Nonstate actors

Barbara J. Keys

"Shortly after I left office," former president Bill Clinton told a group in 2005, "I was shaving and I looked in the mirror and I thought, my God, I have become an NGO." The remark neatly captures the ubiquity of NGOs in today's world. Previous ex-presidents had taken up various causes, as Clinton did with HIV/AIDS, but in recent decades activities that might earlier have fallen under other rubrics have been swept up in an NGO revolution. The three-letter designation is now so common that it has congealed into a distinct word, independent of its origins as an acronym for nongovernmental organization. Along with other nonstate actors, NGOs have exploded in numbers and in power and influence. As the terrain of global politics has been reconfigured, a booming scholarship in political science, sociology, and anthropology has arisen, which aims to explain how these newly assertive actors influence national and international politics and local lives. In international history, nonstate actors that once hovered on the periphery are moving to the center of scholarly attention.

Rising interest in the role of nonstate actors in international relations is part of a broader shift in the field away from scholarly preoccupation with state-to-state relations. As summed up by two critics in 1971, students and practitioners of international politics traditionally cared almost exclusively about relationships among states. In this view, "the state, regarded as an actor with purposes and power, is the basic unit of action: its main agents are the diplomat and the soldier." The state-driven models of international relations this description captures have been under challenge at least since the 1970s, as it has become glaringly apparent that state power is but one of the drivers of global affairs. Nonstate actors have at their disposal economic or moral assets that translate into direct and indirect political power; some nonstate actors, such as the Palestine Liberation Organization, have military capabilities. As international relations have been transformed, the study of international relations has shifted to adapt to new realities.
The novelty of the scholarly shift and the innovations nonstate actors are bringing to global affairs can easily be overstated. After all, the British East India Company ran a subcontinent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. People have always moved about the world. Networks of traders, religious proselytizers, artists, and intellectuals spread ideas, practices, and goods across political boundaries. What is said to distinguish the last forty or so years (or, according to some accounts, the last century) is the absolute number of nonstate actors, the types of activities they engage in, and the cumulative level of influence they wield. In both popular and academic understanding, the role of nonstate actors has qualitatively changed international affairs in the last few decades. What remains unclear—and hotly debated—is the extent to which this development threatens to undermine or to overturn an international system based on state sovereignty.

The variety of nonstate actors is dizzying. They span local, national, and international nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, philanthropic foundations, international media, religious groups, terrorist and criminal networks, individual actors, migrants, and diasporas. The Mafia, Oxfam, Dennis Rodman, al-Qaeda, expatriate communities, pirates, and the stateless Mehran Karimi Nasseri (who lived in a Paris airport for 17 years); all are nonstate actors. Their uncountable millions vastly outnumber the roughly 200 states in the world today. Their activities penetrate into almost every corner of life. In moral or economic terms, their individual or collective power can exceed that of many states. Google’s market value of $400 billion, for example, dwarfs the GDPs of many countries in the world.

This chapter covers key methodological issues in the study of the three major types of nonstate actors: NGOs, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and multinational corporations. These categories comprise the main institutionalized manifestations of nonstate power. Because intergovernmental organizations are created and nominally controlled by states, they may seem unlikely candidates for the nonstate rubric. Yet they are often placed in the nonstate category as semi-autonomous entities with interests that can diverge from those of the states that comprise them. Although there are other varieties of nonstate actors, the study of these three major groupings raises similar methodological issues and has provided much of the driving force for the rethinking of global affairs in various disciplines.

A wide range of questions can be posed about these groups, and methods and approaches for studying them are highly varied. Despite the fact that nonstate actors have always existed alongside states and have always played a measurable role in international relations, only in the last few decades have political scientists and sociologists begun to develop distinctive tools for approaching the subject. In international history, the study of nonstate actors, such as missionaries and business groups, was often approached in the framework of intercultural relations or as an adjunct to understanding state power. Only recently have international historians moved forcefully to examine
Nonstate actors in leading roles as full-fledged diplomatic actors. One aspect of the change is simply terminological: early studies on missionaries and cultural exchange, for example, were studies of nonstate actors *avant la lettre*. But a significant part of the shift is also conceptual, a product of more explicit recognition of the need to grapple with deterritorialized, transnational spaces and highly complicated flows of power.\(^6\)

The term nonstate actor denotes a negative category, defined by what it is not rather than by common characteristics. The category itself suggests the continuing dominance of the concept of the state and the embryonic condition of efforts to conceptualize international affairs without affirming the centrality of the state. Moreover, like all artificial constructions, it can oversimplify and distort. Delineating where the "public" ends and the "private" begins is usually a fluid and imprecise exercise. The British East India Company’s 1670 charters granted it the right to mint money, to command troops and fortresses, to make war and peace, and to acquire territory.\(^7\) More recent examples, though less dramatic, underscore the difficulties in matching the real world to the ideal types of state and nonstate. Is former president Jimmy Carter a nonstate actor when he engages in personal diplomacy? Was Halliburton’s subsidiary Kellogg, Brown & Root a nonstate actor when the US government paid it billions of dollars to assist in the occupation of Iraq? Where is the line between state and nonstate to be drawn when the government works with internet service providers to gather information on ordinary citizens?

As these questions suggest, much of the study of nonstate actors revolves around understanding their relationship to one another and to state power. Reflecting the assumption that the type of power that “matters” in international relations is the military, diplomatic, economic, and cultural power deployed by states, scholarship on nonstate actors often asks questions about efficacy and influence as measured by nonstate actors’ effects on the behavior of states. There is also recognition, however, that nonstate actors can wield power—over the spread of ideas, lifestyle choices, perceptions, and so on—that shapes international affairs regardless of measurable effects on what states do.

Nonstate actors can be studied in order to shed light on national histories. A study of American missionary groups might aim to illuminate the history of religion in the United States or to show how these groups influenced US foreign policy.\(^8\) The more provocative thrust of scholarship on nonstate actors, however, challenges “methodological nationalism,” which sets the nation-state as the default scale of analysis. Studying nonstate actors on larger scales than the nation can work to de-privilege the nation as the primary “container” of history. Almost by definition, international nongovernmental organizations occupy a transnational space that spans but does not encompass nations, polities, and cultures.\(^9\) Amnesty International, for example, is headquartered in the UK, has 80 national sections, and works in dozens more. Though its US section can be studied to illuminate American developments and its influence on US foreign policy, studying the international organization necessarily involves a
transnational frame of reference. Understanding the workings of this transnational space and its influence on global politics is at the heart of much of the innovation in studying nonstate actors.

NGOs

In 1998, former Canadian foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy lauded NGOs as the “world’s new superpower.” Their history extends back at least a century, even if the name does not. International associations before World War II were called “semi-private,” “private,” “voluntary,” “informal,” or “unofficial” organizations; often, they included “union,” “conference,” or “council” in their names. The term NGO was effectively created by the United Nations (UN), which in Article 71 of its 1945 Charter gave “nongovernmental organizations” consultative status at the Economic and Social Council and in 1950 codified NGO participation rights. The Council’s definition includes any international organization not established by intergovernmental agreement. To obtain consultative status at the UN, NGOs must deal with issues of concern to the UN, have a headquarters and a hierarchical structure, and be international in scope.

As with nonstate actor, the category is not unproblematic. The organizations themselves have often chafed at the label, seeing it as an alienating device. (One activist provocatively suggested calling governments “non-people’s organizations”; others have recommended redefining the term as “necessary-to-governance organizations.”) Some see NGO, like “non-white,” as having pejorative connotations and a framing that signals irrelevance in traditional diplomacy. Though most scholars consider NGOs to be nonprofit groups and hence distinguished from other nonstate actors such as criminal organizations, the category is nevertheless extremely diverse, with numerous subgroups such as “mutant NGOs,” “mushroom NGOs,” Gongos (government-organized NGOs), and Quangos (quasi-autonomous NGOs). As the last two labels underscore, NGOs are often less “nongovernmental” than the typology indicates. Even NGOs that are not formally organized by governments might receive significant funding from governments or intergovernmental organizations, highlighting the blurriness of the lines between nonstate actors and states.

Internationally active NGOs (INGOs) can be found in almost every sphere of social, cultural, economic, and political life: from sports to law, agriculture to education, religion to health. Many of them are well known, including human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International; humanitarian entities such as CARE International and Doctors without Borders; environmental groups such as Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund; sports bodies such as the International Olympic Committee and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association; and religious organizations such as the World Council of Churches and the World Muslim Congress.
Others, such as the International Electrotechnical Commission, operate out of the public spotlight and often on very small budgets. Lyman Cromwell White's early study of INGOs dates the beginning of the modern type of organization to the mid-nineteenth century, when travel and communications technology began to spark new forms of association. Current estimates suggest that there are over 40,000 international nongovernmental organizations in the world today, with millions of NGOs operating at a local or national level. Only recently has the heavy geographic concentration of INGO headquarters in Paris, Brussels, London, New York, and Geneva begun to be balanced by organizations based in the non-West.

Because NGOs so often act in concert or in competition with other NGOs, studying their role involves understanding their interactions, formal and informal networks, and lines of influence. NGOs often act in concert, as illustrated by the example of the Climate Action Network, which brings together nearly 900 NGOs working on climate change. As the number of NGOs has mushroomed, however, competitive behavior has also become common. International historian Pierre-Yves Saunier notes that whereas the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Save the Children Fund were the only two humanitarian bodies on the ground during the 1935-6 Italo-Ethiopian War, 120 groups jostled elbows in Rwanda during the genocide of 1994-5, where "logo wars" erupted as groups struggled to plant their organization's symbols before television cameras. As scholars increasingly recognize, NGOs are self-interested, seek to "market" themselves, and sometimes engage in misconduct. In short, they are like other international actors.

A central divide in approaches to the study of NGOs lies in how researchers conceptualize the relationship of these organizations to other forms of power, especially state power. One strand of thinking, now on the wane, views INGOs as vehicles for the expression of interests that encompass humanity as a whole. In this view, INGOs work for global causes, whereas governments, corporations, and citizens pursue their own narrow interests. INGOs therefore exist on a higher moral plane, where they are working in salutary fashion to create a global society that is loosening the grip of the old international order based on sovereign states, which is ill-equipped to manage new trans-border challenges. This perspective was prevalent in the 1990s, when many observers celebrated the birth of a post-Westphalian world order in which well-meaning INGOs would supplant the narrowly self-interested power of states. Countering this view are those who argue that INGOs, far from being benevolent forces acting against the state, are in fact serving the interests of powerful states and, whether they intend to or not, abet imperialistic missions.

Those in the former camp tend to approach the study of NGOs through the lens of global society, a concept defined and developed by social scientists in the last few decades. Other labels include international society, transnational civil
society, and the global public. As one study put it, whereas states and corporations are self-interested, transnational civil society is a “third force” that aims to promote shared values and the public good. International historian Akira Iriye, in his seminal 2002 volume on the role of nongovernmental organizations in international relations, calls it “global community.” Lamenting that diplomatic historians too often dismissed international organizations as irrelevant to the kinds of diplomatic and military activities that were seen to bear on matters of war and peace, Iriye argues that international organizations offer a means to reconceptualize world affairs not as the clash of nations but as a search for order, cooperation, and interdependence. Limiting his scope to nonprofit, nonreligious, nonmilitary, voluntary INGOs with progressive goals, he claims that these groups build transnational networks “that are based on a global consciousness, the idea that there is a wider world over and above separate states and national societies, and that individuals and groups, no matter where they are, share certain interests and concerns in that wider world.” As Saunier has suggested, the narrative of global civil society is a refraction of the self-glorifying myths INGOs propagate about themselves, and its prevalence is a function of the fledgling—and, in his view, naive—state of historical scholarship on these groups.

Related to the global civil society framework is the study of social movements. This field, and the study of transnational social movements in particular, has generated a rich range of “theories” and approaches in sociology and political science. Though NGOs are sometimes excluded from the definition of social movement, it is more accurate to see them as components of social movements, and social movement studies offer much methodological fodder to the scholar of NGOs. Sociologists and political scientists have produced a large body of work on how social movements emerge and the consequences they have. This work has pointed to the importance of understanding the broader political contexts that structure opportunities for action, including political and economic opportunities and constraints and the vulnerabilities of political targets. How activists organize resources and create networks has also been an intense focus of study, particularly around the relationship of social movements to civil society more broadly and to associational cultures in particular locales. Of particular interest to historians are the ways that social movements “frame” their causes to define issues, mobilize support, and create systems of meaning. These approaches—understanding how movements mobilize resources (“resource mobilization theory”), the larger political arenas in which they operate (“political process theory”), and the roles of emotions, culture, and identity—all have relevance to historians and can be helpful to understanding not only social movements but also other nonstate actors.

The concept of “transnational advocacy networks,” developed by political scientists Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink in 1998, has been widely
influential among scholars of social movements and NGOs. Positing networks rather than individual NGOs as the unit of analysis and showing that NGOs can act simultaneously in domestic and international settings, Keck and Sikkink emphasize that advocacy networks can exert influence by shaping flows of information and thus constitute "an important part of an explanation for change in world politics." Their analysis partially reinforces the primacy of the state by locating it as the target of most advocacy pressures, but also suggests that new forms of global governance beyond the power of the state have been developing.\textsuperscript{33}

While INGOs have been studied intensively for how they frame issues, what causes they adopt, and what impact they have had, the internal structures and functions of these organizations have been neglected. We know little about their financing, staffing, or organizational cultures. Most INGOs are structured along national lines, such as Amnesty International with its national sections. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in 1924 imagined a "world section" that would be a "psychological laboratory" for rethinking national identifications, but this experiment was an anomaly, and even today most INGOs continue to reinforce national identities in their internal structures. Counterbalancing a predisposition in earlier work to treat INGOs as cosmopolitan, post-national entities, future scholarship is likely to look closely at the national environments of INGOs, how the location of a group's headquarters shape internal and external perceptions of the organization, and how national contexts matter to the ways that INGOs organize and act.\textsuperscript{34}

Whereas many scholars see nongovernmental organizations as counterweights to state power and the power of the market, other observers have suggested that NGOs buttress neoinimperialist distributions of power. They can point to evidence such as former US Secretary of State Colin Powell's paean to humanitarian NGOs as a "force multiplier" for the US government.\textsuperscript{35} Historian Niall Ferguson, a cheerleader for American empire, has approvingly described the United States as an imperial power whose methods of informal rule "rely heavily on nongovernmental organizations and corporations."\textsuperscript{36}

Critics of American empire tend to agree that the spread of American influence overseas has been fostered by private and public interests acting in concert. A groundbreaking example of such an approach is historian Emily Rosenberg's work on the role of churches, foundations, and civic organizations in the early twentieth century in spreading an American ideology she calls "liberal developmentalism."\textsuperscript{37} In a different vein, Matthew Connelly's work on international population control efforts underscores the driving role played by nonstate actors, such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation, in pushing rich countries to embrace a massive, coercive social engineering project premised on violations of human rights. International and nongovernmental organizations "tried to control the population of the world without having to answer to anyone in particular" - sometimes even without the knowledge or consent of governments, Connelly notes.\textsuperscript{38}
As skeptics of the moral superiority of an NGO-dominated global society point out, there is nothing inherent in the nature of these organizations that ensures they represent the public interest. NGOs are typically not democratic and do not operate in transparent ways. Information on their personnel, operations, funding sources, and expenditures is often difficult or impossible to obtain. They are not accountable to the people, governments, and businesses they most affect, and they often consist of people in one place speaking for people, often “victims,” somewhere else. Usually constructed around a single raison d’être, they pursue causes that are often narrowly defined, rather than considering the broad interests of society as a whole. Sometimes they act in ways that foster their own organizational interests, sensationalizing or distorting issues to spur donations or gain publicity and membership. The global society concept assumes that a set of shared values is spreading, even in the face of much evidence that values remain deeply contested. The concept of civic networks also downplays major asymmetries, as some “nodes” in the networks may wield vastly disproportionate influence. For all these reasons, attending to questions of moral and political legitimacy and accountability is important for students of INGOs.

Recent approaches often begin with the assumption that NGOs and states do not work in opposition but instead share many similarities and are often deeply intertwined. Far from being autonomous, NGOs depend on the provision of public goods by governments, including a civic sphere that allows free speech. Their work often depends on persuading friendly governments to work with them in IGOs or to act against other governments. They often work as subcontractors for or full partners to governments, who implicitly offer them legitimacy. Development NGOs have become a major partner for both governments and IGOs. This type of partnership extends back to the League of Nations, which worked closely with private groups and individuals interested in disarmament, finance, and welfare. Older approaches that assumed that the growth of NGO power meant a reduction in state power have given way to recognition that NGO power works in multiple directions and often in ways that buttress state power.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

The study of IGOs, the second prong of the boom in nonstate actor research, exhibits considerable common ground with the study of NGOs. Indeed the two types of organization often work so closely together that they cannot be studied in isolation. Though many US foreign relations historians might agree with a political scientist’s characterization of international organizations as a “big yawn,” estimates of their importance in international relations continue to rise. As is the case with NGOs, the numbers of IGOs have grown sharply in the last few decades, and they have effected key changes in the international system as they have assumed more wide-ranging roles. In 1900 there were 36
such organizations; a century later, there were thousands. Some of them, such as the UN and NATO, appear often, though rarely centrally, in the work of scholars of US foreign relations. Other well-known IGOs include the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

As with NGOs, scholars have often approached the study of IGOs with a normative bias, viewing these organizations as “good” because they spread cooperation, expert knowledge; and humanitarian goals. Historian Amy Staples sees the “international civil servants” of the World Health Organization as genuinely apolitical, “disinterested citizens of the world.” The more biographical approach in Joseph Hodge’s work, in contrast, underscores how British imperial administrators and technical advisers after World War II moved into UN agencies as development experts, transferring old colonial practices and assumptions to the new environment.

Understanding how IGOs operate in and shape the international system is central to the study of global governance. A concept popularized in the 1990s, it means not world government but, rather, processes for managing tractable global problems through formal institutions. Because IGOs and NGOs often work closely together, the study of global governance might be said to comprise the study of the relationship between IGOs and NGOs. The study of IGOs, and especially their international secretariats, involves questions similar to those raised by NGOs: what is the nature of their power, how is it exercised, how do they derive their legitimacy, and why do they succeed and fail?

MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS

The definition of multinational corporation limits its scope to recent times (when nations and corporations have existed), but firms that cross borders are as old as the modern nation-state, and they have both influenced and practiced diplomacy, often with very substantial effects. Like NGOs, the power and reach of multinational corporations, also known as transnational corporations and multinational enterprises or firms, have grown dramatically over the last two centuries. In 1970 an observer noted that General Motors, Ford, Standard Oil of New Jersey, Royal/Dutch Shell, General Electric, Chrysler, Unilever, and Mobil Oil ranked among the largest forty entities in the world.

The study of multinational corporations and their nineteenth-century antecedents is a neglected area in US foreign relations history, both little investigated and poorly incorporated into existing narratives. Though the influential revisionist paradigm associated with William Appleman Williams focused on the economic underpinnings of foreign policy, it posited an ideology of economic expansion driven primarily by a search for new markets for goods and capital, without detailed examination of actual economic processes or sustained attention to the role of business. (The role of United Fruit in the 1954 CIA-led coup in Guatemala is an important exception to the common
neglect of corporations — as distinct from economic interests — in US foreign relations history.\textsuperscript{53} There are signs, however, that the boom in interest in the history of capitalism provoked by the 2008 financial crisis may be spilling over into diplomatic history.

For a detailed discussion of methods for studying multinational corporations, see the entries in this volume by Brad Simpson on political economy and Michael Hogan on corporatism.\textsuperscript{54} A few brief points are warranted here. Whereas many scholars of NGOs approach their subjects with a normative bias in their favor, scholars of multinational corporations rarely take that stance. After all, firms do not usually claim to act for the public good. They are profit-seeking, whereas NGOs often define their goals in moral terms and claim to act for others. But as with NGOs, the question of whose interests are being followed is central. If in the euphoric 1990s, obituaries of state power posited that power was devolving not only from states to NGOs but from states to corporations, recent work suggests that multinational corporations, like INGOs, retain a form of national identification and often buttress state power rather than diminish it.\textsuperscript{55} Multinational corporations often participate in defining national interests, identifying their own interest with those of the state. And like NGOs, corporations often have close relationships with IGOs. The special agencies of the League of Nations and the United Nations assisted in the development of a world market, despite many disagreements over monetary policy, trade, and development.\textsuperscript{56} Methodologies to interpret organizational behavior — how organizations influence each other, how different governmental “regimes” affect how organizations pursue goals, the organizational forms they take, their strategies for allocating resources, and so on — can also be usefully adapted to the historical study of firms.\textsuperscript{57}

CONCLUSION

Writing the history of nonstate actors presents many methodological challenges. Some of the best work aims to trace the complex relationships and networks formed between nonstate and state actors and among different varieties of nonstate actors.\textsuperscript{58} The decentered, diffused, complex, and uneven nature of these connections makes them both tricky to document and challenging to describe. On a practical level, simply finding sources can be difficult, as many NGOs and MNCs have inaccessible, nonexistent, or disorganized archives. Even when reasonably complete and organized, the records of headquarters may not convey the viewpoints and activities of local or national nodes, and the records of other organizations and governments need to be mined to illuminate crucial interactions and relationships.\textsuperscript{59}

Many nonstate actors inhabit a transnational space that is difficult to conceptualize geographically and whose lines of power and influence are difficult to trace. We are all familiar with maps of the world in which lines
and colors are determined by the boundaries of states. A map of the world that rendered countries not according to their territorial land mass but relative to the number of multinational corporation headquarters they contained would look very different, making Denmark, for example, look huge. Nonstate actors sometimes use interstitial spaces, such as the airspace between countries, as arenas for the contestation of power. Standard chronologies are also challenged when nonstate actors are placed on the stage. An oft-cited example is the Cold War, typically studied within the framework of superpower conflict but during which many trends and developments arose or accelerated that operated quite independently of East-West competition.

If state-to-state relations are complex, involving competing interests, bureaucratic rivalries, and inputs from domestic politics, ideology, and other forces, the study of nonstate actors multiplies these complexities by an order of magnitude. Links move horizontally: across governments, international funding agencies, and NGOs; as well as vertically: connecting local, regional, national, and international levels. Along these multiple axes people, money, knowledge, and ideas flow in ways that are often extremely difficult to trace and, once traced, even more difficult to narrate. Typically, the targets of action are geographically dispersed and involve a multitude of actors, making it hard to establish causation and agency. Often, failing to follow one of these axes will elide important relationships. For example, the movement of particular individuals from INGOs to IGOs to governments, carrying with them practices and assumptions, can reveal causal lines of influence that would not be obvious with a purely institutional approach that neglected biography.

The study of groups, organizations, individuals, and networks outside the state is an essential task for international historians. Yet leaping on the nonstate actor bandwagon poses potential risks. Might this category and the closely linked term NGO obscure more than they reveal? It is worth considering what exactly is gained by using this conceptual framework and these labels, and what political choices are embedded in their current prevalence. The second edition of this volume had no entry dedicated to nonstate actors. Will the fourth?

NOTES

1. This chapter was funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery Project Grant (DP110100424, 2011–2014). The author thanks Nathan Kurz and Brad Simpson for excellent suggestions.
4. Important works on other types of nonstate actors include Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004), which sets

5. This structure follows the definition of nonstate actor in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Non-State Actors*, ed. Bob Reinalda (Farnham, Surrey, 2011).


14. Elizabeth Bloodgood, “The Yearbook of International Organizations and Quantitative Non-State Actor Research,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Non-State Actors*, ed. Reinalda, 21–2. The *Yearbook of International Organizations*, published by the Union of International Associations since 1908, defines NGOs as formally organized bodies independent of government representation with permanent headquarters, a governing unit, and projects, funding, and members
from at least three countries. For a definition of NGOs as post-traditional civil associations, see Heins, *Nongovernmental Organizations*, 17–19.


17. White, *International Non-Governmental Organizations*.


21. Ibid., 577.


23. In a well-known exchange, Jessica Tuchman Mathews declared the accumulation of power in the hands of states that had begun with the Peace of Westphalia was “over” and that a “novel distribution of power among states, markets, and civil society” had happened that allowed “NGOs to push around even the largest governments.” Mathews, “Power Shift,” *Foreign Affairs* 76 (1997): 50–66, quotations at 50, 53. In response, Laurence Jarvik denounced NGOs as a “new class” whose activities served the interests of “terrorists, warlords, and mafia dons” by weakening states – the only entities capable of maintaining order. Jarvik, “NGOs: A ‘New Class’ in International Relations,” *Orbis* 51 (2007): 217–38, quotation at 217.

24. For an excellent discussion from an anthropological standpoint about the need to distinguish between civil society and NGOs, see William F. Fisher, “Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26 (1997): 439–64. As Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink have noted in regard to the “world polity” approach, the question of where and how global norms originate is left unclear. Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 33.


27. Iriye, *Global Community*, 2–8, quotation at 8. Sociologists John Boli and George M. Thomas articulated an influential “world polity” perspective with similar characteristics: see Boli and Thomas, eds., *Constructing World Culture: International Nongovernmental Organizations since 1875* (Stanford, 2005).


29. A very large sociological literature on social movements exists. For an introduction to the subset of this literature that deals with transnational social movements, see Jackie Smith, “Transnational Processes and Movements,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, eds. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi (Malden, MA, 2007).


34. Saunier, “INGOs,” 575. On this point see also Matthew Connelly, Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population (Cambridge, MA, 2008), 8–9. Sarah Stroup’s recent study, for example, argues that legal, political, and cultural variation in the nations where INGOs are headquartered creates major differences in the forms of action and organization these groups take. Sarah S. Stroup, Borders among Activists: International NGOs in the United States, Britain, and France (Ithaca, 2012).


36. Niall Ferguson, Colossus: The Price of America’s Empire (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 13; see also his description of the type of empire that “rules mainly through firms and NGOs,” 11.

37. Emily Rosenberg, Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890–1945 (New York, 1982).


40. Heins, Nongovernmental Organizations, 34.

41. See ibid., 38.


43. On the study of IGOs as bureaucracies, see Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics (Ithaca, 2004).


45. Numbers vary according to definition and how groups are counted. See David Held and Anthony McGrew, Globalization/Anti-Globalization: Beyond the Great Divide (Cambridge, 2007), 22.


Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations

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Contents

List of figures
List of contributors

Introduction
Frank Costigliola and Michael J. Hogan

1 Theories of International Relations
Robert Jervis

2 National security
Melvyn P. Leffler

3 Corporatism: from the new era to the age of development
Michael J. Hogan

4 Explaining political economy
Brad Simpson

5 Diplomatic history after the big bang: using computational methods to explore the infinite archive
David Allen and Matthew Connelly

6 Development and technopolitics
Nick Cullather

7 Nonstate actors
Barbara J. Keys

8 Legal history as foreign relations history
Mary L. Dudziak

9 Domestic politics
Fredrik Logevall

10 The global frontier: comparative history and the frontier-borderlands approach
Nathan J. Citino

page ix
x
1
9
25
42
58
74
102
119
135
151
168
vii
List of contributors

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