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1

Non-state Actors in World Politics: a Framework

Daphné Josselin and William Wallace

Non-state actors are heroes and villains in different narratives of international politics. Idealists often present non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as the vanguard of an emerging global civil society, challenging the instinctive authoritarianism of states and the power of international capital. Enthusiasts for globalization see private social actors as building networks across borders, promoting shared understandings, even international solidarity. Hard-line Realists, on the other hand, see NGOs either as front-organizations thinly disguising the interests of particular states, or as potential revolutionaries, seeking to undermine national solidarity and the stability of the state system. Realists and Idealists come together in their ambivalence about transnational economic actors – banks and multinational companies (MNCs) – as transmitters both of investment and influence, as bringing both modernization and external intervention.

Only the most determined ‘Realist’, however, would now deny that the balance between states and non-state actors has shifted, over the past 30–40 years – at least within the community of advanced industrial democracies. Democratic states have retreated from the post-war attempt to control substantial proportions of their national economies, and have progressively reduced barriers to cross-border trade, investment, production and provision of services. The communications revolution has transformed the ability of non-state actors to develop and maintain transnational contacts, and has radically lowered the costs of doing so. Rising educational standards, increased international travel, the emergence of global media, have widened the perspectives of elites and of counter-elites. Our starting point is, therefore, that any interpretation of international relations and global politics must now take the significance of non-state actors, operating transnationally, into account.¹ Over the past three decades there has been an explosion in the number of NGOs (Union of International Associations 1970–99), while deregulation of domestic economies and the strengthening of international economic regimes has allowed for a

parallel explosion of multinational companies (MNCs), banks, service networks and economic associations (Strange 1996).

The aim of this volume is to bring together expertise from different corners of this extensive field, to explore how far it is possible to agree on a common narrative, or at least on a common empirical foundation on which contending schools may build their theoretical structures. There is a tendency for those who focus on particular non-state actors to be familiar with the activities of private actors within that area, but not far beyond. Economists and students of the international political economy study MNCs, financial markets, even trade unions, looking at a very different group of private actors from those which students of conflict resolution or of transnational advocacy networks examine. We therefore bring together for a general audience some of the insights and information from recent detailed research, with which others in the field may not yet be familiar.

Non-state actors: a definition

States and non-state actors form broad opposing categories. Yet defining non-state actors chiefly by their independence from states and state authority would be misleading. Both in domestic and international politics, the theoretical purity of these opposing ideal types is muddled by the complexities of practice. The relationship between banks and MNCs and their home governments may well be close, including 'golden shares' or partial state ownership.² Governments of liberal states provide financial support for some transnational groups, primarily those working in economic and social development. Think-tanks and elite networks often have close links with governments, from funding to participation by officials. Intelligence agencies subsidize 'autonomous' groups which promote appropriate causes.³ The universe of non-state actors is thus necessarily diverse. Private actors shade into public: degrees of autonomy from state authority and control vary. Public-private partnerships exist beyond the nation-state as well as within it, with intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) contracting with think-tanks for policy advice, and with NGOs for the delivery of services. At one end of our spectrum lie companies and organizations the activities of which meet with full approval and support from one or more national governments; at the other groups and movements seen by the governments of most territories in which they seek to operate as threats to established order. Even here there are intermediate categories, with states sponsoring subversive groups (including 'state-sponsored terrorism') to undermine other governments.

International organizations, bureaucracies and what Mansbach (1976: 41) defines as 'governmental noncentral actors' such as cities or local authorities, are also semi-autonomous: public actors but not – strictly-defined – state actors. The network of central bankers does not always reflect the views even of national

finance ministries (Kapstein 1992); international police cooperation has also developed a degree of network autonomy (Anderson 1989). Emerging patterns of global governance among liberal states reflect this partial disaggregation of states as governments into extensive transgovernmental networks, linking sub-nation-state authorities and state ministries with international institutions. Those international organizations which now play an important part in providing the regimes of global governance are particularly important to transnational non-state actors. World conferences – on the status of women, on the protection of the environment, on the exploitation of space – attract a crowd of business lobbies and NGOs alongside official delegations. Non-state actors have learned to exploit the space between these multilateral institutions and their member states, developing a triangular relationship of ‘complex multilateralism’ in which economic associations and social movements are also significant players (O’Brien et al. 2000).

In this book, however, our focus is on actors which are at least in principle autonomous from the structure and machinery of the state, and of the governmental and intergovernmental bodies below and above the formally-sovereign state: transnational, rather than transgovernmental. Some of these actors are primarily transnational in organization and objectives: that is to say that they operate on a cross-border basis, pursue the same set of goals everywhere, and address a global audience. This does not mean that their national affiliates, subsidiaries or chapters, have no autonomy: but they possess a clear overall image, and exist as international, often legal entities, whether as church, corporation or federation. Oxfam’s national groups, for instance, are responsible for their own fundraising and projects. The existence of intra-organizational tensions within such transnational entities is a recurrent theme in the chapters which follow.

Others merely participate in transnational coalitions or networks while retaining their primarily domestic outlook.⁴ Yet their influence on international politics may nevertheless be considerable; the American trade union federation, AFL-CIO, for example, was the single largest source of finance behind the mass demonstrations organized against the launch of a millennium round of trade talks in December 1999. Here as well the existence of a broad continuum must be acknowledged, from the largely domestic entity to the determinedly global: all of them working to change policy outcomes through regular cross-border activities, in what many interpret as indicative of the growing irrelevance of the divide between domestic and international politics.

Our definition of non-state actors therefore includes organizations:

- largely or entirely autonomous from central government funding and control: emanating from civil society,⁵ or from the market economy, or from political impulses beyond state control and direction;

- operating as or participating in networks which extend across the boundaries of two or more states – thus engaging in ‘transnational’ relations, linking political systems, economies, societies;
- acting in ways which affect political outcomes, either within one or more states or within international institutions – either purposefully or semi-purposefully, either as their primary objective or as one aspect of their activities.

The reader should note that our definition of non-state actors (NSAs) is deliberately wider than the commonly-accepted definition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which excludes primarily economic actors as well as criminal elements, churches or transnational political parties (Weiss and Gordenker 1996: 29). We are aware of the dangers of such an encompassing approach, which ‘lumps’ together actors motivated by instrumental, mainly economic aims (corporations, mafias), actors promoting principled ideas (churches, advocacy groups), experts motivated by professional values and commitment to rational analysis (think-tanks, epistemic communities), actors reflecting a shared ethnic origin (diasporas). By adopting a broad scope, however, we hope to give the general reader a sense of the diversity and complexity of non-state activity across borders, which now constitutes an international society – even a partial global society – within the framework provided by the established society of states.

Non-state actors and the state

Non-state actors can only flourish within a relatively peaceful and stable international system, with an underlying consensus about the rules of international interaction and the legitimacy of the state units. International trade only extends to international investment and production when the risks of operating beyond the protection of one’s own state are seen as acceptable. Global networks depend upon shared assumptions about global society, shared understandings and beliefs. Societies of states, in Hedley Bull’s concept, provide the framework within which cross-border exchanges may flourish (Bull 1977). Limited government as the legitimating principle for state units is necessary to provide the legal distinction between public and private, within states as well as in transnational exchanges, which enables non-state actors to operate openly across borders. Conversely, revolutionary states which challenge the dominant assumptions of international society have understandably treated private organizations which incorporate and transmit those dominant assumptions as illegitimate, while themselves supporting groups which aim to subvert the established international order. Totalitarian states reject the distinction between private and public; authoritarian states accept the intrusion onto their territory of private actors beyond their control only under tight conditions.

In historical terms, therefore, the expansion and contraction of non-state actors has accompanied the growth and decline of societies of states. The growth of private commerce and of religious, sporting and intellectual linkages across the ancient Greek world rested upon shared assumptions about the legitimacy of the *polis* and on a framework of common beliefs and values.⁶ The Hanseatic merchants, and religious orders, of medieval Europe operated within the common framework of Roman Christianity, with its moral and legal underpinnings and institutional structure. The Reformation tore Christendom apart, with Protestant states executing subversive Jesuit priests, and Catholic kings expelling – or massacring – heretical protestants: disrupting universities, trade patterns, industrial development. The re-establishment of an agreed basis for the European state system, after the devastation of the Thirty Years' War, allowed for the recovery of international trade, financial networks, and social and intellectual interchange, though offering only limited toleration for such new social movements as corresponding societies and Freemasons, as Fred Halliday notes in Chapter 2.

Within the nineteenth-century European international system, banking families and trading companies co-existed and collaborated with dominant, semi-liberal, states; as did early advocacy networks, from the anti-slavery movement to the movement for women's rights (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Liberal states often tried to enforce customary international law protecting foreign property, especially in Latin America (the Calvo Doctrine).⁷ Missionary societies from these dominant liberal states, non-state actors benefiting from the prestige and resources of their home states, and – as protectorates and colonies succeeded trading posts – the protection of their forces, spread European values across Africa and Asia. The authoritarian states of central and eastern Europe had an ambivalent relationship to this relatively liberal, largely Protestant Christian, international society: directing their secret services against the transnational subversion of exiled revolutionaries, while accepting (under conditions) the extension of international law and institutions, the incursions of foreign capital and foreign-owned industry.⁸ States outside the accepted framework of the 'civilized world' – Siam, Persia, Ethiopia, above all China – struggled to maintain their independence, and their distinctive values, in the face of foreign missionaries and traders and of the external sanctions and military forces which lay behind them.

The contradiction between liberal states with limited governments and non-state actors which operated within the (political and economic) liberal consensus, and revolutionary states which rejected that consensus, was even clearer in the disoriented inter-war period. Idealist groups in Britain and the USA were still working to promote international peace and to support the League of Nations while Soviet courts were trying engineers from Metro-Vickers as spies, and Nazi concentration camps were incarcerating Protestant pastors and Catholic priests

who failed to recognize a primary loyalty to the new order. The fascist Italian state, with its state-directed economy, sought to exploit the new medium of radio as a vehicle for inciting subversion within British and French protectorates in the Middle East, to promote its own commercial and political ambitions. The Japanese state sought to replace European empire in east Asia with Japanese supremacy, with Japanese companies closely linked to the expansion of state power; only when at war with the European powers did Japanese commanders seek to ally with nationalist groups in other Asian states.

The Anglo-American planners who set out to design a more open and liberal international order for the world which emerged from the Second World War sought to base its principles on limited government, private property, individual rights and international institutions. The aftermath of war, the commitment of liberal states to welfare and economic growth, and the onset of the ideological Cold War, however, saw state power in the 1940s and 1950s reach a peak, though lower in 'Western' countries and in the emerging states of the 'South' than in the socialist 'East'. In western Europe confiscation of collaborationist companies and nationalization of key industrial sectors brought substantial proportions of domestic economies under direct state ownership. Moreover, the apparent triumph of liberalism against totalitarianism at the end of the Second World War soon gave way to demands for alliance between liberals and the liberal state in opposition to the challenge of Soviet power. Both sides in the Cold War used non-state actors as allies, openly or covertly sponsored and funded. Trade unions, student organizations, peace groups, friendship societies, human rights organizations, development NGOs were turned into weapons in this ideological conflict. Transnational private groups were open to attack as 'front organizations' for the enemy. American missionaries and academics who had close links with China were among those attacked by the Congressional Unamerican Activities Committee for the 'loss of China'. Only with difficulty, as the high tensions of the first Cold War subsided, could such expert groups as Pugwash establish a degree of credibility, and of autonomy from the interventions of suspicious security services (Evangelista 1995).

Within the 'West', American 'Cold War liberals' set out to build a democratic community under US leadership, through encouraging the development of cross-border social, cultural and economic links (Halle 1967; Key 1961). West European elites were encouraged to look to Boston and New York rather than to Warsaw and Prague, with the active assistance of the diaspora elite from central Europe now installed in American universities, where they taught (amongst other topics) the unity of 'Western civilization'. Private American foundations, as well as public American agencies, funded conferences and exchanges, 'area studies' and joint research, which helped to build transnational expert communities that revolved around the United States. American multinationals, with managerial and production techniques more advanced than their European and other competitors, both

led and profited from the liberalization of international trade – while they also operated to transfer managerial skills and technology through the demonstration effect of their overseas operations (Gilpin 1975; Strange 1988). Transnationalism had become ‘the American mode of expansion’ (Huntington 1973).

The explosive growth of non-governmental organizations, which so many scholars have noted as one of the most striking phenomena of contemporary international relations, took off in the 1960s (Risse-Kappen 1995: 10; Boli and Thomas 1999: ch. 1). The expansion of the Western international economy, in the wake of the post-war reconstruction of the west European and Japanese economies, proceeded in parallel; assisted by successive rounds of multilateral trade liberalization, by rising flows of investment and finance, and by steady improvements in international communication networks. Decolonization of European empires brought the ‘third world’ fully into the sovereign state system, economically and socially dependent on the Western ‘first world’, though often politically attracted to pursue links with the socialist ‘second world’. Operating within and through the framework of international institutions which Anglo-American liberals had created, these new states were ambivalent both about the established values of Western international society and about the transnational companies and social movements which transmitted those values. The context within which non-state actors today contest the rules and values of an emerging global society was shaped in this optimistic ‘Decade of Development’, as the United States government and its allies, working in partnership with international institutions and Western non-state actors, set out to extend their economic and social models across the third world.

One recurrent question in later chapters is how far non-state actors, in their triangular relations with states and international institutions, still operate within the constraints of this American-dominated system, in which the structural advantages which accrue to those which are based in the USA or in the wider West leave public and private actors from the developing world in peripheral positions. We wish to note first, however, the significance of the ideological, economic, social and technological conditions which have proved so favourable to the mushrooming of non-state actors over the past 40 years. Relaxation of Cold War tensions, from the early 1960s onwards, allowed for a parallel relaxation in state vigilance over the transnational activities of groups of private actors, at least in the developed world. The growth of affluence within Western liberal democracies was interpreted by Daniel Bell and others as marking ‘the end of ideology’, leaving a passive ‘permissive consensus’ within which governments were relatively free to pursue the public interest at home and abroad (Bell 1974). In retrospect, affluence, increased leisure, and rising levels of education were as essential as the decline in international ideological conflict in laying the foundations for greater autonomous civic actions, both in domestic and in international politics.

The declining prestige first of the USSR and later of the USA, both within other societies and within their own, assisted this process of the privatization of transnational interactions. Soviet suppression of the Nagy regime in Hungary in 1956 weakened faith in the superiority of Communism; the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 demonstrated how much the USSR had become a conservative power, fearing change. For the USA, the involvement in Vietnam – and the sharpness of domestic opposition to the war – brought a comparable loss of prestige, and a weakening of self-belief in the inherent superiority of American political, social and economic values. Even before the Vietnam commitment had grown, the civil rights movement in the American south, with its informal links to anti-apartheid and anti-colonial groups in the USA and beyond, had exposed the gap between American rhetoric and American practice. Widespread criticism of both superpowers allowed for, and marked, the emergence of a pluralist network of transnational private groups, accepted by Western governing elites (and by their security services) as legitimate actors in an increasingly complex international society. At the same time growing foreign direct investment was transforming the functioning of the world economy, and turning multinational corporations into increasingly autonomous political actors. In the 1960s Raymond Vernon and others saw American MNCs as distancing themselves from the political purposes of the US Administration, as they pursued market share, developed new technologies, and expanded production outside North America (Vernon 1971). The gradual retreat of western European states from economic planning and ownership, which gathered pace in the 1970s, also made it easier to distinguish between national foreign policies and company strategies – though support for ‘national champions’, often state-owned, continued to mark foreign economic strategies (French and Italian in particular) into the 1980s and beyond. The industrial adjustment of the 1970s and 1980s, as advanced economies moved from heavy industries to new technologies and to the provision of services, also carried a certain transnational logic. International services, in telecommunications, information and air transport, required international companies with a presence in different national markets round the world. Niche markets within an increasingly complex and specialized economy could now be contacted through international communications, and supplied through airfreight. Multiple flows of foreign direct investment among OECD economies had by the early 1990s reached the stage where Robert Reich could appropriately challenge the assumptions underlying American foreign economic policy with the question, ‘Who is “Us”?’, even though the phenomenon had yet to spread beyond the core OECD countries to take root in semi-peripheral Mexico, or Brazil or India (Reich 1990).

Overloaded governments, which recognized that their home markets were too small as a base from which domestic companies could hope to compete in an increasingly open international market, moved towards privatization and the

promotion of transnational mergers. The shift away from the embedded liberalism of the post-war social-democratic consensus within the advanced industrial democracies, as Keynesian economic policies gave way to monetarism and as the limits of welfare provision were perceived as being reached, also tilted the balance between public and private in favour of the latter. Disillusion with state action – the replacement of the image of the public servant as enlightened technocrat by that of the self-interested bureaucrat, together with resistance to rising levels of taxation and public expenditure – led governments to contract out public functions to private actors, converting companies and NGOs into agents in providing public services.

The parallel development in transnational elite networks, advocacy groups and social movements partly reflected the impact of technological development: in raising new issues of nuclear safety, ethics or environmental degradation; and in creating new opportunities for transnational networking through the spread of new means of communication and transportation. It also partly reflected, in its turn, the loss of faith in state direction and state action throughout the advanced industrial democracies – and to some extent beyond. The mushrooming of NGOs in economic development and emergency assistance from the 1970s on, for example, followed disillusion, within Western governments and international organizations, with state-to-state transfers as the path to modernization. The rise of multilateral institutions, often willing to trade support and institutional access in exchange for expertise and legitimacy, also played a major role in creating the permissive conditions for NSAs to function and flourish. Partly funded from government aid budgets, NGOs became increasingly involved in the daily work of the United Nations' agencies (Weiss and Gordenker 1996). The identification of global issues (environment, human rights, financial instability, crime) characterized by a high degree of uncertainty made the information held by some non-state actors a highly valued commodity, propelling epistemic communities of scientific and other experts to the fore (Haas 1992; Cutler, Haufler and Porter 1999). Private actors joined governmental representatives in emerging transnational policy networks, providing support and legitimacy, monitoring compliance, in what Wolfgang Reinicke has described as 'public-private partnerships' in international society (Reinicke 1998: 220).

More critical groups of outsiders, challenging the conventional wisdom with their own claims to expertise and analysis, have also flourished in the spaces left by the partial retreat of the state, pressing new issues onto the international agenda, drawing attention to problems which governments' established elites had left to one side (Smith, Chatfield and Pagnucco 1997; Keck and Sikkink 1998). Here are to be found the advocacy networks and social movements of the claimed global society, shaping the agenda of a 'turbulent' international system (Rosenau 1990) or building the cross-cutting links and loyalties which might come to constitute a 'neo-medieval' world (Bull 1977). Thanks largely to the

revolution in communications, the flourishing of domestic civil society within prosperous liberal states has spilled over into transnational linkages and international movements: independent of governments, in some cases opposed to them, targeting sympathizers within other countries to resist or reshape national policies, even arguing in effect that governments can be bypassed in building an alternative global order. At the same time, the diffusion of international rivalry after the end of the Cold War has further weakened the link between national solidarity and national security, so favouring the emergence or strengthening of 'non-national identities' at the subnational (ethnic groups) and transnational (activist groups, diasporas) levels .

The necessary conditions for such groups to grow may, however, be limited to the liberal states they often criticize. Public and private international agencies largely withdrew from Afghanistan in 1998–9, unwilling to accept the limitations on their freedom of action which the Taliban regime imposed; Western visitors who demonstrated in favour of the opposition in Burma were arrested and imprisoned. In China, where an authoritarian state in the 1990s was sponsoring the development of a semi-liberal economy, both domestic and foreign private actors were repeatedly testing the limits of permitted autonomy. How far transnational networks have yet extended beyond the advanced industrial countries, across the developing world, into the remaining authoritarian states, remains an open question.

The contemporary debate: key questions

The proliferation and heightened international visibility of non-state actors have triggered new concerns within sovereignty-sensitive political systems, even within the United States, the dominant power within the post-Cold War global system and the home base for a disproportionate number of NSAs. US government funding, as well as finance from US-based foundations, churches, companies and unions, has flowed into think-tanks, advocacy networks and NGOs across the world in the past half-century. Yet the emergence of a counter-flow, intended to influence the domestic debate within the USA, has proved controversial. Washington allegations that foreign companies and governments were buying influence through subsidies to domestic think-tanks and lobbies has led Washington institutes to publish explicitly the proportion of their funding they receive from public and private sources within Japan. It has also led to charges and counter-charges about Chinese sources of campaign finance.

Academics have argued, in parallel, about the emergence of a liberal world society, or global order, or world polity, and about the implications of such a development for our understanding of international relations. Liberal pluralists take for granted the framework of international institutions and regimes which have created the space within which transnational economic and social actors

now flourish, and welcome the gradual extension of this originally-Western international society across the countries of the former third and second worlds. More radical critics of the existing state-centred international order, from Marx and Mitrany to contemporary Idealists, have looked to a future in which the state as such will wither away, leaving behind a peaceful and mutually beneficial global civil society. Structuralists point to the values and assumptions embedded in this society, and to the highly unbalanced distribution of resources within it, giving entrenched advantages to dominant states and to the non-state actors which are based on their territories. Before we go any further, the terms of the debate therefore need to be laid out.

Academic research on transnational relations, with the exception of such economic actors as multinational companies, has until recently been limited. In the 1940s and 1950s, the work of David Mitrany on the role of experts in international collaboration, that of Karl Deutsch on the pluralist notion of transnational linkages or, in a European setting, that of Ernst Haas on the input of transnational interest groups and political elites in supranational governance undoubtedly showed the way (Mitrany 1966 (1943); Deutsch 1957; Haas 1958). The long economic boom of the 1960s, the rise of East–West *détente*, and the spread of multilateral regimes negotiated among public and private actors through international institutions, then led to a first generation of studies and theories transposing liberal pluralist theory to international affairs. Karl Kaiser wrote a widely cited article on ‘transnational politics’; Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye linked concepts of transnational relations and of interdependence; James Rosenau offered ‘pre-theories’ of linkage politics, emulation and ‘intermestic’ politics; Peter Willetts studied the role of international pressure groups (Kaiser 1969; Keohane and Nye 1971 and 1977; Rosenau 1980; Willetts 1982). Throughout most of the 1980s, however, American International Relations was driven by the debate between neo-realists and liberal institutionalists, differing on the possibilities of international cooperation but sharing the assumption that the state, as a coherent and largely rational actor, continued to define international relations and to hold the boundary between the two levels of domestic politics and international negotiation (Evans et al. 1993).⁹ Students of European integration, on both sides of the Atlantic, examined the blossoming of cross-border networks within this transnational economic and social community, but rarely linked this development to wider transatlantic or global trends. As for the critical approaches to transnational economic relations which had emerged in the 1970s, and which presented multinational corporations as the main agents preventing the development of an indigenous industry in the South (Frank 1967; Emmanuel 1972; Amin 1977; Cardoso and Faletto 1969), their empirical validity soon came under heavy attack.

Since the end of the Cold War, with state power in retreat across the globe and with increasing evidence of the influence of transnational private actors in

international and domestic politics, there has been a resurgence of academic interest. The 'globalization debate' has drawn attention to increasing levels of transboundary activities, and to the need to develop a more intimate analytic relationship between the study of international and domestic politics, in which public and private actors would be considered jointly (notably Rosenau 1990 and 1997; Camilleri and Falk 1992; Cerny 1995; Held 1995; Appadurai 1996; Strange 1992 and 1996). Transnationalism has come back to the fore, and with it a new wave of studies devoted to the cross-border activities of non-state actors, their impact on policy outcomes and institutions at the domestic and international levels, and the implications of NSA proliferation for our understanding of international relations. Mirroring new trends in theorizing, debates about the role of non-state actors in world politics have incorporated the views of constructivist writers, rejecting the ontological assumptions of methodological individualism that had dominated the earlier literature.¹⁰

In contrast with the 1970s–1980s, debates no longer focus on *whether* NSAs play a role in world politics, but rather on *how* they do so. Using concepts familiar to students of comparative politics and public policy, a first group of scholars look at the functions performed by NSAs in the establishment and maintenance of international regimes, and more generally in 'global governance'. Mapping transnational policy networks, identifying 'entry points' at the level of governments and international institutions, analysing the input of experts, NGOs and economic actors at various stages of the international policy cycle, these works tend to be largely process-oriented. Broadly liberal in outlook, they tend to place a strong emphasis on the role of institutional arrangements, both domestic structures and international institutionalization, in mediating NSA influence (see notably Risse-Kappen 1995; Weiss and Gordenker 1996; Reinicke 1998; Cutler, Haufler and Porter 1999; Coleman and Perl 1999). The recent surge in interest in so-called new or complex multilateralism can thus be closely associated with the latest wave of work on transnationalism (O'Brien et al. 2000). However, some continue to favour a realist approach, arguing that the impact of NSAs mainly depends on their success in altering the preferences and policies of the most powerful states (see for instance Krasner 1993 and 1995).

A second body of works considers the role of NSAs in normative change, this time borrowing from sociological approaches. Arguing that ideas, not simply material interests, shape international agendas – as the English school always assumed – they show that non-state actors may play a major part in shifting the assumptions which constitute international society, promoting shared principles and norms, fostering 'global consciousness', with major consequences for domestic politics and policies (Nadelmann 1990; Haas 1992; Wapner 1996; Smith, Chatfield and Pagnucco 1997; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Boli and Thomas 1999; Evangelista 1999). Here, the main intervening variable

would be the compatibility between the ideas promoted by non-state coalitions and the pre-existing collective identities and beliefs of political actors. The influence of constructivism and sociological institutionalism is also perceptible in the works of neo-Gramscian theorists (Gill 1993; Cox and Sinclair 1996).

In addition, a number of authors discuss the role of non-state actors in the broader context of globalization and state retreat, grappling more directly with the implications of transnational relations for state authority, hegemony and democracy in the international system (notably Camilleri and Falk 1992; Strange 1996; Cox 1999; Held et al. 1999; Schechter 1999; Higgott, Underhill and Bieler 2000; Florini 2000). These overlap and interact with the utopian discourse of 'new social movements' as the building blocks for global civil society: the romantic vision of non-state actors as vehicles for peace and progress shared by some liberal and neo-Gramscian writers, which Fred Halliday examines in the next chapter.

These are all themes addressed in this volume. We are interested above all in the impact of non-governmental actors on national politics and international cooperation: both directly, through the messages they convey and the activities in which they engage, and indirectly, through the responses their activities and messages provoke from governments and from private actors within other states. The questions we posed to our contributors at the outset include:

1. How new a phenomenon is the pattern of networks and influence observed in each of the fields covered? Where significant transnational activities predate the growth of contemporary world society, how have recent technological, economic and political changes affected the way in which these actors operate?

2. What sources of influence are available for these different actors or networks: direct links into domestic politics below the state level, influence over national policy-making in different states, ability to 'set the agenda' by influencing the language and discourse of national debates in more than one country, access to international institutions as well as to national governments? Do they depend on the number of supporters who recognize their influence (mass membership or support), or on the quality of those who participate in the network (elite membership or participation), or on their financial or industrial or employment-generating capacity?

3. What are the characteristic forms of activity in search of influence: direct lobbying of governments, for example; campaigns addressed to elites or to mass publics; reliance on existing supporters within national political systems; financial contributions; intellectual efforts to shape and reshape the language of debate; activities outside the boundaries of conventional politics, or the domestic legal order? Understanding the ways in which NSAs effectively mobilize resources or generate constituencies transnationally is of obvious interest here. So are the identification of changes in the tactics used, and the assessment of the role

played by factors such as modern technology, democratization and cultural homogenization in the process.

4. What are their characteristic targets? Do particular NSAs aim to influence national governments first and foremost, or do they interact with and target other non-governmental actors (e.g. trade unions and companies; political party networks competing with each other transnationally)? How important are international institutions and conferences among their targets for influence, as forums for creating and shaping international consensus and as rule-making bodies? To what extent is the action of NSAs and international organizations mutually reinforcing, each providing political opportunity and legitimacy to the other? How significant are activities excluding state actors: can we rightly speak of private governance, or private regimes?

5. What are the flows of influence within transnational networks? How far do most NSAs act as carriers of ideas and influence from advanced societies to less advanced, from hegemonic states and cultures to their dependent neighbours?

This volume is concerned with examining non-state actors in global politics. We have not, therefore, paid particular attention to the explosion of transnational private actors within west European politics over the past 30–40 years. The pattern of politics within the geographically concentrated and densely populated EU is best characterized as ‘post-sovereign’, with an interpenetration of economies, societies and governments far beyond that observable in any other international region – with the partial exception of bilateral exchanges between the USA and Canada (Wallace 1999).

The issue of how far the term ‘global’ implies fully global interaction, or rather covers the extension of economic and intellectual influence from the advanced industrial democracies across a large part of the globe is however one which we do address in this volume. It links to the last of the questions posed above, about the balance or imbalance of influence observable within the transnational networks which non-state actors constitute. Images of non-state actors as ‘agents’ have found new echoes in the broad debate on globalization and ideological convergence, through which a Western ideology of ‘limited state apparatus, representative government and a liberal concept of freedom and choice’ is conveyed (Higgott and Reich 1998: 8). At the same time, images of transnational social movements as providing an effective opposition to American (or Western) hegemony show the limits of any overarching interpretation of the role of non-state actors in the transmission of power and influence. Robert Cox thus distinguishes between ‘top-down’ conceptions of civil society, in which ‘the dominant forces penetrate and coopt elements of popular movements’, and a ‘bottom-up’ version, in which civil society would be ‘the realm in which those who are disadvantaged by globalization of the world economy can mount their protests and seek alternatives’ (Cox 1999: 10–11). Further empirical investigation of the funding, personnel, actions and

prescriptions of non-state actors is clearly needed, as exemplified in the remainder of this volume.

Outline of the book

Non-state actors have long been active participants in transnational networks, from ancient diasporas to more recent transnational social movements, epistemic communities and advocacy coalitions. Therefore, while some of the chapters in this book focus on the transnational activities of select organizations, others look more specifically at the dynamic and recurrent relations which certain sets of non-state actors (scientists, NGOs, ethnic groups) entertain across borders. These organizations or networks either concentrate on a single issue or on several: churches, trade unions and diasporas are active on a multiplicity of fronts, whether social, economic or ethical. Some pre-date the emergence of the modern state system (the Catholic church, certain diasporas), others represent fairly recent (possibly transient) phenomena (epistemic communities, many NGOs). But they all participate in international politics, and in many cases increasingly so.

The challenges raised by this evolution are queried by Fred Halliday in the next chapter. In theoretical terms, the 'non-state' presents a twofold challenge for the study of international relations: on the one hand to the 'state-centric' approach, and on the other to an approach that would regard structure as the prime locus of power and change. Reconceptualizing international politics to take into account the role of non-state actors, however, raises major definitional, historical and normative issues. If instead of anchoring the state-versus-NSAs debate in the contemporary world we look back to the origins of the modern state system, we no longer see non-state actors as the challengers but rather as the shapers and supporters of that system. In addition, non-state actors are not always benign and autonomous. It is only by going beyond the 'romance' that we shall begin to think through the implications of state–society relations.

These questions are taken up in the empirical chapters that follow. In Part II, our contributors focus on the action of non-state actors in the area of principles and norms, and on the way these actors respond in turn to the emergence of 'global ethics', starting with one of the oldest promoters of principled beliefs: the Catholic church. Organized Catholicism has a uniquely wide range of groups within its structures, ranging from the smallest level of sub-parochial units through to missionary religious orders such as the Jesuits that can claim to be prototypes of globalization. David Ryall examines the activities of development agencies, religious congregations and groups such as Pax Christi and Opus Dei, defining their political and ideational influence, and the relationships they have with the Holy See. He suggests that the continued growth of diverse transnational Catholic movements, especially in the human rights sector, will result in

increasing tensions between different ecclesial models. This in turn will provoke widely differing responses to the political and social challenges that the church faces as a global actor.

While typically reflecting national societal cleavages, the political parties that emerged during the nineteenth century frequently espoused internationalist ideologies. In Chapter 4, Julie Smith analyses the impact of party internationals, transnational parties and party foundations in international politics. She shows that such associations serve two key functions: to socialize parties into a particular political family; and to foster civil society and help create the conditions for free and fair elections in newly emerging democracies. In the end, though, the attempt to maximize support frequently means not only a loss of ideological or philosophical idealism, but also a loss of coherence in the parties more generally. While political parties now play a role in global politics, it is one that differs fundamentally from that of national parties.

In Chapter 5, Ariel Colonomos defines what he sees as the emerging 'global ethical scene'. The post-Cold War international system is witnessing a major upsurge of moral entrepreneurs, whether NGOs, churches or social movements, hoping to gain respectability and influence by reinvesting the domain of human rights. Through a discussion of recent international disputes over property rights, the ethical monitoring of multinational corporations, and the adoption of more humane sanctions, Colonomos shows that the action of these moral entrepreneurs hinges on the combination of affective community values and business interests, over and beyond the purview of interstate politics. Rather than talk about 'individuals in international relations' or focus on non-state actors as instruments of powerful governments, one should seek to understand the associative mechanisms that create transnational chains of mobilization and shape the emerging normative scene.

The third part of the book deals with the more technical input of NSAs in international governance, as experts, lobbyists and monitors on the ground. In Chapter 6, William Coleman sheds light on the type of policy environment most likely to favour non-state actors. In the case of agriculture, initially a highly autarchic sector, the growth of a supranational policy network drew heavily on individual experts from universities and representatives of think-tanks. However, as policy-making became more institutionalized at the supranational level, the policy environment shifted towards a multilateral governance arrangement, bringing in its wake a new transgovernmental policy network organized around the Committee of Agriculture of the WTO. As a result, non-state actors receded in importance. Thus, globalization may not in some cases make it easier for NSAs to be active players in international politics.

In Chapter 7, Diane Stone looks at the role of think-tanks in international policy-making. While think-tank networks are not new, their scale and density has mounted significantly, extending beyond Western institutes to include a

more globally diverse range of organizations. Increasingly, independent policy research organizations have used appropriately packaged ideas to seek, and sometimes acquire, agenda-setting powers. They have also acted as advisers in international organizations or multilateral negotiations, and partners in policy implementation. However, it is within policy communities that think-tanks may more directly achieve some political and policy influence. A growing number of think-tanks are thus both responsive to and constitutive of emerging global policy processes.

Transnational corporations TNCs have an impact on the environment in two ways. First, their 'business' activities directly affect environmental quality and levels of sustainability more broadly. Second, by engaging with other actors, TNCs also contribute to the establishment of systems of governance. Drawing on a variety of environmental issues, Ian Rowlands defines the many roles that these, either individually or collectively, play in international environmental politics. Their effectiveness as agenda setters, supporters of research, national and international lobbyists is examined, leading to the conclusion that the actual exercise of their considerable economic and political clout depends on the prevailing conditions, and notably on the kind of issue at stake and on the stage and degree of formality of the negotiations. TNCs are thus powerful actors certainly, but not necessarily dominant ones.

This conclusion is also reached by Andrew Walter. Looking at the controversial negotiations concerning a Multilateral Investment Agreement (MAI), he highlights new trends in NSA involvement and shifting patterns of alliances between governments and private groups. In their efforts to strengthen the rules relating to international investment, governments both responded to and relied upon pro-trade business organizations. This Faustian bargain between political and business elites was exposed by latecomers to the scene: non-business NGO groups with a growing interest in international economic regimes, who successfully threatened to halt the entire process of liberalization by targeting the domestic ratification process. Walter argues that the MAI project represented the high-water mark of the peculiar political economy of post-war trade and investment liberalization, in which governments and pro-trade business colluded. At the least, the major governments will need to rethink their whole approach to negotiating international liberalization agreements, probably allowing for much greater NGO participation at the domestic and international levels.

This is certainly the hope of labour representatives. After condemning globalization as inimical to workers' interests, labour groups have sought to take advantage of the structure of opportunity created by cheaper and faster communications, new centres of decision and the emergence of 'global consciousness'. In the case of international trade union federations, this has meant adopting a modified agenda centred on the defence of universal values, diversifying their political targets, and collaborating more closely with other non-

state actors around issues such as regional trading agreements and core labour rights. Daphné Josselin asks whether this strategy is likely to provide organized labour with a new lease of legitimacy and political influence. Looking at recent examples of transnational action, she argues that national and ideological divisions, both within and without the labour movement, will continue to limit the contribution of international trade union federations to the definition of international trade and investment regimes.

In the fourth part of the book, authors take a closer look at ways in which NSA activities seem to challenge our understanding of the state and national security. In Chapter 11, Christopher Coker analyses the 'privatization' of warfare. This privatization is apparent at several levels: in the emergence of limited warfare as the only way for postmodern societies to continue to use war as a political instrument; in the way the commercial ethos is challenging the traditional professional ethos of the armed services; in the growing role of private mercenary companies in the pre-modern world, Africa in particular. It may even be possible that large corporations will turn to these 'privatized peace-keepers', or outfit their own armies in the future. His prognosis is clear, however: although the future may witness a more wide-ranging partnership between the public and private sectors, it will not – in war at least – witness a replacement of the public sector by the private.

Sometimes presented as the underground alter-ego of transnational business, organized transnational crime is hardly new. However, the twentieth century has seen a phenomenal increase in its scope, power and effectiveness, as a result of the revolution in technology, of the increasing sophistication and globalization of economies, of rising cross-border travel and of the spread of weak states. As a result, organized crime now not only operates transnationally, it has mirrored legitimate business in its increasingly global outlook. After a brief overview of the main global players and the ways in which they interact, Mark Galeotti considers the role of organized criminal groupings as agenda-setters, policy-makers and economic actors. His conclusion: we are heading for the criminal millennium, with the struggle against organized and transnational crime likely to be the defining security concern of the twenty-first century.

Diasporas are transnational per definition: their emotive, social, economic and not least political cross-border networks with their homeland constitute one of their main resources for political influence. In Chapter 13, Eva Østergaard-Nielsen examines the political structures and factors furthering and constraining the foreign policy lobbying of diaspora actors. As is the case with most non-state actors, the success of such lobbying depends notably on the political system of the host country and on the scope and importance of the economic-political relations between the host country and the homeland. Dynamics of globalization and transnationalism also play a role in facilitating the trans-state networks and activities of diasporas. However, the sensitive issues of dual authority and loyalty raised by diaspora politics can trigger specific reactions as the groups are perceived

as a threat to national security in the host state, or as dangerous dissidents in the home state.

Islamic fundamentalism raises similar issues. As a political movement it is often hailed as an example of a powerful transnational phenomenon illustrating the weakness and growing obsolescence of the nation-state, especially in the Middle East. In Chapter 14 Katerina Dalacoura challenges this view. Support links do exist between the Islamist movements of the various Middle East countries, and the influence of key actors such as the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, the *mujahedin* (Islamic warriors) and the government of Saudi Arabia has been instrumental in spreading the Islamist message in the region. However, despite the effectiveness and strength of this transnational movement, it is still the domestic political situation of each particular Middle Eastern country that determines not only the concerns of Islamists, but also the nature of their political thinking (in other words their interpretation of Islam). Far from rejecting the nation-state, Islamists accept it as the implicit and all-important context of their political thought.

Finally, in Chapter 15, Daphné Josselin and William Wallace review some of the contributions' major findings with a view to providing an answer to the questions initially outlined: what sources of influence do non-state actors use and how new are they? What are their preferred tactics? Their major targets? Does their involvement call into question the primacy of the state in world politics, and how?

Taken together, these essays shed light on the phenomenon of non-state actor activity in international politics. While the centrality of the state can hardly be overlooked, the role played by non-state actors in emerging patterns of global governance and norm definition has grown, and continues to grow, within the framework of the post Cold-War international system. TNCs work to defend and promote their interests, advocacy campaigners to reform international rules and regimes, criminal groups and terrorists to undermine established order. Students of international relations, whatever their theoretical starting point, must therefore accommodate the fast-evolving nature of state–society relations in a globalizing world.

Notes

- 1 Transnational relations are here defined as 'regular interactions across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an intergovernmental organization' (Risse-Kappen 1995: 3).
- 2 State governments within Germany, for example, hold stakes in Volkswagen and DASA, and also hold substantial stakes in the Landbanks.
- 3 The CIA, for example, provided funding for the European Movement in 1949–51, and played an active part in establishing the Congress for Cultural Freedom, while the Soviet Union supported and funded a competing network of peace councils and social

movements. Many multinational companies actively solicit the support of their 'home' government in promoting their interests.

- 4 The degree of institutionalization of these networks varies; however, in order to distinguish a coalition or network from a mere alliance, the interaction has to occur with regularity over time.
- 5 Civil society here refers to 'the space of uncoerced human association and also the set of relational networks – formed for the sake of family, faith, interest and ideology – that fill this space' (Walzer 1998: 7).
- 6 Moore and Lewis (1999) note that commerce among Greek states continued, relatively uninterrupted, during the Peloponnesian war: a strong indicator that the distinction between public and private actors had taken firm root.
- 7 The authors are indebted to Andrew Walter for this point.
- 8 The origins of Interpol lie in the extensive files which the Austro-Hungarian police, in Vienna, had assembled to monitor revolutionary nationalist and anarchist groups in the decades before the First World War (M. Anderson 1989).
- 9 However, the shift towards domestic-comparative approaches in International Political Economy soon contributed to giving non-state actors a new prominence away from transnationalist approaches (Keohane and Milner 1996; Milner 1997).
- 10 According to Thomas Risse (2001), focusing on transnational actors has enabled constructivist scholars to address the dual criticism initially addressed to them: that they lacked an empirical research programme, and that they overprivileged structure in relation to agency.

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NOTE: All abbreviations and acronyms are given in full in the index entries; to identify the full version of an abbreviation or acronym, please consult the list on pages xi–xiii. Page numbers followed by *n* refer to a note.

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