual property, including: copyrights and related rights, patents, rights in plant varieties, industrial designs, rights in semiconductor layout designs, trade secrets, including know how and confidential business information, trade and service marks, and trade names; and (vi) rights conferred pursuant to law, such as licenses and permits; (The list of items . . . above is illustrative and not exhaustive.)

measures often have implications beyond purely investment-related issues; as a result, the scope of an investment arbitration may reach public interest issues that directly impact citizens’ rights.\textsuperscript{122}

i. Public Interest Issues

The concept of public interest issues can be formulated in two ways. First, the public interest can be thought of in terms of the interest of the state and its constituents.\textsuperscript{123} For example, under takings jurisprudence, state takings may be exempt from liability if effectuated for a public purpose.\textsuperscript{124} For the most part, the state has broad discretion to self-define its public purpose so long as it is rational or reasonable.\textsuperscript{125} The discretion given to states to act for a public purpose is premised on the idea that the state will act in its own best interests and in those of its citizens.

The public interest can also implicate issues that encapsulate the common interest of mankind.\textsuperscript{126} Examples of this include issues raised by environmental concerns or human rights.\textsuperscript{127} In this context, public interest issues may implicate the economic notion of public goods. Economists define a public good as being non-rival and non-excludable.\textsuperscript{128} Thus, the environment, drinking water, and many public services are all considered public goods.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{122} Rosalyn Higgins, The Taking of Property by the State: Recent Developments in International Law, 176 RECUEIL DES COURS 259, 277 (1982). As Higgins asks, in the taking of property by the state, who is to pay for the economic cost of attending to the public interest involved in the measure in question?

\textsuperscript{123} See BLACK’S LAW DICTIONARY 1266 (8th ed. 2004) (defining “public interest” as either “[t]he general welfare of the public that warrants recognition and protection” or “[s]omething in which the public as a whole has a stake; esp., an interest that justifies governmental regulation”).


\textsuperscript{125} The Restatement points out in its commentary that “public purpose is broad and not subject to effective reexamination by other states.” RESTATEMENT (THIRD) OF FOREIGN RELATIONS LAW OF THE UNITED STATES § 712 cmt. E (1987). The European Court of Human Rights, considering the issue of takings in violation of the right to property under the first protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights, has held that it will “respect a national legislature’s judgment as to what is in the public interest . . . unless that judgment is manifestly without reasonable foundation.” James v. United Kingdom, 8 Eur. Ct. H.R. 123, 123 (1986).


\textsuperscript{128} “Non-rival” means that consumption of the good by one individual does not reduce the amount of the good available for consumption by others, and “non-excludable” means that the individuals cannot be excluded from the good’s consumption. JAMES M. BUCHANAN, THE DEMAND AND SUPPLY OF PUBLIC GOODS 48 (1968); RICHARD A. MUSGRAVE, A PURE THEORY OF PUBLIC FINANCE 9–12 (1959).

\textsuperscript{129} BUCHANAN, supra note 128, at 3; MUSGRAVE, supra note 128, at 9–12.
Accordingly, investment arbitrations engage the public interest when they implicate issues concerning the common interest, such as a non-rival and non-excludable good, or the best interest of the state and its constituents. Already, this clash between investment and public interest issues has occurred in several investment arbitrations. Public interest issues have been implicated in previous arbitrations concerning regulatory expropriations (primarily in the environmental context), public services, and several idiosyncratic issues.

(1) Regulatory Expropriations through the Lens of Environmental Issues

Expropriations can take on one of two forms of property deprivation: direct or indirect. A direct expropriation involves the nationalization or expropriation of an investment though formal transfer of title or outright physical seizure. However, when state interference in the use or enjoyment of an investment deprives the investor of all benefits of the property, the interference is termed an indirect expropriation (although legal title to the property remains with the investor).

Under customary international law, expropriations—whether direct or indirect—are compensable. Nevertheless, a state regulation, though it affects foreign interests considerably, does not amount to an expropriation as it is prima facie a lawful exercise of governmental powers. Most investment treaties incorporate this "police-powers" exception to allow states to expropriate a foreign investment if the expropriation is done on a nondiscriminatory basis for a public purpose and the investor is compensated.


132. COSBEY ET AL., supra note 102, at 13; OECD REPORT, supra note 94; Rudolph Dolzer, Indirect Expropriation of Alien Property, 1 ISCID (World Bank) 41 (1988).

133. COSBEY ET AL., supra note 102, at 3.

134. IAN BROWNLEE, PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW 509 (6th ed. 2003); see also Sedco Inc. v. Nat'l Iranian Oil Co., 9 Iran-U.S. Cl. Trib. Rep. 248, 275 (1985) (holding that it is an accepted principle of international law that a state is not liable for economic injury which is a consequence of bona fide regulation within the accepted police power of states).

135. For example, Article 1110 of NAFTA, reads as follows:

No Party may directly or indirectly nationalize or expropriate an investment of an investor of another Party in its territory or take a measure tantamount to
However, in the trade and investment treaty context, the police-powers exception applies only to expropriations. Consequently, if an investor is denied fair and equitable treatment, national treatment, or most-favored nation treatment, the state cannot justify its actions through the police-powers exception. Nevertheless, because the police-powers exception effectively distinguishes between legitimate and confiscatory regulation, defining the exception's scope is integral to determining whether states can legislate in the public interest when doing so conflicts with investor rights.

At present, three lines of reasoning, all taken from jurisprudence on regulatory expropriations in the environmental context, define the police-powers exception. The first line of reasoning holds that a bona fide regulation does not exempt the government from its obligations under the expropriation provisions of an investment treaty. Thus, in *Santa Elena*, the government of Costa Rica took property owned by a U.S. company for inclusion in a national park designed to protect the surrounding environment. The investor argued that Costa Rica’s actions constituted expropriation, and the tribunal adjudicating the dispute agreed. The tribunal held that the environmental purpose for the taking of property did not “alter the legal character of the taking for which adequate compensation

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NAFTA, *supra* note 130, art.1110.

136. As Howard Mann and Konrad von Moltke note:

Under the traditional international law concept of the exercise of police powers, when a state acted in a non-discriminatory manner to protect public goods such as its environment, the health of its people or other public welfare interests, such actions were understood to fall outside the scope of what was meant by expropriation. In trade law terms, this was ‘a carve out’ from the applicable rules. Such acts were simply not covered by the concept of expropriation, were not a taking of property, and no compensation was payable as a matter of international law.


137. *Id.*

138. Examining regulatory expropriations through the lens of environmental concerns is particularly apt given that several investment arbitrations of claims for expropriation have implicated environmental concerns either directly or indirectly. This repeated clash between governmental regulations and investor rights has begun to provide guidance on the precise extent of the police powers exception.


140. *Id.*

141. *Id.*
must be paid” and that environmental measures, “no matter how laudable and beneficial to society as a whole,” were similar to other expropriatory measures, and therefore compensable.142

For the most part, tribunals have been reluctant to examine the motivations behind environmental regulations that interfere with investor rights.143 Thus, when the Mexican government addressed the adverse environmental effects of a landfill by instituting an ecological decree to protect land used as a hazardous waste site, the tribunal held that the decree constituted an expropriation and that it “need not decide or consider the motivation or intent of the adoption” of the decree.144 Similarly, in Tecmed the tribunal declined to examine the motivation or intent behind state legislation when the Mexican government had failed to renew the permit for a landfill site operated by a Spanish investor due to environmental and health concerns.145

Effectively, this line of reasoning ignores the police-powers exception and severely limits the state’s ability to regulate in the public interest. In fact, when confronted with an investment arbitration, at least one government sufficiently doubted the applicability of the police-powers exception that it repealed the contested regulation even though it had been enacted for health and environmental reasons.146

A second line of reasoning, however, acknowledges the indisputable nature of a state’s right to exercise its sovereign powers and notes that legitimate state regulations neither constitute an expropriation nor are compensable.147 This line of reasoning demands a proportionality analysis to show that a state regulation is

142. Id. ¶¶ 71–72.
143. See, e.g., Metaclad, supra note 108.
144. Metaclad Award, supra note 110, ¶¶ 109–11.
145. Técnicas Medioambientales Tecmed, S.A. v. United Mexican States, ICSID (World Bank) Case No. ARB(AF)/00/2, ¶ 120 (2003) [hereinafter Tecmed]. But see S.D. Myers, Inc. v. Canada, Partial Award, ¶¶ 152, 161–62 (2000) [hereinafter S.D. Myers Partial Award], in which Canada had enacted regulations prohibiting the transboundary export of PCBs, supposedly for the purpose of guaranteeing the disposal of PCB waste in an environmentally sound manner. In that case, the tribunal examined the motivation or intent behind the regulation and concluded that its main purpose was the protection of domestic companies and therefore found the regulation to be in violation of obligations owed to the investor. Id.
147. S.D. Myers Partial Award, supra note 145, ¶ 281. The Tecmed tribunal acknowledged the indisputable nature of a state’s right to exercise its sovereign powers within the framework of its police power, which could result in non-compensable economic damage to those subject to its powers. Tecmed, supra note 145, ¶ 119.
expropriatory. In *Tecmed*, the tribunal determined that a state’s regulatory actions or measures could only be characterized as expropriatory after examining whether the state actions or measures were proportional to the public interest presumably protected and to the protection legally granted to investments, taking into account that the significance of such impact has a key role upon deciding the proportionality.\(^{149}\)

In adopting the proportionality analysis of *Tecmed*, the *Azurix* tribunal held that a regulation depriving an investor of his property must pursue a “legitimate aim in the public interest” and the means employed must be proportional to the “aim sought to be realized.”\(^{150}\) Both the *Tecmed* and *Azurix* tribunals also noted that, because foreign investors cannot participate in the democratic processes that produce the challenged measures, it may be reasonable for nationals to bear a greater burden in the public interest than non-nationals.\(^{151}\)

Thus, under this second line of reasoning, the police-powers exception can only be invoked when the investor’s ownership rights have not been completely deprived or where the state's regulations are proportional to the interest being protected. Moreover, proportionality should be assessed by considering the significance of the regulation’s impact on the investment and the foreign investor’s ability to participate in the creation of the state regulation.\(^{152}\) Similarly, the police-powers exception is available only when the state can prove “some genuine interest of the public”; mere assertion of an interest is insufficient.\(^{153}\) In effect, this line of reasoning emphasizes the regulations’ impact on the investment and the investor’s inability to participate in the process that created the contested regulation, to the detriment of any public interest being served.

A third line of reasoning suggests, however, that disputes involving conflicts between investor rights and environmental

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\(^{149}\) *Tecmed*, supra note 145, ¶ 122. In *Tecmed*, the tribunal found that the state regulation was created in response to sociopolitical pressure rather than for environmental protection reasons, but also found that the political pressure did not amount to a state of emergency. Accordingly, the tribunal found the regulation, which significantly interfered with the investor’s investment, was not proportional and thereby constituted an expropriation. *Id.*, ¶¶ 129–37.

\(^{150}\) *Azurix*, supra note 148, ¶ 310 (citing *In the Case of James and Others*, ¶¶ 50, 63 (1986)).

\(^{151}\) *Id.*; *Tecmed*, supra note 145, ¶¶ 121–22.

\(^{152}\) *Tecmed*, supra note 145, ¶ 122.

concerns should be decided in favor of the environmental concerns.\textsuperscript{154} In \textit{Methanex}, a Canadian investor argued that California’s ban on MTBE\textsuperscript{155} was expropriatory as it affected the investor’s production of methanol, a key component of MTBE.\textsuperscript{156} California countered that the ban was necessary because MTBE was contaminating water supplies, posing both an environmental and a health risk to California residents.\textsuperscript{157} In determining whether the ban was an expropriation for which the state was liable, the \textit{Methanex} investment arbitral tribunal drew a clear distinction between expropriatory measures and public purpose regulations, holding that

\begin{quote}
[a] non-discriminatory regulation for a public purpose, which is enacted in accordance with due process and which affects, inter alia, a foreign investor or investment is not deemed expropriatory and compensable unless specific commitments have been given by the regulating government to the then putative foreign investors contemplating investment that the government would refrain from such regulation.\textsuperscript{158}
\end{quote}

The \textit{Methanex} tribunal therefore concluded that public purpose regulations, when enacted with due process and not discriminatory, are neither expropriations—even if they affect foreign investments—nor compensable.\textsuperscript{159} Interestingly, the general police-powers exception found in many investment treaties allows public purpose regulations to affect investments, but only if adequate compensation is paid.\textsuperscript{160} Thus, the \textit{Methanex} line of reasoning broadens the scope of the police-powers exception beyond the texts of most investment treaties.

Following \textit{Methanex}, the \textit{Saluka} tribunal also adopted the ruling that economic injuries resulting from bona fide regulations within the police powers of a state are not compensable.\textsuperscript{161} The tribunal observed that the adjudicator should determine whether particular state conduct constitutes valid regulatory activity.\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Saluka} thus requires tribunals to evaluate the public purpose of the state

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{154} \textit{Methanex Corp. v. United States}, Final Award, ICSID (World Bank) (2005), available at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/51052.pdf [hereinafter \textit{Methanex Final Award}].
\item \textsuperscript{155} MTBE is an abbreviation of methyl tertiary-butyl ether, a gasoline additive that is added in relatively low concentrations to increase octane ratings in premium grade fuels. Envtl. Protection Agency, Overview: Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE), http://www.epa.gov/mtbe/faq.htm (last visited Mar. 30, 2008).
\item \textsuperscript{156} \textit{Methanex Final Award}, supra note 154, at Part IV, Ch. D.
\item \textsuperscript{157} Id.
\item \textsuperscript{158} Id. at Part IV, Ch. F, ¶ 6.
\item \textsuperscript{159} Id. at Part IV, Ch. D.
\item \textsuperscript{160} NAFTA, supra note 130, art. 1110.
\item \textsuperscript{161} \textit{Saluka Investments BV v. Czech Republic}, UNCITRAL Partial Award, ¶ 262 (2006) [hereinafter \textit{Saluka Partial Award}].
\item \textsuperscript{162} Id. at ¶¶ 263–64.
\end{itemize}
regulation rather than to defer to a state’s assessment as to whether a particular regulation serves the public interest. 163

However, because investment arbitration is devoid of a precedent system, 164 future tribunals are free to adopt any of the three lines of reasoning adopted in Santa Elena, Tecmed, and Methanex. Therefore, future tribunals considering expropriation claims involving environmental concerns may hold that the expropriation is unaffected by the purpose of the regulation, is subject to a proportionality analysis, or does not amount to a compensable interference. As a result, the requirements for and compensability of expropriations based on environmental regulations remain at issue.

(2) Non-Expropriatory Regulatory Interferences with Investments

Even when a state’s actions in regulating for the public interest are covered by the police-powers exception, the state regulation may amount to a violation of other investment protections. Regulatory interferences with investments may still violate national treatment, 165 most-favored nation treatment, 166 or fair and equitable treatment provisions. 167

In S.D. Myers v. Canada, a challenge to the Canadian government’s ban on the transboundary export of PCB waste (instituted, at least in part, to ensure that the waste was disposed of in an environmentally sound manner), the tribunal found that the measure did not constitute an expropriation due to the temporary nature of the ban. 168 However, the tribunal found that the ban constituted a violation of national treatment and fair and equitable treatment.

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163. Id.
165. National treatment requires states to treat foreign investors and investments no less favorably than domestic investors. NAFTA, supra note 130, art. 1102; see also Treaty Between The United States of America and Jamaica Concerning the Reciprocal Encouragement and Protection of Investment, U.S.-Jam., art II(1), Feb. 4, 1994.
166. Most-favored nation treatment requires states to treat investors from the most-favored nation no less favorably than investors from a third party state or a non-party state. NAFTA, supra note 130, art. 1105; see also Agreement Between the Swedish Government and the Macedonian Government on the Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments, Swed.-Maced., art. 3(1), 1998.
167. Fair and equitable treatment requires states to accord foreign investments and investors treatment in accordance with international law. NAFTA, supra note 130, art. 1105; see also Treaty Between the United States Of America and the Republic of Turkey Concerning the Reciprocal Encouragement and Protection of Investments, U.S.-Turk., art. II(3), 1985.
treatment principles that required compensation for damages.\textsuperscript{169} Moreover, if Canada had not already amended its regulations on the export of the hazardous waste, the government’s loss in the investment arbitration action would likely have resulted in a repeal or amendment of the offending law.\textsuperscript{170}

Similarly, in \textit{Azurix}, which involved a water concession contract, the Argentine government enacted measures for the protection of public health when problems with water quality arose after an investor took over the provision of water services in Argentina.\textsuperscript{171} In response, the investor brought an action against the Argentine Republic alleging expropriation and denial of fair and equitable treatment.\textsuperscript{172} The tribunal declined to find that the regulatory actions amounted to an expropriation.\textsuperscript{173} Nevertheless, it held that the investor had been denied fair and equitable treatment.\textsuperscript{174} In fact, the tribunal noted that the standards of bilateral investment treaties require states to “pro-actively” encourage and protect foreign investment.\textsuperscript{175}

Thus, a balancing of investor rights against a state’s ability to regulate in the public interest requires the police-powers exception to be extended beyond expropriation claims to other investment claims. Failure to do so ensures that investment arbitration outcomes implicating both non-expropriation claims and public interest issues will continue to favor investment interests. In this context, several investment arbitrations have been launched that implicate both expropriatory and non-expropriatory claims but nevertheless affect important public interest issues, including public services and several state-defined public interest issues.

(3) Public Services

Public interest issues that implicate the state or the common interest and extend beyond issues of expropriation are also found in the realm of public services. Public services are those without which the basic welfare of society would be endangered or those that states have traditionally afforded their citizens.\textsuperscript{176} Examples include water

\textsuperscript{169} S.D. Myers Partial Award, supra note 145, ¶¶ 258–68.

\textsuperscript{170} For example in \textit{Ethyl}, the Canadian government repealed the law in issue after the investor initiated a claim against the government pertaining to the law. \textit{Ethyl}, supra note 146, ¶ 114.

\textsuperscript{171} \textit{Azurix}, supra note 148, ¶ 144.

\textsuperscript{172} Id.

\textsuperscript{173} Id.

\textsuperscript{174} Id. ¶ 322.

\textsuperscript{175} Id. ¶ 372.

services, health care, education, public transport, and security.\textsuperscript{177} In fact, in some states—particularly developing states—public services may be the only mechanism for providing essential services, such that the availability of these public services implicates issues of fundamental human rights.\textsuperscript{178} Public services are also typically associated with an obligation of universal service, or the provision of the service to all state residents regardless of income or at an affordable price.\textsuperscript{179}

(a) Water Services

The right to water illustrates the link between public services and human rights.\textsuperscript{180} The right to water implies a corresponding obligation by the water service provider to provide sufficient, accessible, and affordable water, which might not be possible unless water is provided as a public service or on equivalent terms.\textsuperscript{181}

However, many developing states are unable to put in place the necessary infrastructure for the provision of water services on a public basis.\textsuperscript{182} As a result, several states have allowed foreign investors to privatize their water services.\textsuperscript{183} These state actions have often led to arbitration.\textsuperscript{184} In the most well-known of these disputes, U.S.-based Bechtel Corporation privatized the water

\textsuperscript{177} See discussion infra Parts I.B.2.b.i–ii.


\textsuperscript{179} UNCTAD Secretariat, supra note 178.


\textsuperscript{181} General Comment No. 15, supra note 180, ¶ 2.

\textsuperscript{182} See, for example, arbitrations involving water disputes listed infra note 186.

\textsuperscript{183} For example, privatization of water services has occurred in Argentina, Bolivia, Tanzania, and Belize. See infra note 186.

services in Cochabamba, Bolivia. The privatization led to a 400% rate increase and gave rights to private wells to the investor corporation, thereby allowing it to charge users for water from their own wells. Due to the price increases, the citizens of Cochabamba rebelled by organizing protests that led to military intervention, during which hundreds were injured and at least one person was killed. After witnessing the violence and protests, the investor voluntarily terminated the contract with the Bolivian government, and water services returned to state control.

Shortly thereafter, the investor sought $25 million in damages from the Bolivian government for alleged breaches of provisions in the investment treaty governing the dispute, which it claimed led to the rescission of the water privatization contract. Although the arbitration proceeded to the constitution phase, the investor ultimately withdrew its claim against Bolivia in 2006 in return for Bolivia’s absolving it of all potential liability.

The public interest issues raised in Cochabamba, however, were disregarded in another investment arbitration involving the provision of water services. Azurix v. Argentine Republic involved a water concession contract that had been granted to U.S. investor and Enron spinoff Azurix for thirty years for the provision of water services in

186. Id.
188. Sanchez-Moreno & Higgins, supra note 185, at 1769–71.
189. Sanchez-Moreno & Higgins, supra note 185, at 1769–71.
the Argentine province of Buenos Aires. Problems arose after the onset of the takeover of the concession by Azurix, including concerns about water quality and water pressure. Later, when an algae outbreak contaminated the water supply, government officials warned citizens not to drink the water, advised citizens to minimize exposure to the water, and dissuaded customers from paying their water bills. In October 2001, Azurix initiated a claim under the U.S.-Argentina bilateral investment treaty seeking damages in excess of $600 million.

The tribunal observed that the measures taken by the Argentine officials were exercises of its public authority for the protection of public health, but found that the measures had exacerbated rather than aided the health crisis. In finding for the investor, the tribunal held that Azurix had been denied fair and equitable treatment because Argentina’s actions in actively encouraging the investment were below international standards, which frustrated the investor’s legitimate expectations. In the end, the tribunal ordered damages in the amount of $165 million.

Several other disputes related to the provision of water services are currently in progress. However, if the decision in Azurix is indicative of future tribunal rulings, it suggests that state interferences with water service contracts that are not expropriatory in nature may lead to exorbitant compensatory awards, even if the interference is for the public’s protection.

(b) Health Care and Other Subsidized Public Services

Outcomes from investment disputes that implicate health care issues or other subsidized public services may also impinge upon democratic values. In many states, public services are either fully or partially subsidized by the government in order to ensure availability of these services on a universal basis regardless of individuals’ ability to pay. For example, in Canada, essential health care services are subsidized in order to ensure universal access. In fact, provision of...
universal health care services is viewed by Canadian nationals as a part of their identity, such that outside interferences with health care services would likely be viewed as striking at deeply held core values.\(^{201}\)

However, a recent increase in international trade of health care services has the potential to affect the provision of health care services, and correspondingly, the potential to affect the democratic values of states where the services are subsidized.\(^{202}\) States that subsidize health care may be subject to claims for breaches of investment treaty obligations if they argue for access to other states’ health care sectors while simultaneously denying foreign investment in their own health care sectors.\(^{203}\) Similar problems may also arise, as in the water privatization disputes discussed above, if foreign investors are invited into a state’s health care sector and the government is later forced to interfere when the level of health care provided by the investor is inadequate. For example, due to problems with privatization initiatives in Czech hospitals, the Czech government passed legislation that curtailed the ability of private, for-profit hospitals to receive payments from health insurance schemes.\(^{204}\) Proponents heralded the legislation for “improv[ing]
accessibility to hospitals,” while critics warned that the legislation could trigger investment arbitration claims if any of the private, for-profit hospitals were owned by foreign investors.\footnote{Id.}

However, the reach of investment and trade obligations into the public service sector does not end with water or health services. Any public service sector into which foreign investors are invited is subject to investment arbitration claims if the state interferes due to concerns about the quality of the service being provided. Given that many public services encompass human rights obligations,\footnote{Id. at 2.} investment arbitrations have the potential to create significant problems for citizens’ basic and most essential rights.

(4) Idiosyncratic Public Interest Issues

Whereas many public services could be termed public interest issues, as defined by common or universal interests, investment arbitration also implicates the best interests of the state and its constituents. The idiosyncratic nature of these issues may lead a state’s populace to view the handling of these issues by investment arbitral tribunals as highly antidemocratic.\footnote{Id.}

For example, South Africa recently enacted a Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policy that aims to redress historical, social, and economic inequalities faced by the black community in South Africa.\footnote{Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Bill 27B of 2003 (S. Afr.); see also SOUTH AFRICA’S ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION: A STRATEGY FOR BROAD-BASED BLACK ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT, available at http://www.dti.gov.za/bee/complete.pdf (providing an overview of BEE Policy).} In South Africa’s mining sector, the BEE mining regime vests all mineral and petroleum rights in the government.\footnote{Luke Eric Peterson, European Mining Investors Mount Arbitration Over South African Black Empowerment, INVESTMENT TREATY NEWS (Int’l Inst. for Sustainable Dev., Winnipeg, Man., Can.), Feb. 14, 2007, at 3, available at http://www.iisd.org/ pdf/2007/itn_feb14_2007.pdf.} This allows the government to condition the granting of state licenses for mining rights on companies’ compliance with social, labor, and development objectives set out in a mining charter.\footnote{Id. at 2.} Objectives include the hiring of black or historically disadvantaged South
African (HDSA) managers and the selling of 26% of shares to blacks or HDSAs.\footnote{211}

In January 2007, Italian investors and their Luxembourg-based holding company Finstone (PTY) Ltd. SA launched an action arguing that the BEE mining regime violates provisions of South Africa’s investment treaties with Italy and Luxembourg.\footnote{212} The investors contend that the forced divestiture of their investment to HDSAs is a denial of fair and equitable treatment and that they are being discriminated against through treatment less favorable than that given to HDSAs.\footnote{213} Effectively, by submitting this dispute for investment arbitration, the foreign investors are asking a three-person tribunal, which may have no links at all to South Africa, to evaluate the propriety of South Africa’s BEE policy vis-à-vis its interest in attracting foreign investment.

The California government faces similar scrutiny from an investment arbitral tribunal for regulations it enacted to protect Native American sacred lands from holes created by open-pit mining operations.\footnote{214} In 1987, Canadian mining company Glamis Gold began preparation for the operation of an open-pit gold mine in the Imperial Valley of California.\footnote{215} Although initially denied a permit to operate the mine due to concerns about adverse impact on both the environment and a local Native American tribe’s religious sites, a change in government later reversed the denial of the permit.\footnote{216} The California government reacted by passing emergency legislation requiring the backfilling and re-contouring of new open-pit metallic mines in protected areas of the California desert near sites sacred to the local Native American tribe.\footnote{217} Glamis argued that the California backfilling regulations destroyed the value of its mining investments, and in 2003, Glamis initiated an investment arbitration arguing that

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item 211. \textit{Id.} at 3.
\item 212. \textit{Id.} at 2. The investors argue that the BEE policy violates the expropriation and fair and equitable provisions of the relevant investment treaties. \textit{Id.} at 3.
\item 213. \textit{Id.} at 3–4.
\item 216. \textit{Id.} ¶ 15. The Department of the Interior under the Clinton administration initially denied Glamis the permit. That same year, the new Secretary of the Interior under the recently elected Bush administration reversed the denial of the permit. \textit{Id.} ¶ 16. For a synopsis of the case, see OXFAM AM., \textit{GLAMIS GOLD: A CASE STUDY OF INVESTING IN DESTRUCTION} (2003), available at http://www.oxfamamerica.org/newsandpublications/publications/research_reports/art6471.html/OA-Glamis_Gold_English.pdf.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the regulations are contrary to investment treaty provisions. The arbitration is still in progress.

To date, one of the most profound examples of a public interest regulation adversely affecting whole classes of foreign investors has been Argentina’s Public Emergency and Foreign Exchange System Reform Law. Faced with an economic crisis involving high unemployment, school closings, and the resignation of five presidential administrations in one month, Argentina enacted the Emergency Law to eliminate the conversion of tariffs from dollars to pesos at a rate of one-to-one and to abolish the indexation of tariffs to U.S. dollar indices. Most of Argentina’s public utilities had been privatized and purchased by foreign investors during the 1990s. Accordingly, the Emergency Law resulted in the devaluation of many Argentine assets held by foreign investors. Many of the affected investors began investment arbitrations against the Argentine government, leading to approximately forty arbitrations against the government worth almost $20 billion.

Argentina argued that it acted out of a state of necessity following the financial crisis that imperiled the essential interests of the country at that time. Specifically, Argentina defended the measures as necessary to maintain public order and protect its essential security interests. The first tribunal to consider this defense rejected it. The CMS tribunal declined to accept the necessity defense, finding that the essential interests of the state were not engaged by the financial crisis in part because, although the

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218. *Glamis Gold Notice of Arbitration,* supra note 214. The investor is arguing that the regulations are tantamount to expropriation and a denial of fair and equitable treatment. *Id.* ¶ 25.


222. *Id.* ¶¶ 35, 52.

223. *Id.* ¶¶ 109, 134.


225. See CMS Gas Transmission Co. v. Argentine Republic, Arbitration Award, ICSID (World Bank) Case No. ARB/01/8, 44 I.L.M. 1205, 1216 (2005) [hereinafter CMS Gas Arbitration Award]; see also *LG&E Decision on Liability,* supra note 220.

226. *CMS Gas Arbitration Award,* supra note 225, at 1239.

227. *Id.* at 1238.
criterion was severe, the measures adopted by Argentina were not the only steps available.\textsuperscript{228} It also held that Argentina was not the sole arbiter in determining whether it was acting in a state of necessity.\textsuperscript{229} Rather, the tribunal stated that measures enacted out of a state’s own determination that it was in a state of necessity are subject to judicial review.\textsuperscript{230} In contrast, on facts comparable to those in CMS, the LG&E tribunal found that Argentina was subject to extreme, “severe crises in the economic, political and social sectors,” placing it in a state of necessity for approximately eighteen months.\textsuperscript{231} The tribunal observed that the economic crisis resulted in unemployment, poverty, and indigency rates of “intolerable levels,” the virtual collapse of the entire health care system, and the inability of one-quarter of the population to afford the minimum amount of food needed for subsistence.\textsuperscript{232}

In a recent development, Argentina challenged the CMS award in an attempt to have it nullified.\textsuperscript{233} Although the Annulment Committee annulled a portion of the award, it was powerless to lessen the overall damages owed by Argentina to CMS, despite the Committee’s recognition that the CMS tribunal erred in failing to assess whether Argentina could have invoked a separate, treaty-based defense of necessity.\textsuperscript{234} The narrow grounds for review in an annulment proceeding precluded the Committee from reconsidering the issue, although the Committee observed that, had it been acting as a court of appeal, it would have revisited the issue as to whether Argentina enjoyed a defense of necessity under the BIT between the United States and Argentina.\textsuperscript{235} Interestingly, three days later, the Sempra tribunal, which included two of the same members as the CMS tribunal, held that Argentina had no defense of necessity under the BIT or under customary international law between the United States and Argentina.\textsuperscript{236} On much the same facts as CMS and LG&E, the tribunal found Argentina liable to a U.S. investor for over $128 million.\textsuperscript{237}

\textsuperscript{228} Id. at 1239–41.  
\textsuperscript{229} Id. at 1245.  
\textsuperscript{230} Id. at 1246.  
\textsuperscript{231} LG&E Decision on Liability, supra note 220, ¶ 231.  
\textsuperscript{232} Id. ¶ 234.  
\textsuperscript{234} The Annulment Committee annulled the portion of the award that determined Argentina had violated Article II(2)(c) of the U.S.-Argentina BIT. Id. ¶¶ 158, 163.  
\textsuperscript{235} Id. ¶ 135.  
\textsuperscript{237} Id. ¶ 482.
The absence of precedent in investment arbitration leaves open the question as to whether the tribunal holdings in CMS and Sempra, or the holdings in LG&E and the annulment decision in CMS, will govern in future state necessity cases. Given the factual findings of the LG&E tribunal and the CMS Annulment Committee’s interest in exploring a defense of necessity, it is unclear how much additional hardship the citizens of Argentina would have had to incur to satisfy the CMS and Sempra tribunals that Argentina had been in a state of necessity.

ii. Investment Arbitration, the Public Interest, and Democracy

Whether promulgated in the best interests of the state or in the common interest of mankind, public interest regulations embody deeply embedded democratic values held by a state’s populace. To give less credence to these values, or to simply ignore them—as has happened in several investment arbitrations—is to establish a hierarchy in which investment values trump non-investment values, no matter what the effect.

State sovereignty signifies the ability of states to regulate for the benefit of public welfare. It also signifies a state’s ability to assess for itself whether a regulation is truly necessary. However, in an attempt to protect investors from states that hide behind public interest regulations as a disguise for protectionism, investment arbitration has moved too far away from the core rights that state sovereignty entails. Accordingly, a better solution is necessary to regain equilibrium between investor rights and the sovereign right of a state to regulate in the public interest.

II. SOLUTIONS FOR BALANCING PUBLIC INTEREST WITH INVESTMENT ARBITRATION

Given the public’s stake in many of the issues related to investment arbitration and its inability to participate in or hold the decision makers of the process accountable, correcting the democratic deficit that investment arbitration creates requires more than involvement of a legislature or democratic body. Rather, it involves concepts of legitimacy, which requires the inclusion of core

238. See discussion supra Part I.B.2.b.ii.
239. Caruba, supra note 50, at s. 3.4.1.
241. See AMAN, supra note 56, at 5 (arguing that depending on the conceptualization of democracy, democracy deficits may require more than the attention of a legislative or executive body).
democratic values in the investment arbitration process. Thus, public participation in the decision-making process should be encouraged on the part of stakeholders whose interests may not be adequately represented by a member state. Minorit and special interest groups should also be given a voice in the process. Furthermore, decision makers should be held accountable in order to increase public perception of the quality of decisions resulting from the investment arbitration process.

However, process changes alone are not enough. The reach of investment arbitral tribunals into core democratic values also requires altering investment arbitration outcomes. Thus, reduction in the scope of an investment arbitral body’s actions or the inclusion of non-investment issues into its decision-making process is needed. However, only with the infusion of democratic principles into both the investment arbitration process and its outcomes can the democratic deficit begin to be addressed.

A. Process Changes

One method of reducing the democratic deficit is to enhance public debate and participation in the investment arbitration process such that the public feel as though they have a meaningful say in the arbitral tribunal outcomes. The creation of a transparent process enables and ultimately encourages public involvement. Enhancing the legitimacy of the investment arbitration process also reduces the democratic deficit, because legitimate processes protect and promote democratic values. Legitimacy is found in

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242. See id. at 147 (arguing that legitimacy requires more than electoral accountability and general public oversight of elected officials).
243. Id. at 5.
244. See id. at 6 (arguing that the quality of decisions “may suffer if perspectives of diverse interests and parties are not considered”).
245. See id. at 5 (arguing that judicial panels using non-transparent decision-making processes, for example, should be held accountable).
246. Dunoff, supra note 73, at 674.
both the transparency of the process and the accountability of the decision makers. Thus, transparency through public access to the investment arbitration process or involvement of amici curiae on public interest issues, along with the presence of accountable and independent decision makers, adds to the credibility of this decision-making process and helps to legitimize the process in the eyes of the public.

1. Transparency

The public nature of investment arbitration indicates the need for increased transparency in the process for a number of reasons. First, large segments of a society may be affected by decisions of investment arbitral tribunals. In addition, the public outcry over the water services decisions and the pending arbitration of the challenge to South Africa’s BEE policy demonstrate that investment arbitration decisions may go so far as to affect the fundamental values of a society. Moreover, adverse decisions leading to monetary awards will likely be paid by out of the public’s tax revenues.

Transparency enhances democracy by increasing citizens’ access to information, thus enabling greater participation. It also raises the accountability of and confidence in public authority and allows groups other than special interest groups to present their views to public institutions. Increased transparency may even combat the narrowing of decision makers’ viewpoints by ensuring that the public’s point of view is heard by the decision makers as well.

in light of shared democratic ideals.

249. Charles H. Brower, II, *Structure, Legitimacy, and NAFTA’s Investment Chapter*, 36 VAND. J. TRANSNAT’L L. 37, 56 (2003). Professor Brower argues that because the international community values the principles of accountability and transparency, the use of these shared values by international legal regimes serves to legitimize them. *Id.* at 57.

250. *See supra* Part I.B.2.b.i. (highlighting the wide scope of impact).

251. For the water services decisions, *see supra* Part I.B.2.b.i(3)(a). For a description of South Africa’s BEE policy arbitration, *see supra* Part I.B.2.b.i(4).

252. *Stein, supra* note 7, at 494.


254. *See Goldman, supra* note 72, at 648 (stating that examples of transparency at work are the public’s “opportunities to submit their views in the form of testimony, public comments, or *amicus* briefs”).
Overall, transparency supports democracy, and “democracy confers legitimacy on a system of governance.”

Transparency is also an essential element in establishing an arbitral tribunal’s legitimacy because it provides an opportunity for a reasoned critique of the process. Maintaining a mere shroud of confidentiality in investment arbitral proceedings that involve public interest issues serves only to attract criticism and harm the process’s legitimacy. Whether defined narrowly as the availability of a process’s rules to interested parties or more broadly as increased public access and participation in an adjudicatory process, transparency is an essential precondition to imparting greater democracy to the investment arbitral process. Increasing public access to the process and requiring standardized involvement of amici curiae in arbitrations involving public interest issues best serves this goal.

a. Public Access

Greater transparency may be imparted to the investment arbitration process through increased public access. For the most part, investment arbitrations run under the auspices of the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) are registered by the ICSID Secretariat, after which the names of the parties to the dispute, the date of registration, and a brief description of the dispute are posted on the ICSID website. However, other arbitration institutions, such as the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) or the Arbitration Institute of the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce, do not publicize any of the disputes they administer. NAFTA arbitrations involving investment issues are also not widely publicized by the NAFTA secretariat, but much of the information pertaining to the arbitrations is maintained on a private website.

255. Stein, supra note 7, at 494.
256. See Rogers, supra note 65, at 1307 (observing that all new international criminal tribunals set transparency as a precondition for legitimacy to permit critique of their processes).
259. Id.
The Sun Belt Water dispute exemplifies the lack of public notice associated with investment arbitrations. Sun Belt Water, a U.S. corporation, filed an investment arbitration claim against the government of Canada in 1998. No further action appears to have been taken in connection with the arbitration. In fact, the government of Canada insists that the arbitration has been dismissed, while the investor characterizes the arbitration as pending. This inability to ascertain the status of an arbitration confirms that public notice remains inadequate.

Similarly, pleadings associated with investment arbitrations and the awards granted at their conclusion generally remain confidential. In many cases, pleadings or decisions from an arbitration can only be made public with the parties’ consent. In an effort to provide greater transparency within the arbitration process, the ICSID rules were recently amended to provide for the prompt publication of “excerpts of the legal reasoning of the tribunal.” Nevertheless, publication of the arbitration award is still subject to the parties’ consent. In addition, most arbitral institutions do not require pleadings to be made available to the public.

262. Id.
263. See id.; see also Hill, supra note 92, at 162–63; Sinclair, supra note 92, at 2.
264. See Sun Belt Water, Inc., Transport of Bulk Fresh Water, NAFTA, http://www.sunbeltwater.com/docs.shtml (displaying all the records in this arbitration) (last visited March 5, 2008). Others have also noted the contradictory information on the status of the Sun Belt arbitration. See, e.g., Hill, supra note 92, at 162–63 (“There has been no UNCITRAL action on the complaint, and the government of Canada insists it has been dismissed. Sun Belt, on the other hand, insists that the case is still in progress, and most observers identify the case as ‘pending.’”); Sinclair, supra note 92, at 2.
265. See, e.g., UNCITRAL Rules, supra note 76, art. 32(5); ICSID Convention, supra note 41, art. 48(5).
266. ICSID Convention, supra note 41, art. 48(5); see also UNCITRAL Rules, supra note 76, art. 32(5).
267. See ICSID Convention, supra note 41, at Arb. Rul. 48(4) (“The Centre shall not publish the award without the consent of the parties. The Centre shall, however, promptly include in its publications excerpts of the legal reasoning of the Tribunal.”).
268. Id.
Investment arbitration hearings are also generally closed to the public.270 Again, the rationale for this rule originates from international commercial arbitration, which encourages closed-door hearings in order to protect the privacy of the parties and the nature of the dispute.271 However, in an effort to increase the transparency of the investment arbitration process, the ICSID Rules were recently revised to allow third parties to attend or observe the arbitral hearings with the consent of the parties.272 This practice was employed in three NAFTA arbitrations, Methanex, UPS, and Canfor, whose hearings were both open to the public and broadcast live from the World Bank Headquarters in Washington, D.C.273

Requiring prompt publication of both the main pleadings and the arbitration award and opening the oral hearings to the public would contribute to the effectiveness and public acceptance of investment arbitration. Provisions requiring that the main documents related to arbitrations be made public and that hearings be open to the public have been included in the recent U.S. Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with Australia, Chile, Morocco, Singapore, and Central America and the Dominican Republic.274 Similarly, Canada’s Foreign Investment

270. Non-disputant private parties in NAFTA arbitrations do not have access to the proceedings without the consent of the parties. OECD Report, supra note 94, at 3; see also ICSID Convention, supra note 41, at Arb. Rul. 32(2) (noting that special arrangements must be made to allow uninvolved parties to witness the hearings). Transcripts of the proceedings are also not generally made available.

271. See supra note 88 and accompanying text.

272. See ICSID Convention, supra note 41, at Arb. Rul. 32(2) (“Unless either party objects, the Tribunal . . . may allow other persons, besides the parties, their agents, counsel and advocates, witnesses and experts during their testimony, and officers of the Tribunal, to attend or observe all or part of the hearings.”).


Protection Agreement Model provides that “all documents submitted to or issued by the tribunal, including transcripts of hearings[,] will be promptly made available to the public” and that all hearings will be open to the public. In addition, the main documents from NAFTA arbitrations have long been publicized unofficially on a private website, and the live broadcasting of two NAFTA arbitrations was met with considerable praise.

Public access to the main documents and hearings in an arbitration appears to neither overburden the parties nor interfere with the propriety of the investment arbitration process. Nevertheless, critics of increased public access to arbitrations argue that further public input is unnecessary because public participation in democratic elections of their representatives, who ostensibly have authority over the regulatory schemes governing arbitration, gives the arbitration process its necessary legitimacy. However, this argument fails to consider the fact that many national governments are somewhat removed from the regulatory issues in dispute “such that they may not properly weight the interests of those affected.”

Increased transparency does give rise to concerns about the parties’ need for confidentiality. However, sensitive information can be protected through either redaction or withdrawal, as determined by the tribunal. This ensures that confidential information will not be summarily disclosed.

278. Id. at 542.
279. See supra notes 88, 271 and accompanying text.
280. See, e.g., Chile FTA, supra note 274, art. 10.20(4)(c)–(d)

(c) A disputing party shall, at the same time that it submits a document containing information claimed to be confidential business information or information that is privileged or otherwise protected from disclosure under a Party’s law, submit a redacted version of the document that does not contain the information. Only the redacted version shall be provided to the non-disputing Party and made public in accordance with paragraph 1; and (d) The tribunal shall decide any objection regarding the designation of information claimed to be confidential business information or information that is privileged or otherwise protected from disclosure under a Party’s law. If the tribunal determines that such information was not properly designated, the disputing party that submitted the information may: (i) withdraw all or part of its submission containing such information; or (ii) agree to resubmit complete
Criticisms aside, the primary effect of increased public access is greater public awareness of the disputed issues, particularly public interest issues, and increased overall credibility of investment arbitration. Public access also legitimizes the arbitration process by conferring on the public the rights to scrutinize and evaluate the process. This Article suggests that infusing these simple practices into the investment arbitration process leads to benefits that far outweigh their drawbacks.

b. Amici Curiae

A democratic measure closely related to the publication of documents and the provision of open public hearings in investment arbitration is the inclusion of public input by way of formalized submissions. Submissions by amici curiae represent a promising source of public input into the arbitration process. However, amicus briefs have not traditionally been allowed in the investment arbitration process.

Nevertheless, investment disputes with a public interest focus have often attracted intense public scrutiny. In at least four arbitrations concerning the provision of water services, citizens groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have sought amicus standing or other input into the arbitrations. Initially, investment arbitral tribunals deferred to the parties’ views as to whether amicus groups should be granted standing. Thus, in the Bolivian Bechtel dispute, the tribunal denied citizens and environmental groups standing at the arbitration due to the parties’...
unwillingness to consent to their participation.\textsuperscript{285} However, in \textit{Aguas Argentinas}, local groups and NGOs were granted limited amicus curiae standing despite objections from the investor.\textsuperscript{286} In allowing standing for the NGOs, the \textit{Aguas Argentinas} tribunal noted that public interest warranted allowing amici because the subject matter of the dispute raised complex public and international law questions, including human rights considerations.\textsuperscript{287} It also observed that, since the subject matter of the dispute—water distribution services—was a basic public service, any decision rendered in the case would have the potential to affect the overall operation of the water distribution system and thereby the members of the public it serves.\textsuperscript{288}

Most recently, in a pending, high-profile arbitration initiated by a British investor against the government of Tanzania concerning a water services contract in Dar es Salaam,\textsuperscript{289} three Tanzanian NGOs and two international NGOs sought amicus curiae standing, access to key documents, and attendance at the oral hearings.\textsuperscript{290} Following the reasoning in \textit{Aguas Argentinas}, the tribunal permitted a single written submission from all the amici but denied the other requests.\textsuperscript{291} In particular, the tribunal denied the petitioners’ request to attend the oral hearings due to objections from the investor.\textsuperscript{292}

The tribunals in two NAFTA arbitrations involving public interest issues followed a similar approach. In both \textit{Methanex} and \textit{UPS}, the tribunals granted amicus standing to NGOs and public interest groups.\textsuperscript{293} The \textit{Methanex} tribunal found the subject matter of
the issues in dispute to be of “undoubted . . . public interest,” which favored allowing amicus participation. However, in both disputes, amici were only allowed to submit written submissions and were provided with only as much documentary disclosure as was necessary to make the submissions. Amici were not permitted to attend the hearings or access the parties’ documents.

Although amici curiae have been allowed to participate in several investment arbitrations, for the most part their participation has not been formalized. A notable exception is found in the ICSID Rules, which have recently been amended to give tribunals discretion to accept third party written submissions even without the consent of the disputing parties. The Rules provide that, in determining whether to accept third party submissions, a tribunal must consider whether the third party would bring a perspective to the dispute not represented by the parties, whether its submission would address a matter within the scope of the dispute, and whether the third party has a significant interest in the proceeding. Similarly, the 2004 U.S.- and Canadian-model BITs and newer FTAs allow for the submission of amicus briefs, provided that each amicus has a significant interest in the arbitration, brings a different perspective to the dispute, and addresses a matter within the scope of the dispute. Amicus briefs are also permitted only if the dispute concerns a matter of public interest. However, rules of UNCITRAL, the ICC, and other arbitral institutions do not explicitly provide for amicus participation.

The ICSID rule permitting amicus briefs is a substantial step towards the inclusion of public input into the investment arbitration process. The three-part test advocated by ICSID Rule 37 balances the need to include the public in investment disputes that involve public interest issues with the perceived problems of amicus involvement, including added costs and fears of expanded scope of disputes. The rule also vests ultimate discretion in the tribunal, rather than the parties, to determine whether amicus involvement is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>294</td>
<td>Methanex Petitions for Amici Curiae, supra note 93, ¶ 49.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>295</td>
<td>Id.; UPS Petitions for Amici Curiae, supra note 93, ¶¶ 60–61.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>297</td>
<td>ICSID Convention, supra note 41, at Arb. Rul. 37(2).</td>
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<td>298</td>
<td>Id.</td>
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<td>299</td>
<td>See, e.g., Canada Model FIPA, supra note 275, art. 39; Chile FTA, supra note 274, art. 10.19, ¶ 3.</td>
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<td>Id.</td>
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<td>See UNCITRAL Rules, supra note 76; ICC Rules, supra note 76.</td>
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<tr>
<td>302</td>
<td>BJORKLAND, supra note 282.</td>
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warranted.\textsuperscript{303} This allows the tribunal to assess an amicus’s interest and perspective in order to determine whether the added burdens of amicus involvement are justified. Similarly, the rule provides for the filing of joint briefs by numerous amici to limit the number of briefs filed, and it protects the process from manipulation by preventing amici from obtaining party status and allowing them only limited involvement.\textsuperscript{304}

Under the ICSID rules, amici also benefit from the absence of a requirement that the subject matter of the dispute concern a matter of public interest, as is required by the model BITs.\textsuperscript{305} In several previous arbitrations, including Metalclad and S.D. Myers, tribunals were reluctant to find that the disputes involved health or environmental issues despite arguable evidence to the contrary.\textsuperscript{306} As a result, it is unlikely that these tribunals, if faced with an amicus application, would have found the disputes to concern matters of public interest, and they could have denied the amicus application on this basis. Requiring a tribunal to assess whether a dispute involves public interest issues as a criterion for amicus applications unnecessarily broadens the powers of the tribunal, giving it greater latitude to deny amicus applications.

The current process for amicus involvement is also limited by the tribunals’ and parties’ reluctance to grant amici access to key documents and an opportunity to cross-examine witnesses. Although several investment arbitral tribunals have been eager for amicus input, they have systematically denied amici any involvement beyond the submission of briefs.\textsuperscript{307} Without knowledge of the content of key documents in the arbitration, amici can only be of limited assistance to the tribunal.\textsuperscript{308} Critics of amicus involvement claim that allowing such submissions permits self-elected interest groups from developed

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{303} ICSID Convention, supra note 41, at Arb. Rul. 37.
\item \textsuperscript{304} See, e.g., United Parcel Serv. of Am., Inc. v. Canada (U.S. v. Can.), Amicus Petitions by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the Council of Canadians, 19 WORLD TRADE & ARM. MATERIALS 107 (NAFTA Ch. 11 Arb.) (2007), available at http://naftaclaims.com/Disputes/Canada/UPS/UPSAmicusPetitionCUPW.pdf (requesting party status to the UPS case and attempting to challenge the tribunal’s jurisdiction and noting that both demands were denied by the tribunal). The tribunal later granted them amicus standing. UPS Petitions for Amici Curiae, supra note 93.
\item \textsuperscript{305} See Canada Model FIPA, supra note 275, art. 39; Chile FTA, supra note 274, art. 10.19, ¶ 3; ICSID Convention, supra note 41, at Arb. Rul. 37.
\item \textsuperscript{306} Metalclad Award, supra note 110, ¶ 98; S.D. Myers Partial Award, supra note 145, ¶¶ 152, 161–62.
\item \textsuperscript{307} In each of Methanex, UPS, and the water disputes in which amicus involvement was granted, the tribunals denied all requests by the amici other than the requests to submit amicus briefs. Methanex Petitions for Amici Curiae, supra note 93; UPS Petitions for Amici Curiae, supra note 93. For a contrasting approach to the issue of amici participation, see Suez Amicus Curiae Order, supra note 263, at 342–50 (granting certain affected groups limited amicus standing).
\item \textsuperscript{308} Brower, supra note 249, at 72–73.
\end{itemize}
countries to dominate arbitrations to the detriment of less well-funded but valid interests in developing countries.\footnote{See, e.g., Philip M. Nichols, 
\textit{Extension of Standing in WTO Disputes to Non-government Parties}, 17 U. PA. J. INT'L ECON. L. \textbf{295}, \textcolor{black}{316, \textcolor{black}{327}} (1996); Stein, \textit{supra} note 7, at 491.}

Nevertheless, the success of amicus involvement in \textit{Methanex} and several water disputes in bringing about well-reasoned, informed arbitral awards suggests that the amended ICSID rules on amicus participation should be adopted by UNCITRAL and other arbitral bodies. Although NAFTA tribunals have interpreted UNCITRAL rules to provide for amicus involvement, a structured process for amicus participation, akin to the amended ICSID rules, provides several benefits.\footnote{See Bjorklund, \textit{supra} note 282.} First, it prevents parties from having to litigate the issue of amicus involvement in every dispute. Second, it provides tribunals with the opportunity to hear perspectives and issues that are not adequately represented by the disputing parties, who may be focused only on the investment aspects of the dispute. Third, it paves the way for broadening the scope of amicus involvement in future disputes, with the eventual goal of allowing amici access to key documents and perhaps even limited cross-examination of key witnesses. Fourth, it encourages future involvement by amicus groups, even those that are not well funded. Finally, and most importantly, it infuses the arbitration process with democracy and helps dispel criticisms based upon secrecy.

\section*{2. Accountability of Arbitrators}

Increasing the accountability of decision makers enhances the democratic nature of the process because accountability enables the public to hold elected officials or their appointees responsible for their actions.\footnote{See Richard C. Reuben, \textit{Democracy and Dispute Resolution: The Problem of Arbitration}, 67 \textcolor{black}{L.} \& \textcolor{black}{CONTEMPP. PROBS.} \textbf{279}, \textcolor{black}{288–89}} In most domestic judicial systems, even where judges are not elected, the judiciary is accountable to the public by way of open hearings or press reports.\footnote{Id. at 294–95.} The legislature can also hold the judiciary accountable by overruling judicial decisions that are not in accord with the general public's view.\footnote{See, e.g., Civil Rights Act of 1991, Pub. L. No. 102-166, 105 Stat. 1071 (codified at 42 U.S.C. §1981) (overruling several court decisions viewed by Congress as being unreceptive to employment discrimination claims).} At the same time, however, the judiciary is not \textit{directly} accountable to elected officials within the legislature.\footnote{See Kelly J. Varsho, \textit{In the Global Market for Justice: Who Is Paying the Highest Price for Judicial Independence?}, 27 N. ILL. U. L. REV. \textbf{445}, \textcolor{black}{454}} Judicial independence is one of the hallmarks of most judicial systems, and it serves to legitimize the neutrality of the
judiciary, particularly in the eyes of the public. For this reason, senior court judges in many states are granted life tenure and financial security. Judicial independence thus ensures the ability of the judiciary to produce fair and unbiased decisions while judges remain accountable to the public through open hearings and potential legislative override.

Investment arbitrators, however, are not accountable to the public and not independent and may, therefore, be viewed publicly as illegitimate. The lack of transparency in the process prevents the public from holding arbitrators directly accountable. Moreover, because investment arbitrators may have no relationship to the state whose regulation is under scrutiny, the degree to which the arbitrators can be held responsible to the affected public for their actions is negligible. In addition, without a legislative override mechanism, undemocratic decisions by investment arbitrators cannot be overturned by state governments. Similarly, although investment arbitral tribunals parallel administrative agencies functionally, their decisions cannot be reviewed to the same extent as those from administrative agencies.

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316. U.S. Const. art III; Constitution Act of 1867, art. 7, §§ 96–100 (Can.).

317. See discussion supra Part II.A.1.

318. An arbitrator may, but is not required to, be a citizen of the host state against which the investor has brought the action. Rau, supra note 96, at 506–07.

319. Although the state cannot override an investment arbitral award, it can choose to maintain the regulation at issue in the dispute even if the arbitrators find that the regulation offends a state’s investment treaty obligations. UNCITRAL Rules, supra note 76, art. 32; ICSID Convention, supra note 41, art. 53(4); see also Dhooge, supra note 115; Jones, supra note 26, at 545. However, if it chooses to do so, the state faces the risk that other similarly situated foreign investors will launch further investment arbitration claims against the state. See supra note 114 for examples of arbitrations in which the state regulation was judged offending but not removed, leaving the state liable to potential further investors’ suits.

320. Nevertheless, limited review of investment arbitral awards is possible at the situs of the arbitration. However, the situs of the arbitration is not always within the host state. Thus, an investment arbitral award which finds that State A’s regulations contravene its investment obligations may be reviewed in the domestic courts of State B if the situs of the arbitration is in State B. See van Harten & Loughlin, supra note 16, at 133–37. This was the situation in Metalclad where the tribunal found that the Mexican government had contravened its investment
A final democratic problem for the investment arbitration process is that investment arbitrators lack judicial independence that protects and legitimizes the judiciary. Without tenure or financial security, investment arbitrators must constantly bargain for new appointments and appropriate compensation.\(^{321}\) Thus—at least in the public perception—arbitrators’ neutrality might be in question.\(^{322}\) Concerns about neutrality and bias also arise from the arbitrator’s ability to act as judge in one case and advocate in another.\(^{323}\)

In an attempt to instill greater confidence in the neutrality of investment tribunals, the ICSID rules were recently amended to impose an ongoing duty for arbitrators to report any circumstance that could impair an arbitrator’s independent judgment.\(^{324}\) Prior to the amendments, ICSID rules only required arbitrators to disclose previous or existing relationships with the parties.\(^{325}\) The new rules, however, require disclosure of any new relationships formed with either of the parties.\(^{326}\) Nevertheless, the amended rules do not prohibit individuals from comingling their roles as arbitrator and advocate.\(^{327}\)

One solution to the lack of arbitrator accountability is to increase the transparency of the process. In particular, opening investment arbitral hearings to the public would allow scrutiny and evaluation of the arbitrators’ work.\(^{328}\) Greater accountability could also be achieved by permitting a narrow legislative override mechanism, which would allow the host state to retain a regulation found to be inconsistent with the state’s investment treaty obligations but favored by the host state’s citizens. The override would bar the disputed regulation from forming the basis of future investment arbitration claims by other investors.\(^{329}\) In this way, although the initial investor would be compensated for the state’s interference in its investment, elected officials could preserve the views of the public obligations, but the review of the award was held in the domestic courts of Canada, which was the situs of the arbitration. *Metaclad*, *supra* note 108.

322. *See* id. at 514–16 (discussing several factors which undermine the perception of arbitrators’ neutrality).
327. *Id.*
329. The high costs and risks associated with initiating an investment arbitration claim would prevent this solution from creating “a race to the courthouse.” *See* Franck, *supra* note 25, at 1540 (observing that “[i]nvestors do not lightly sue governments as they are aware that Sovereigns will staunchly defend their corner; and, as a result, when initiating arbitration, investors undertake a major financial risk with the possibility of minimal recovery”).
over those of the investment arbitral tribunal by maintaining the disputed regulation.

The accountability of arbitrators could also be reinforced by requiring reviews of arbitral awards that implicate public interest issues in the domestic courts of the host state rather than at the site of the arbitration. This would allow the domestic courts to constrain the arbitrators' actions if warranted by the public interest.330

The creation of a permanent arbitral body could also foster public perception of the arbitrators' legitimacy by improving their neutrality. The permanent body would be one in which the members are guaranteed tenure and security. The permanent body could also be affiliated with an existing arbitral institution, and members could be drawn from among eminent practitioners or scholars, with a goal of achieving balanced representation from both developed and developing countries and from persons both with trade and investment perspectives and with broader public interest perspectives.331 Alternatively, a permanent roster of arbitrators, with the same goals as outlined above, could be drawn up to arbitrate investment disputes. In either case, so long as the process grants arbitrators greater security over tenure and salary332 and disavows the current practice of allowing arbitrators to act as both arbitrator and advocate, the increased parallels between a more institutionalized arbitral judiciary and a national court or tribunal should instill greater public confidence in the decision makers of investment arbitral disputes.

B. Outcome Changes

Structural and procedural changes alone, without changes in outcomes, particularly when public interest issues are involved, will likely have only a negligible effect on the democratic deficit. The survey of public interest issues implicated in investment arbitrations333 suggests that citizens’ values, ranging from the

330. However, in order to preserve the benefits of investment arbitration and to prevent bias in favor of the state, the review in the domestic courts would have to be very narrow. See the potential problems that have arisen when domestic courts review investment arbitral awards in Barnali Choudhury, Determining the Appropriate Level of Deference for Domestic Court Reviews of Investor-State Arbitral Awards, 32 Queen’s L.J. 602 (2007).

331. Forcese, supra note 55, at 329. Forcese argues that party selection of arbitrators can prejudice tribunal composition in favor of persons with trade and investment perspectives as opposed to broader public interest perspectives.

332. Arbitrator salaries would then be paid by state parties to an arbitral agreement, such as the ICSID Convention, or an arbitral institution, such as the ICC. Investors interested in using the investment arbitration process might pay user fees that could be used to offset state payments toward maintenance of this permanent body.

333. See discussion supra Part I.B.2.b.i.
protection of the environment to issues of race discrimination and economic hardship, are affected by investment arbitration decisions and can only be protected with changes in outcomes as well.

The repeated intersections between public interest issues and investment obligations have caused some states to proactively change future outcomes by limiting the scope of the investment arbitration process. Several states have drafted new language in future investment treaties, which tightens the expropriation provisions of the treaties with the aim of reducing the risk of subsequent findings of regulatory expropriations. The United States’ approach is evidenced in its recently concluded free trade agreements. In the agreements, nondiscriminatory regulatory actions that “are designed and applied to protect legitimate public welfare objectives, such as public health, safety, and the environment[,]” are defined as not constituting indirect expropriations. Similarly, future investment agreements to which Canada is a party couple investor rights with “specific and detailed exemptions” aimed at preserving the state’s power to promote the public interest. Some states have also taken more specific exceptions. For example, the Republic of Congo’s investment treaty with the United States exempts investments related to drinking water supply, and Morocco’s treaty with the United Kingdom exempts government aid reserved for its own nationals that is used for national development programs and activities.

Nevertheless, amending the text of investment treaties only addresses outcomes of disputes arising from recently concluded or future investment treaties. It does not address the more than 2,500 investment treaties and free trade agreements that do not contain these carve-outs and are still subject to outcomes in line with Metalclad, Tecmed, or Santa Elena. Thus, public interest disputes falling under these old investment treaties require creative or sensitive rulings that balance investment obligations with the public


335. See, e.g., U.S.-Austrl. FTA, supra note 274, at Annex 11-B, para. 4(b); U.S.-Chile FTA, supra note 274, at Annex 10-D; CAFTA, supra note 274, at Annex 10-c, para. 4(b); U.S.-Morocco FTA, supra note 274, at Annex 10-B.

336. CAFTA, supra note 274, at Annex 10-C, para. 4(b).


interest. Several suggested mechanisms for producing such creative or sensitive outcomes are explored below.

1. The Margin of Appreciation and Article 1 of the ECHR

The “margin of appreciation” doctrine has been most widely applied in the context of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Essentially, the doctrine provides that state authorities enjoy a degree of latitude in balancing treaty obligations against other pressing societal concerns. The doctrine also encourages international tribunals to grant state authorities deference in determining the proper method for executing their international law obligations. The margin-of-appreciation doctrine therefore argues against de novo review of state decisions by international tribunals. It also provides for normative flexibility by allowing states an extensive “zone of legality” within which they can freely operate.

The doctrine has been frequently used in the application of Article 1 of the First Protocol of the ECHR. Article 1 provides that every person is guaranteed the right not to be “deprived of his possessions except in the public interest.” In interpreting this provision, the ECHR has mandated the fulfillment of certain conditions before a person can be legally deprived of his possessions. First, the deprivation must be in the public interest. National authorities are afforded a margin of appreciation in determining this issue in light of their superior knowledge of their society. Their determinations are respected unless they manifestly lack a reasonable foundation. Second, the deprivations must be in accordance with both domestic law and general principles of

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344. Id.
345. Id. at 910.
346. See generally id.; Baughen, supra note 342; see also Freeman, supra note 342, at 185.
350. Id.
Third, the ECHR requires that there be a proportional relationship between the state regulations at issue and the aim sought to be realized. As the ECHR has observed, there should be “a fair balance ... struck between the demands of the general interest of the community and the requirements of the protection of the individual’s fundamental rights”; a fair balance does not exist where an individual bears an unreasonably large burden.

The ECHR also differentiates between deprivations of property and deprivations of the control over use of property. Thus, even if the above three conditions for legal deprivation are satisfied, only deprivations of property must be accompanied by compensation. The distinction between deprivations of property and control-of-use deprivations therefore becomes significant. Generally, only where a property owner has been divested of all uses of the property will a deprivation of property be found. In contrast, where a property owner has not been completely divested of all uses of the property, the interference will be characterized as a “control-of-use” deprivation unless the individual has suffered an excessive burden.

In the investment arbitration context, the margin-of-appreciation doctrine can be used to formulate the sensitive and creative rulings needed for investment arbitrations involving public interest issues. For example, Article 1 of the ECHR parallels the expropriation provisions of investment treaties. Thus, in determining whether an expropriation is for a public purpose, the analysis under Article 1 is relevant.

Applying an Article 1 analysis to Metalclad or Tecmed demonstrates the degree to which non-investment obligations can play a role in assessing a state’s investment treaty obligations. For example, an Article 1 analysis in Metalclad or Tecmed would have given the Mexican government a margin of appreciation in determining whether their environmental protection regulations were in the public interest. This stands in sharp contrast to the approach advocated by the Saluka and CMS tribunals, which observed that the

351. As Article 1 of the Protocol states: “No one shall be deprived of his possessions ... subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law.” Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, supra note 347 (emphasis added).
352. Baughen, supra note 342, at 214; Freeman, supra note 342, at 185, 191.
354. Freeman, supra note 342, at 186–95.
355. Baughen, supra note 342, at 214; Freeman, supra note 342, at 187.
358. See NAFTA, supra note 130, art. 1110.
359. See Metalclad, supra note 108; Tecmed, supra note 145.
arbitrators should evaluate or review the suitability of a state’s public interest regulation, rather than deferring to the state. 360

An Article 1 analysis would seek to achieve a fair balance, in this case between investor rights and protection of the public interest, requiring a determination of the extent to which the investors’ rights were interfered with. Thus, the analysis calls for a finding of whether the investors were deprived of property or control of use. In *Metalclad* and *Tecmed*, the investors did not lose all uses of their property because they continued to maintain the land and facilities upon which the investments were based. 361 Accordingly, an Article 1 analysis would have likely labeled the state interference with the investment a control-of-use deprivation rather than an expropriation, thereby suggesting that a fair balance had been struck.

Nevertheless, the control-of-use analysis under Article 1 also considers whether as person deprived of property has suffered an excessive burden. 362 In *Metalclad*, federal authorities had assured the investor the right to operate its waste facility prior to establishment of its investment. 363 Moreover, it was only after the investor had substantially completed its investment that local authorities raised environmental concerns. 364 Although the Mexican government should be entitled to regulate in the public interest at any time, the combination of pre-investment guarantees and the last-minute raising of environmental concerns suggests that the investor did suffer an excessive burden. Therefore, the end result in *Metalclad* might not have been altered by an Article 1 analysis. 365 In contrast, if the Mexican authorities in *Tecmed* had substantiated their environmental concerns with a reasonable basis, an Article 1 analysis in that case would have likely lead to a contrary outcome. 366

However, regardless of the final outcome in *Metalclad*, the margin of appreciation and Article 1 analyses highlight public interest issues currently absent from the analyses in investment arbitration decisions. For example, the *Metalclad* decision, as it presently stands, makes little reference to the environmental concerns local authorities had raised. 367 This result would not have been possible under an Article 1 analysis, as the Mexican government would have been granted a margin of appreciation in which to

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establish the environmental concerns its regulation sought to address.

An Article 1 analysis also calls for a “fair balance” or proportionality analysis. Interestingly, several investment arbitral tribunals have already adopted a proportionality analysis similar to the fair balance test. However, because investment tribunals have not also adopted the margin-of-appreciation doctrine, which defers to a state’s self-assessment of the public interest, the balancing of interests by tribunals has tended to favor investment rights.

Aspects of the Article 1 analysis could also be used in the analysis of non-expropriation claims. For instance, in considering whether an investor’s right to fair and equitable treatment, national treatment, or most-favored nation treatment has been violated, tribunals could defer to public interest regulations within a margin of appreciation. Tribunals could then meaningfully assess whether a fair balance had been struck between the means employed and the aims sought to be realized.

In the upcoming arbitration concerning South Africa’s BEE policy, use of the margin-of-appreciation doctrine and the fair balance test could produce dramatically different results from a traditional investment analysis. In that arbitration, the investors allege that the BEE policy results in a lack of fair and equitable treatment. However, applying the margin-of-appreciation doctrine would show deference towards South Africa’s own determination that the BEE policy serves the public interest. The tribunal would then be faced with determining whether a fair balance had been struck between the BEE policies requiring the hiring of or partial divestiture of shares to historically disadvantaged South Africans and the BEE’s aim of redressing historical, social, and economic inequalities in South Africa. Unless an excessive burden would be placed upon the investors as a result of the BEE policies, an ECHR Article 1 analysis would likely find that a fair balance had been struck. Thus, use of the margin-of-appreciation doctrine and the fair balance test would

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368. See, e.g., Tecmed, supra note 145; Saluka Partial Award, supra note 161.
369. For example, the Tecmed tribunal found that the state regulation was not grounded in environmental protection and therefore not proportional to the aim sought to be realized. See Tecmed, supra note 145, ¶¶ 122, 129–37; see also Azurix, supra note 148, ¶¶ 310–11 (citing In the Case of James and Others, Sentence of Feb. 21, 1986, ¶¶ 50, 63).
370. See supra text accompanying note 111 (addressing BEE policy); see also supra Part I.B.2.b.(i)(4) (discussing upcoming arbitration concerning South Africa’s BEE policy).
conclude that the BEE policy does not violate the investors’ fair and equitable treatment rights.

In contrast, under a traditional “fair and equitable treatment” analysis, tribunals generally do not give any consideration to whether state regulations serve the public interest. Rather, only the effects of the regulation are measured. Thus, evaluating the BEE policy under the traditional analysis, the tribunal will likely conclude that a violation of the investors’ rights has occurred if the facts show a significant interference with the investors’ rights.

Overall, use of the margin-of-appreciation doctrine on a case-by-case basis allows for the inclusion of public interest issues into investment treaties, which, for the most part, do not provide for the consideration of non-investment issues. Without the doctrine’s use, tribunals can easily dismiss public interest issues because they do not find textual support in most treaty provisions. The margin-of-appreciation doctrine also narrows the scope of an investment tribunal’s review to issues concerning investment, their area of expertise, thereby leaving state-determined public interest issues to the national authorities who are better suited to make such assessments. Nevertheless, so long as the tribunals continue to review the bases supporting a state’s finding of the public interest, states cannot use the margin of appreciation as a disguised mode of protectionism. The limits of the margin of appreciation are also tested by the fair balance test, which advocates the balancing of investment and non-investment issues and is a useful tool in investment arbitrations that implicate public interest issues.

2. Ascertaining Intent

International law acknowledges that state regulations that result in infringements upon alien property rights do not entail liability if they are bona fide and nondiscriminatory, because such regulations are within the police powers of a state. Thus,


regulations enacted in the public interest were not likely intended to be limited by the obligations of investment treaties.

The problem lies in determining whether a regulation was enacted in the public interest or as a disguised means of protectionism. Although more recent investment treaties define the public interest broadly as including environmental, health, safety, and related issues, older treaties lack this broad definition and require a tribunal to ascertain the intent or purpose of the regulation in order to determine its true character.\textsuperscript{374} However, tribunals have customarily focused exclusively on a regulation’s effect on the investor rather than on the intent behind the regulation.\textsuperscript{375} Some tribunals have even specifically noted that the intent or purpose of the regulation is irrelevant to the tribunal’s analysis.\textsuperscript{376}

Expanding the analysis to include an examination of the regulation’s underlying intent allows for a more nuanced decision-making process.\textsuperscript{377} Traditional tribunal analysis has focused almost exclusively on the degree of interference by a regulation.\textsuperscript{378} This line of reasoning too often invalidates regulations genuinely enacted in the public interest. Expanding the analysis to include an examination of intent allows room for differentiation between legitimate regulations and discriminatory, protectionist interferences with investments. Focusing on the effects of a regulation without considering the purposes behind it also erodes the ability of states to enact public interest regulations.\textsuperscript{379} Further, it propagates the consideration of investment obligations from the sole vantage point of the investor, rather than from the perspective of the state, thereby preventing the tribunal from taking into account any non-investment related concerns.

\textsuperscript{374} See treaties cited supra note 286. The parties to NAFTA have also taken reservations to the national treatment provisions of the agreement, which provide a safe harbor for the state’s provisions of social services that are in conflict with NAFTA. However, similar reservations have not been taken for the expropriation provisions of the NAFTA. See JOHNSON, supra note 200, at 13 (discussing this effect on Canada’s health care system); Epps & Flood, supra note 200, at 776–80.

\textsuperscript{375} See, e.g., Pope v. Canada, Interim Award on Merits, ¶ 102; Metaclad Award, supra note 110, ¶ 111; S.D. Myers Partial Award, supra note 145, ¶ 282.

\textsuperscript{376} See Metaclad Award, supra note 110, ¶ 111 (noting that it was not imperative to “consider the motivation or the intent”).

\textsuperscript{377} Several methods exist for ascertaining intent. In the past, tribunals have ascertained the intent of a regulation by interpreting the actual statutory text of the regulation, including the use of interpretive principles detailed in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties and by looking to witness testimony, internal government documents reflecting intent, and scientific studies and risk assessments justifying the regulation’s purpose. See, e.g., Methanex Corp. v. United States, Final Award, ICSID (W. Bank) (2005), available at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/51052.pdf; S.D. Myers Partial Award, supra note 145; see also Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, May 23, 1969, 1155 U.N.T.S. 331.

\textsuperscript{378} See generally MANN & SOLOWAY, supra note 372.

\textsuperscript{379} COSBEY ET AL., supra note 102, at 15.
Ascertaining the intent of a regulation in trade and investment disputes may also promote more democratic outcomes. One commentator has argued that tribunals should reject claims for state liability when the state regulation “reflects a deeply embedded value” that is supported by a majority of the population—a means of using democracy to legitimize the outcome of a trade dispute. Following this line of reasoning, if the intent behind a regulation challenged by an investor evidences a society’s values and is supported by the majority of the populace, the proper outcome would be to dismiss the investor’s claim.

Support for the exemption of public interest-based regulations from liability also comes from the text of the treaties. Most investment treaty provisions pertaining to expropriation exempt from liability those expropriations that are for a public purpose. Although other investment obligations do not enjoy the explicit exemption found in expropriation provisions, the overall purposes and objectives of investment treaties suggest that investment obligations should be read in the context of public interest issues. For example, several treaties promote sustainable development or prohibit the relaxation of environmental and health standards as their principal objectives, thereby suggesting that all public interest issues that fall under these objectives are within the context of the treaty. Similarly, in the investment chapter of NAFTA, Article 1114 argues in favor of environmental protection, which suggests that investment obligations under NAFTA should be read in the context of environmental protection.

Ascertaining intent can thus lead to a number of different outcomes. First, for regulations enacted in the public interest, states

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380. Atik, *Legitimacy, Transparency and NGO Participation*, supra note 115, at 234, 261. Atik also argues that the state imposing the legislation should bear the burden of any ensuing trade distortion that the legislation causes. *Id.*

381. This approach assumes that a particular state’s values are objectively beneficial. However, given the interest of most states in attracting foreign investment, the tendency is for states to create a stable, hospitable investment environment in which objectively beneficial values, such as internationally recognized human rights issues, are respected. Thus, a state interested in preserving foreign investment will likely be reluctant to argue in favor of a regulation that both interferes with foreign investment and is not objectively beneficial.

382. See, e.g., provision of NAFTA discussed *supra* note 135.


384. Article 1114(1) provides: “Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed to prevent a Party from adopting, maintaining or enforcing any measure otherwise consistent with this Chapter that it considers appropriate to ensure that investment activity in its territory is undertaken in a manner sensitive to environmental concerns.” NAFTA, *supra* note 130, art. 1114(1).
can be absolved of all liability so long as the regulations are bona fide and nondiscriminatory in nature.\textsuperscript{385} Alternately, ascertaining the intent of contested regulations can lead to a purpose-and-effect analysis by the tribunal wherein the tribunal assesses whether the state has struck a proper balance between the means employed and the aim sought to be realized.\textsuperscript{386} Finally, considering the purpose behind contested regulations can be instructive in determining the amount of compensation owed to an investor if a state is found to be in violation of an investment obligation.\textsuperscript{387} Where an investment treaty specifies that the level of compensation owed is “just,” “reasonable,” “fair,” or “appropriate”—as opposed to “full”—tribunals are given significant discretion to assess the limits of these terms.\textsuperscript{388} Similarly, in assessing a claim for “fair and equitable treatment,” the public-interest nature of the regulation could weigh towards fairness or equity. Thus, a public-interest-based regulation that led to interference with an investment could provide tribunals the necessary discretion to reduce the level of compensation owed to an investor.

Overall, the advantages of requiring a tribunal to ascertain the intent of an allegedly expropriatory regulation argue against a uniform standard for regulatory interferences with investments. Rather, these advantages illustrate the need to have regulatory interferences considered by tribunals with some discretion on a case-by-case basis. More importantly, an intent-based inquiry further allows tribunals to consider the public interest implications of their adjudicative functions.\textsuperscript{389}

\section*{III. Conclusion}

Contrary to the view of many citizens’ groups or NGOs, investors and investments should continue to enjoy the protection afforded by investment treaties. Nevertheless, public interest issues should also

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{385} This is the approach used in Methanex Final Award, supra note 154.
\item \textsuperscript{386} See supra notes 352–53 and accompanying text.
\item \textsuperscript{387} For example, Peterson and Gray argue that human rights obligations should be used to mitigate the level of damages owed. See Peterson & Gray, supra note 13, at 30.
\item \textsuperscript{389} For example, the General Comment on the Right to Water notes that judges, adjudicators, and members of the legal profession should “pay greater attention to violations of the right to water in the exercise of their functions.” U.N. Econ. & Soc. Council [ECOSOC], Comm. on Econ., Soc. & Cultural Rights, Substantive Issues Arising in the Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ¶ 58, U.N. Doc. E/C. 12/2002/11 (Jan. 29, 2003); see also Peterson & Gray, supra note 13, at 31.
\end{itemize}
be given protection. The question thus remains: When should private interests yield to the public interest?

Currently, the investment arbitration process tends to favor private investment interests when the two clash. As one tribunal noted, investment treaties require pro-active encouragement and protection of investments by states. As another observed, the inability of foreign investors to participate in the democratic process that created the public interest regulation makes it reasonable for the public to bear a greater burden in the public interest than the investor. Moreover, as several tribunals have held, even where a tribunal weighs a public interest issue against interference with an investment, the impact upon the investment, rather than the gravity of the public interest issue implicated, is the key consideration in determining whether an investment obligation has been violated.

Although balancing competing public and private interests is an effective mechanism for determining the line between legitimate and protectionist regulations, interpreting investment treaties exclusively from an investment perspective does not achieve the proper balance. Rather, by eschewing non-investment concerns and focusing solely on investment issues in an opaque process, investor and investment concerns tend to dominate.

Where public interest issues are implicated in investment arbitrations, investment treaty obligations must be interpreted with due regard to the importance and value of such public interests. Many recent tribunals have attempted to balance non-investment concerns with investment obligations—but without recognition of the inherent worth of the deeply embedded values that public interest regulations often represent, a true balance will rarely be achieved.

In addition to more sensitive rulings from the tribunals, investment arbitration requires procedural changes. Increases in transparency and public access enhance democratic ideals, allowing the public to observe the process and hold their government accountable for the results. Moreover, if members of the public are dissatisfied with their government’s stance in the arbitration process, or even with the government’s consent to participate in the arbitration, increased transparency will also allow the public to be informed so that they can demonstrate their dissatisfaction through the democratic electoral process.

At their core, the public interest issues implicated in investment arbitrations involve society’s most sacred values: human rights, idiosyncratic issues, and values definitive of a nation’s identity.

390. Azurix, supra note 148, ¶ 372.
391. Id. ¶¶ 50, 63; Tecmed, supra note 145, ¶¶ 121–22 (2003).
392. Tecmed, supra note 145, ¶ 122; see also Azurix, supra note 148; Saluka Partial Award, supra note 161, ¶ 262.
393. Buys, supra note 88, at 134.
Thus, transferring these issues to an international body requires some degree of democratic control.\textsuperscript{394} It is only through an adjudicatory sensitivity to public interest issues that investment arbitration will enjoy true legitimacy in the public eye.

\textsuperscript{394} Atik, \textit{supra} note 67, at 472.