CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW AND WORLD POLITICS:
DEFINITION, CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, PROBLEMS

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I. SALIENCE

Civil society actors are frequently involved in the processes of global politics and becoming more influential than ever. As such, those actors are not only more visible in the political and legal matters of the developed world, but they also “have become a significant part of political landscape in a growing number of countries in the Third World and former Soviet bloc.”2 In particular, the end of Cold War created opportunities for NGO activity on global level.3 The increasing role of NGOs made it necessary to evaluate their nature, types, and procedures in detail, requiring a more comprehensive approach that goes beyond traditional analysis based on the interactions between nation-states.4

The number of NGOs has risen dramatically since the end of Second World War.5 Over the last three decades their numbers have increased more rapidly and they have become more diversified.6 Notwithstanding their growing salience, their status in international law is not yet clearly defined.7

Involvement of civil society actors, very diverse in nature, and large in number, in world politics creates the need for significant alterations in existing paradigms and analyses, as the study of international relations has historically focused only on inter-state relations, a small part of global transactions.8 Joseph S. Nye, Jr. and Robert O. Keohane, prominent scholars of international politics, join this view, noting that “students and practitioners of international politics have traditionally concentrated their attention on relationships between states. State, regarded as an actor with purposes and power, is the basic unit of

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action; its main agents are the diplomat and soldier.” Nye and Keohane stress that “the environment of interstate politics, however, does not include only these powerful and well-known forces. A good deal of intersocietal intercourse, with significant political importance, takes place without governmental control.”

For this reason, Nye and Keohane believe that the state-centric paradigm has proven to be inadequate in analyzing the nature of world politics on the grounds that states are not always in a position to win in confrontations with other actors. They also refuse the argument that transnational relations have always existed, an argument voiced by the defenders of the state-centric paradigm to prove its prevalence and usefulness.

They also contend that in essence even the proponents of the state-centric paradigm admit the complexity of world politics involves many actors beyond states. However they draw attention to the fact that while proponents of state-centric order are very well aware of the rise of transnational politics, they are inclined to disregard the relevance of global complexity created by transnational actors “on the grounds that their direct political importance is small and that their indirect effects enter, along with domestic factors, into the formation of national foreign policies.”

Nye and Keohane challenge this view, asserting that the students of international politics need to adapt themselves—and their arguments, approaches and theories—to changing circumstances. They note on the matter,

> World politics is changing, but our conceptual paradigms have not kept pace. The classic state-centric paradigm assumes that states are the only significant actor in world politics and that they act as units. Diverse domestic interests have effects on international politics only through governmental foreign policy channels.

Anne-Marie Slaughter, too, believes that the new world order is not what has long been depicted by the proponents of the state-centric paradigm. Slaughter draws attention to the failure of the international order based on the nation-states and the intergovernmental organizations and asserts that the routine proclamations of new world order by world leaders are in fact illusory since such attempts have for the most part referred to a system that relies on the proper functioning of nation-states. However, Slaughter argues that the idea that an international political order solely based on nation-states and intergovernmental organizations needs a central authority that is to be charged with regulating the conduct of world politics is a chimera. Slaughter notes that the new medievalism, whose adherents “proclaim the end of the nation-state,” was presented as the leading alternative to this model. However, it should be noted that Slaughter is suspicious of the validity of this alternative for two reasons in particular. First, the influence of transnational actors in world politics does not necessarily mean the extinction of the nation-state. She further notes that the power shift is not a zero-sum game. In other words, the transnational

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12 *Ibid.*, pp. 724-726. However, it should be noted that their adherence to the world politics paradigm does not mean states are obsolete. Quite the contrary, they assert that the survival of transnational relations very much depends on the presence of states. *Ibid.*, p. 748.
actors’ increasing eminence should not lead us to conclude that states are losing control and prominence.\textsuperscript{17}

In her final analysis, Slaughter asserts that the new—and real—world order is based on cooperation between the states and transnational actors on global problems. Resolving those problems requires enforcement ability, which could mainly be provided by governments. For this reason, “governance without government” is not a viable alternative to state-centric system.\textsuperscript{18}

Like Slaughter, Clark believes that the presence of NGOs in international politics would not eliminate the role of the state, since “the intergovernmental policy-making arena is likely to remain a central point for coordinating action on international issues such as human rights and environment.” But this does not mean that NGOs would not be influential. Their contribution to the international arena regulated by the states and intergovernmental units, Clark contends, “can turn them into organizational avenues for citizens as well as states on pressing global issues.”\textsuperscript{19}

Does this mean the world order is still state-centric? Nye and Keohane argue it does not. They strongly believe that a transnational paradigm is taking over, and refuse the objections directed against the premise that transnational politics is replacing inter-state politics. They further argue that “a broader world politics paradigm is necessary if scholars and statesmen are to understand such current problems as the unequal distribution of power and values in the world, the new setting of United States foreign policy, statesmen’s feelings of ‘loss of control,’ and the new types and tasks of international organizations.”\textsuperscript{20}

The important question here is why does such a new and complex paradigm that destroys the leadership of states in global politics emerge? The general consensus is that civil society actors are becoming increasingly influential simply because states have proven to be inadequate and ineffective in addressing and resolving such global problems as human rights violations and environmental degradation. For instance, Kal Raustiala argues that,

[i]nternational cooperation is required to address the transboundary and global environmental problems. In order to work, international environmental cooperation must rely on the legitimate coercion over private actors which only states, and organizations, wield. That is why many NGOs that are deeply critical of the states system and sovereignty are nevertheless participants in the creation and maintenance of the international environmental institutions.\textsuperscript{21}

In a similar vein, Florini and Simpsons are of the opinion that states simply do not have the necessary will, determination, and even resources to cope with problems that concern the world as a whole. Especially for this reason, “non-governmental organizations (NGOs), informal associations, and loose coalitions are forming a vast number of connections across national borders and inserting themselves into a wide range of decision-making processes on issues from international security to human rights to the

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 184.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., pp. 183-197.
environment.” As a consequence, the emergence of transnational actors specializing in specific problems can be attributed to the void in world affairs that can not be filled by states.

The question then arises, have the civil society actors been successful in rectifying the global problems that the states have been unable to solve? The answer to this question is for the most part positive. Eizenstat, describing NGOs as ‘the fifth estate,’ contends that whereas there are several problems with the NGOs—lack of accountability, the indifference of advocacy networks to compromise, non-satisfaction with the concessions made in response to their demands, and most importantly the non-elected character of the officers governing them—their presence is a positive and constructive element for the course of world affairs, since they have proven to be effective in the construction of a more democratic and just world.

Civil society actors have proven to be very successful not only on the issues that are thought to be of secondary importance like human rights and environmental degradation, but also on issues relevant to security. Furthermore, they have been influential in non-democratic and repressive countries, a fact demonstrating that civil activism is not peculiar to Western political regulations.

The influence and efficiency of civil society actors has become more visible since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent dissolution of the so-called bipolar international system. There are several reasons for the increased influence and number of NGOs following the end of the Cold War:

First, the ebbing political and military rivalry between East and West allowed for international consensus to develop in favor of humanitarian action. With the growing world-wide respect accorded them, NGOs could not be so easily ignored by countries with an eye to their international image. Secondly, diminishing superpower competition made Western donor governments less willing to offer aid to Third World countries as a means of exercising influence. A third reason for the ballooning influence of NGOs in the 1990s is the greater role they assumed in determining policy, both in Western capitals and in the United Nations. NGOs are gaining more authority in determining US foreign policy now that the demise of the Soviet threat has loosened the rigidity of power calculations.

23 Ibid., pp. 1-15.
26 However, it should be noted that some scholars hold that non-state actors were very influential during the Cold War, and even before WWI. For instance, Akaye Iriye challenges the view that the history of world has been shaped by the actions of great military or economic powers, and asserts that non-state actors, ranging from developmental groups to humanitarian organizations, from peace organizations to transnational religious organizations have had a considerable impact. Arguing that the process of internationalization could be traced back to at least pre-1914, Iriye further contends that even the circumstances of Cold War did not prevent the expansion of transnational ideas: “Intergovernmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations, whether engaged in cultural exchange or in relief work, were demonstrating that there were other themes in international affairs in the Cold War, that geopolitics defined only an aspect of the post-war world, and that visions of global community had not disappeared.” Akira Iriye, Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), p. 52.
More importantly, the inherent features of NGOs allow them and other civil society actors to act efficiently and effectively. NGOs have several major strengths that facilitate their work:

First of all, their small size and flexible administration allow NGOs to avoid the complex procedures and politics that larger bureaucracies use to make decisions or organize resources… The single, specialized focus and expertise of NGOs is a second, related advantage, chiefly responsible for the success of groups like Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch. NGOs can focus intensively on human rights research and publicity, undistracted by other agendas… A third strength of NGOs lies in their apolitical nature and independence. Neutrality and independence, their most important distinctions from government, give them opportunity and credibility… Finally, the long-term grassroots involvement of many international NGOs in a country, particularly developing ones, gave them a familiarity with the people and an expertise that donor governments could not match.28

The level of the success and influence of civil society actors is so striking that “the rise of powerful global social movements demanding peace, economic justice and international democracy has changed the landscape of the new century.”29 In demonstrating this success, civil society actors have managed to infiltrate into spheres long regulated by state authorities, and transcend national borders, the protection and preservation of which have been regarded as one of the most fundamental objectives in international relations. In other words, they have become transboundary actors. Burgerman describes the transboundary character of transnational networks as follows:

Networks of activists operate across borders, within political systems irrespective of their nationality, occupying a political space that ignores the boundaries between states: they infiltrate government and intergovernmental bureaucracies; they attempt, with varying degrees of success, to engage in the arena of international politics, formerly considered the sole preserve of states; they are simultaneously insiders and outsiders.30

One of the simplest implications of the transboundary activities of civil society actors carried out on an unprecedented level of cooperation is the demise of state-centric system. It has also led to the decline of International Relations (IR) theories praising the dominance of inter-state relations, and referring to the nation-state as the main unit of analysis. To this end, Scott Turner argues that the emergence of a global civil society poses significant normative and empirical challenge to the basic assumptions of Realist theory. While realists base their theoretical underpinnings on the assumption that human beings are bad, and selfish in nature, the underlying principles of cooperation, and non-violent political action dominant in the activities of global civil society call into question the fundamentals of realism.31

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28 Ibid., p. 56. In addition, Gale argues that the success of global civil society actors in achieving their goals is attributable to their ability to deal with the tensions inside the organizations and to construct “an externally perceived, distinct identity around shared goals and processes.” Gale, “Constructing Global Civil Society Actors: An Anatomy of the Environmental Coalition Contesting the Tropical Timber Trade Regime,” pp. 341-356.


II. INDIFFERENCE

Despite their growing salience and visible influence in the conduct of world politics, civil society actors have for the most part been—and are—ignored by particularly mainstream IR theories. The indifference is most visible in the field of human rights and fields of similarly universal character. For instance, Sikkink clearly states the inadequacy of IR theories to address the rise of the politics of human rights and the activities of the actors involved in their promotion:

Many of our dominant theories—realism, rational choice, and economic interest theories—have trouble accounting for the rise of human rights politics except to dismiss them as marginal, insignificant, or an ideological cover beneath which economic groups or hegemonic countries pursue their interests.33

Similarly, Gordenker and Weiss argue that the theoretical studies on the NGOs are inadequate:

In general, theoretical approaches to explain international cooperation provide little specific insight into the nature and function of NGOs. Most are based on the state as the only noteworthy entity in international cooperation, and provide no category for considering the possibility that NGOs are significant actors in their own right.34

Gordenker and Weiss also contend that “because NGOs, both local and international, increasingly affect world politics, theoretical and practical understandings of NGO activities are intrinsically important.” Furthermore, they are aware that the eminent role played by the NGOs in world politics and the civil society sector itself has not been “fully described nor adequately encompassed in theoretical approaches.”35

Clarke argues that despite the ‘associational revolution,’ a term he coined to refer to the proliferation of NGOs in world politics, political scientists have not contributed much to the relevant literature. He states on the matter that

NGOs have had a significant impact on politics under a variety of regime conditions, but the existing socio-economic basis to the contemporary NGO literature masks the political significance of NGO proliferation and leaves important questions unanswered. Political scientists in years to come therefore face an interesting challenge in documenting and conceptualizing the role of

32 It is not always possible to ‘blame’ the theories and those who propose them. Sometimes, one might find only a few studies carried out in regards to even a popular subject. For instance, it is argued that despite the recent interest in the issue of women’s human rights, “there is still a shortage of empirical, social scientific research on this topic.” Steven C. Poe, Dierdre Wendel-Blunt and Karl Ho, “Global Patterns in the Achievement of Women's Human Rights to Equality,” *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 19, Issue 4, 1997, p. 830. Similarly, Gordenker and Weiss argue that the dearth of descriptive works and useful statistical information on the phenomena related to the NGOs “makes theory-building and policy recommendations a hazardous, if not totally nonfeasible, undertaking.” Leon Gordenker and Thomas G. Weiss, “NGO Participation in the International Policy Process,” *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 16, Issue 3, 1995, p. 555.
NGOs in the ‘associational revolution’, a revolution which is fast becoming one of the most significant political developments of the late twentieth century.36

Others refer to the lack of a legal perspective and approach towards the study of civil society actors. For instance, Falk criticizes the indifference towards transnational actors as international legal entities:

Despite the notable attention given by international law scholars to the normative status of trends toward democratization in state/society relations, remarkably little notice has been paid to the jurisprudential significance of the emergence of transnational democratic tendencies as a feature of the international legal order at the end of the twentieth century.37

Some scholars, while recognizing that there are a number of studies focusing on civil society actors, argue that those studies in many respects do not fully comprehend the global civil society. For instance, Taylor argues that the research on global civil society has proven to be inadequate; that is, the attempts to describe the notion have been weak and the endeavor has not produced enough theoretical approaches. Taylor sees a need to interpret the phenomenon of global civil society as a progressive multi-organization field. He argues that the research needs to go beyond the state-centric approach and take into account the experiences of the actors in the complex world order as the part of analysis.38

Likewise, Wapner draws attention to the shortcoming of the works referring to the influence and success of civil society actors in world politics, noting that they rarely address the societal dimension of this activism. He argues that these works mainly deal with the influence of those actors on governments, and not with their overall impact on the conduct of world politics. The consequence of this flawed perspective, Wapner contends, is that “transnational activists are solely global pressure groups seeking to change states’ policies or create conditions in the international system that enhance or diminish inter-state cooperation.”39

Tsutsui and Wotipka rightly assert that in general the existing literature focuses on the activities of civil society organizations, and not on the individuals engaged in those activities under the groups’ organizational structure. In particular the efforts of the local activists have been largely ignored. This is significant because international human rights NGOs like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch depend extensively on the reporting of the activities of those individuals for promoting their agendas and pursuing their goals.40

This criticism is important, as Tsutsui and Wotipka found that the number of individuals involved in human rights activities has dramatically increased over time. This increase has been parallel to the increase in the number of NGOs working for the promotion of human rights.41 So, in fact it is the individuals who should receive the credit for the overall success and influence of civil society

41 Ibid., pp. 587-620.
organizations. Despite this, the political approach tends to focus more on the organizations themselves, instead of the individuals.

III. CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS:

In stark contrast with the low number of posited theoretical accounts of civil society actors, the literature on civil society actors is rich with regard to concepts corresponding to these actors, and appropriate definitions. The most widely used concept to refer to non-state entities is non-governmental organization (NGO). Although there are many other terms, few have gained acceptance and prominence like the NGO.

The term NGO was first used by the UN authorities in the UN Charter in 1945 to distinguish between the procedures for participation by the intergovernmental specialized agencies and those of international private organizations. However, while the term was established and introduced into international politics by the UN Charter, it did not provide any definition.

Like many other terms widely used in social sciences, the concept of NGO is not clearly defined. In addition, “there is no generally accepted definition of an NGO and the term carries different connotations in different circumstances.” Gordenker and Weiss succinctly expound the problems associated with the study of civil society actors, especially NGOs:

In spite of the growth of the NGO phenomenon, confusion or ignorance persists as to the definition of the participants and the nature of their relationships to the UN system and to one another. Theoretical explorations have tended to be few in number and specific to a particular sector of activity, especially aspects of economic and social development and of the environment. A considerable body of writing has a primarily legal character, which overlooks or understates the richness of NGO activity and politics. Definitional clarity connects closely with concepts of structure, organisation and institutionalisation.

Martens notes that there are two distinct approaches used in defining NGOs: juridical and sociological. In the juridical approach, the emphasis is on the legal status of the NGO both in national legislation and international law, whereas the sociological approach is more concerned with the impact of the NGOs and their transnational settings. The juridical approach has so far appeared to be more problematic, as the status of NGOs under international law is still ambiguous, and with a few exceptions there is no international legal arrangement regulating their role and legal setting. The most authoritative

42 Peter Willetts, “What is a Non-Governmental Organization?” http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/p.willetts/CS-NTWKS/NGO-ART.HTM, last viewed on 17.1.2008. Of course, this does not mean NGOs did not exist before that date. Although some of the scholars tend to assert that the growth of NGOs is a twentieth century phenomenon, it is in fact possible to trace the NGOs’ efficiency 200 years back. Steve Charnovitz, “Two Centuries of Participation: NGOs and International Governance,” Michigan Journal of International Law, Vol. 18, Issue 1, 1997, p. 186.
44 Willetts, “What is a Non-Governmental Organization?”
47 For instance, European Convention on the Recognition of the Legal Personality of International Non-Governmental Organizations, Strasbourg, 24.IV.1986. By the Convention, signatory States undertake to recognize the organizations that shall satisfy the requirements specified under the Convention as international NGOs having legal status within their borders.
body in the juridical approach is the UN, and thus its definitions in different circumstances are the most commonly accepted. However, with the sociological approach, there is no serious restraint on providing definitions; one could find many definitions for the term NGO.

In one definition from a rather sociological approach, NGOs are defined as “self-governing, private, not-for-profit organizations that are geared toward improving the quality of life of disadvantaged people. They are neither part of government nor controlled by a public body.” For this reason, they enable communication and contact between households and the state which affords possibilities of concerted action and social self-organization.”

Another definition of NGO describes “an independent voluntary association of people acting together on a continuous basis, for some common purpose, other than achieving government office, making money or illegal activities.”

Diane Otto emphasizes NGOs’ civil and popular nature in defining the term. Otto defines NGOs as organizations that aim to represent values and aspirations associated with peoples rather than with states, including the promotion of human rights, gender and race equality, environmental protection, sustainable development, indigenous rights, nonviolent conflict resolution, participatory democracy, social diversity, and social and economic justice.

Even though it is hard to determine what NGOs are, it is possible to specify what they are not, for instance, “[a]n NGO will not be constituted as a political party; it will be non-profit-making and it will be not be [sic] a criminal group, in particular it will be non-violent.” NGOs are not primarily interest or political pressure groups. Their function is often to “link the complex, unfamiliar world of government to the familiar terrain of existing or nascent social and economic groups.”

Peter Willetts, one of the most authoritative scholars studying civil society actors, suggests at least six principles for an NGO to meet to be recognized by the UN. First, the organization needs to work in furtherance of the aims of the UN. Second, an NGO should allow fair representation by members, have a headquarters, and have officers. Third, an NGO should be a non-profit organization. Fourth, an NGO should clearly distance itself from violence. Fifth, an NGO should not act in a way that could be interpreted as an interference with the internal affairs of states. Finally, NGOs are not organizations that can be established by an intergovernmental treaty.

Though there are some fundamental aspects common to all NGOs, they may differ in their functions and mandates. Some may have very narrow focus, and others may operate on a broad level. In

48 Tuijl, “NGOs and Human Rights: Sources of Justice and Democracy,” p. 495.
49 Willetts, “What is a Non-Governmental Organization?”
51 Willetts, “What is a Non-Governmental Organization?”
52 Welch, Protecting Human Rights in Africa: Roles and Strategies of Non-governmental Organizations, p. 44.
54 The primary data collected by Smith, Pagnucco and Lopez based on the responses given to the email surveys by NGOs surveyed demonstrates that international NGOs are very diverse, have different mandates and missions, and are very different in terms of scope, efficiency and membership structure. Jackie Smith, Ron Pagnucco and George A. Lopez, “Globalizing Human Rights: The Work of Transnational Human Rights NGOs in the 1990s,” Human Rights Quarterly, Vol. 20, Issue 2, 1998, pp. 379-412. In supporting the above argument, the findings presented in the study made by Shepard implies that NGO networks can engage a wide range of activities, that the NGOs represented in the network could be strikingly diverse, and that while networking undeniable leads to remarkable
addition, some NGOs limit their activities to their own country, while some others extend their activities to several countries—known as international NGOs. “The main difference between these two types of NGOs is that international NGOs base their advocacy more consistently on international law.” They may also differ in terms of structure and configuration. For example, Third World NGOs employ domestic governmental officials while First World NGOs prohibit members with government connections. Furthermore, while most third World NGOs are dedicated to the resolution of the economic problems and pay greater attention to humanitarian issues, the First World NGOs are more concentrated on “civil and political rights,” committed to “fair (due) process,” “individualistic rather than group or community” oriented, and believe “in a pluralist society functioning within a framework of rules impartially applied to protect individuals against state interference.”

The fact that NGOs are highly differentiated and lack governmental support does not necessarily mean they are weak and ineffective. Their diversity in fact gives them an advantage in effectively addressing human rights issues: “Decentralized and diverse, they proceed with a speed and decisiveness and range of concerns impossible to imagine for most of the work of bureaucratic and politically cautious intergovernmental organizations.” Thanks to their independent and private status, they can act free of political control from the state. It should be noted that their recognition by the UN requires them to operate free of the political control of governments. Furthermore, since they do not have foreign policy concerns, they can focus their attention on a particular subject.

The above would lead us to conclude that the most important characteristic of an NGO is its independence from governmental control and influence. Most probably for this reason, non-governmentality is emphasized. However, defining “NGOs as not governmental organizations, gives little guidance to the question of what constitutes an NGO.” Furthermore, basing the definition of an NGO on its non-governmental nature may be taken as a justification for “the defensive position of states towards NGOs and their insistence that the status of an NGO is peripheral to that of a state.” Moreover, the term non-governmental organization is “inherently unsatisfactory,” since “it could encompass any grouping that is not government.”


56 Ibid., p. 7.
60 Willetts, “What is a Non-Governmental Organization?”
62 “It is unclear how distant from government, both in terms of political power and funding, an organization has to be to qualify as ‘non-governmental.’” See Brett, “The Role and Limits of Human Rights NGOs at the United Nations,” p. 96.
It is generally contended that the term NGO is not appropriate for use in lieu of “civil society.” According to Carothers, the NGOs do not necessarily represent civil society, as the latter “is a broader concept encompassing all the organizations and associations that exist outside of the state (including political parties) and the market.” Charnovitz argues that the term NGO is falling out of use, gradually being replaced by the term ‘civil society,’ because NGO has been severely criticized for describing the organization based on what it is not. While there are numerous terms used to describe the NGO, there is now a general tendency among scholars to refer to the “entire domain of NGO acronyms” as ‘civil society.’

The inadequacy of the term NGO for describing civil society actors led to the creation of many other related terms, each claiming comprehensiveness and appropriateness. The most widely used are “transnational networks,” “coalitions,” “transnational social movements,” “global civil society,” “agents of globalization from below,” and “advocacy networks and campaigns.” While some argue that there are very minor, and in most cases insignificant differences between the above terms, some others contend that each refers to a different kind of entity. For instance, according to Khagram, Riker and Sikkink, there are considerable differences between transnational networks, coalitions and advocacy campaigns, and social movements. Transnational networks in general tend to use informal transnational contacts as a method of activism, whereas coalitions and advocacy campaigns prefer coordinated tactics. On the contrary, social movements rely on the mobilization of the masses in protest activities.

In all cases, the underlying point is the transnational character of the organization concerned. The organizations active in such fields as human rights, environment, women’s rights, peace studies, advocacy works, and fields that require transnational cooperation and coordination inevitably enter into alliances with other NGOs with the same goals and expertise based in other countries. Therefore, transnationality is one of the most fundamental characteristics of NGOs.

The most comprehensive and frequently used term to refer to transnational civil actors is “global civil society.” The majority of the studies focusing on the influence and activities of civil society actors have so far tended to examine its nature, development, and sphere of influence. The main idea and assumption behind this tendency is that civil society actors have been converging on most of the critical global issues, leading to the conclusion that a unified and almost uniform global civil society is rapidly forming.

It is asserted that global civil society is quite different from civil society, whose existence and influence could be traced back for centuries. It is argued that while the term ‘civil society’ connotes a national and local perspective, the term ‘world civil society’ or ‘global civil society’ refers to a political and sociological realm independent of territorial boundaries of sovereign nation states. As such, “world civil society is made up of individuals and groups in voluntary association without regard to their identities as citizens of any particular country, and outside the political and public dominion of the community of nations.” Their presence in the political sphere does not depend on the system of states. In

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69 For an organization to be defined as ‘transnational’ at least two requirements have to be met. First, the organization must be active in at least two countries; and second, the branches of that organization in at least one of the countries should not be an agent of the government. Kjell Skjelsbaek, “The Growth of International Nongovernmental Organization in the Twentieth Century,” International Organization, Vol. 25, Issue 3, 1971, p. 422.
other words, they exist to promote their agendas, and not to transmit the demands of the individuals they represent to the political space controlled by states.70

Marlies Glasius, one of the most ardent students of global civil society, offers a brief yet broad definition for the term global civil society: “people organizing to influence their world.” She contends that in order for an organization to fall into this definition, this organization needs to be driven by a dominant political motive.71

Global civil society is referred to in a paper prepared by a unit affiliated with the UN as “the sphere of cross-border relationships and activities carried out by collective actors, which are independent from governments and private firms, and operating outside the international reach of states and markets.”72 The paper intends to clarify the matter further by listing the actors that are likely to fit into this definition, including associations and NGOs, networks and campaigns, trade unions, informal, occasional or local groups, and global social movements.73

Similarly, Alger attempts to classify global civil society actors into five groups based on the interests that create and drive the organizations: government, i.e., quasi-governmental, government organized, or government-run, international governmental organizations, donor organizations, business and industry organizations, and grass-roots organizations.74

Despite all attempts to define the term and clarify its boundaries, a singular definition has not emerged. In addition to definitional uncertainties and difficulties, there are substantial debates as to whether there even exists an entity that could be called ‘global civil society.’ To this end, Olesen, a critical voice, argues that the concept of global civil society is so broad and inclusive that it is an illusion and an artificial construct. He further contends that the concept may be misleading as it may refer to a detachment and departure from what is national and local. For this reason, he is of the opinion that the so-called global civil society can exist only if there is a global state. To overcome this misperception of global civil society, he proposes to “speak of a plurality of transnational publics rather than a single global civil society.”75

Clark, Friedman, and Hochstetler object to the view that there is a fully formed global civil society. Although the authors contend that NGOs are becoming increasingly influential in many fields of international politics, “it is too soon...to declare that a global civil society has definitively emerged,” since the extensive participation of civil society actors at the UN conferences has not led to the elimination of “the differences between North and South, rich and poor, developed and less developed,”76 the imminent problems that the global civil society is meant to resolve.

73 Ibid., p. 6.
IV. DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS

Scholarly works on civil society actors can be divided into three categories based on their perspective and the approaches employed. These are international law perspective, international politics perspective, and sociological perspective. Of course, these categories are not completely unrelated and there might be some overlap.

In general, scholars of international law have focused on legal settings of the NGOs within the international legal order, while for the scholars of international politics, the influence and the impact of civil society actors on the conduct of world politics, and the states’ behaviors have been the most important research areas. Political scientists have put too much emphasis on concepts and phenomena like power, authority, influence, control etc., and have tended to examine the civil society actors in terms of their ability to influence. To this end, scholars of international politics have analyzed NGOs based on their organizational structures rather than their constituents.

Contrary to this approach, sociological perspective focuses on the driving forces within organizations rather than their formal structures and procedures. For this reason, social movements that are for the most part based on spontaneous reactions of the individuals or collectivities to the centers of power and authority are of analytical importance for sociologists. The formal organizations are taken into account only when they are constituted by activist individuals.

A. INTERNATIONAL LAW PERSPECTIVE:

1. Civil Society Actors in International Organizations:

Many international organizations have detailed procedures ensuring involvement and active participation of NGOs in their operations. For example, Amnesty International (AI) actively participated in the deliberations and discussions of intergovernmental organizations like the United Nations (UN) and the Council of Europe and Organization of American States (OAS).

The first draft of the UN Charter made no mention of establishing cooperation with civil and private bodies. However, many groups from the US and other parts of the world pressured the UN to remedy that

77 The debate on human rights became more inclusive following the creation of Amnesty International in 1961. Its creation was followed by the involvement of a large number of NGOs in the debate, resulting in the adoption of a pluralistic view and approach to human rights issues. “Their involvement changed the tone of that debate. They also helped give structure to the manner in which international human rights laws and international institutions, like the United Nations, can work practically to protect people in need.” Michael Posner, “Human Rights and Non-Governmental Organizations on the Eve of the Next Century,” Fordham Law Review, Vol. 66, Issue 3, 1997, p. 628. For more information on the activities of AI within the context of the UN System, see, Helena Cook, “Amnesty International at the United Nations,” in Peter Willetts (ed.), The Conscience of the World: The Influence of Non-Governmental Organisations in the UN System (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1996), pp. 181-214; see also Kerstin Martens, “An Appraisal of Amnesty International’s Work at the United Nations: Established Areas of Activities and Shifting Priorities since the 1990s,” Human Rights Quarterly, Vol. 26, Issue 4, 2004, pp. 1050-1070. Martens found that Amnesty International has been successful in shifting its relationship patterns with the UN. While the NGO’s focus was limited at first, its participation in relevant UN activities has become more visible since the 1990s. The broadened focus has also led to a shift in AI’s engagements. While its roles were of secondary importance prior to 1990, it has since assumed such primary responsibilities as policy implementation and working as a regular member of relevant UN committees and other bodies.

at the San Francisco Conference and as a result, they succeeded in including provisions defining the procedure of cooperation with NGOs.

Article 70 of the Charter regulates the status of NGOs with the UN as follows:

The Economic and Social Council may make arrangements for representatives of the specialized agencies to participate, without vote, in its deliberations and in those of the commissions established by it, and for its representatives to participate in the deliberations of the specialized agencies.

And article 71 states that

The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence.

The arrangements for consultation with NGOs are made in accordance with UN ECOSOC Resolution 1296 (XLIV) (1968).

1. The organization shall be concerned with matters falling within the competence of the Economic and Social Council with respect to human rights.

4. The organization shall be of representative character and of recognized international standing; it shall represent a substantial proportion, and express the views of major sections, of the population in different regions of the world.

The rights that NGOs have as consultative bodies include “to receive the provisional agenda of ECOSOC or its subsidiary bodies and to propose the inclusion of new agenda items,” “to attend public meetings of ECOSOC,” to “submit statements and have them circulated to ECOSOC,” and “to make oral statements before ECOSOC.” Their consultative status has permitted NGOs to actively participate in drafting discussions. They have the right to propose ideas for inclusion and provide support for why those ideas are worth being incorporated into the text under discussion.

In recent years Article 71 has been interpreted broadly, allowing an increasing number of NGOs to involve themselves in the activities of various UN bodies. UN bodies like the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESR), the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the Committee against Torture permit NGOs to make formal interventions concerning human rights matters within those bodies. Women’s human rights groups have taken action to monitor procedure before the Committee on the

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79 About 1,200 voluntary organizations attended the San Francisco Conference by which the UN was established in 1945. The representatives of those organizations played vital roles in the inclusion of the statement “We the peoples of the United Nations…” in the UN Charter. They also managed to influence state representatives in incorporating the expression referring to the individual human rights in the same text. Alger, “Strengthening Relations between NGOs and the UN System: Towards a Research Agenda,” p. 393.
80 Willetts, “What is a Non-Governmental Organization?” p. 2.
84 UN ECOSOC Resolution 1296 (XLIV) (1968).
Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women even though no formal permission to do so has ever been granted.\textsuperscript{87}

The Council of Europe has also established well-detailed procedures ensuring the participation of NGOs in standard setting process.\textsuperscript{88} Under the European Social Charter, which is a component of the regime established by the Council of Europe, an important role is delegated to NGOs. The provision concerned states that NGOs provide input when contracting parties report on the implementation of the Charter.\textsuperscript{89} Furthermore, “the 1995 Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter Providing a System of Collective Complaints includes as sources of such complaints those international NGOs in consultative status with the Council of Europe listed for this purpose, as well as national NGOs if the State in question has made a declaration to this effect when becoming a party to the Additional Protocol.”\textsuperscript{90}

Under the European Convention System for protection of human rights, NGOs have the right to be present as \textit{amici curiae} in the hearings of the European Court of Human Rights.\textsuperscript{91} Individuals under the jurisdiction of the Court are allowed to file petitions against the violator state with the Court. The ability of the NGOs to participate—even if not as parties—is important because the judgments of the Court, over time, have become a source of international law.

As far as the status of NGOs within the European Union (EU) is concerned, the Union stresses the salience of NGOs in promoting human rights. Its Third Annual Report reflects the attitude of the European Union toward NGOs. According to the Report, the EU commits itself:

\begin{quote}
  to strengthening the position of NGOs in international organizations, where the Union defends established NGO access rights, and in third countries, where the Union makes efforts to enhance the role of civil society and NGOs as participants, promoters and beneficiaries in democratization and development processes. The Union is convinced that Government action greatly benefits from dialogue and cooperation with civil society. Therefore, it will continue its own valuable dialogues with NGOs and also continue to provide extensive support to NGOs and to the strengthening of civil society in different parts of the world.\textsuperscript{92}
\end{quote}

2. Status of Civil Society Actors under International Law:

The fact that NGOs and other civil society actors are given important roles within legal arrangements specified in details under some significant regional and international organizations does not necessarily mean that they are international legal entities recognized under international law. Despite the significant influence of NGOs in the conduct of world politics, their status under international law is not clearly defined. Therefore, “from a legal perspective on international affairs, NGOs seem to remain terra incognita,” since states “have not yet agreed on a standard for NGOs operating in the transnational sphere.”\textsuperscript{93} While an ongoing discussion on granting the status of international legal entity to the NGOs.

\textsuperscript{87} Julie Mertus, \textit{From Legal Transplants to Transformative Justice: Human Rights and the Promise of Transnational Civil Society} (Occasional Paper, Halle Institute: Emory University, 2002), p. 22.

\textsuperscript{88} Donnelly, \textit{International Human Rights}, p. 70.

\textsuperscript{89} European Social Charter, ETS No. 035

\textsuperscript{90} Wouters and Rossi, “Human Rights NGOs: Role, Structure and Legal Studies,” p. 9.

\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 10.


\textsuperscript{93} Martens, “Examining the (Non-)Status of NGOs in International Law,” p. 23.
began as early as 1910, they do not have international legal personality under international law, with the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC)\(^\text{94}\) being an exception.\(^\text{95}\)

In addition to their non-status under international law, civil society actors also lack a useful framework for working in cooperation with the international legal entities. Some scholars hold that the legal setting ensuring the NGOs partial access to the UN and its affiliate units is far from being satisfactory. For instance, Aston notes that while the UN seems to have embraced civil society actors, in fact the permissible sphere of action granted to NGOs is very limited and narrow. Moreover, there is a significant disagreement among Member States on whether the level of participation of NGOs in the UN activities should be extended. The UN system of NGO participation is further flawed by the UN Committee on NGOs, which tends to grant consultative status to too many organizations, but often obstructs the work of human rights organizations permitted to conduct their activities within the UN system on the ground that they manifestly misbehave and abuse the consultative status recognized to them under the UN system.\(^\text{96}\)

Other critics also refer to the lack of civil society participation in international legal proceedings, including those carried out under international courts. Shelton notes that despite the fact that NGOs seem to have been active and influential in world politics, their involvement in international litigation has been relatively limited.\(^\text{97}\)

It should be noted that some scholars of international law are not so pessimistic about the status of civil society actors under international law, and the legal arrangements between the international legal

\(^{94}\) The ICRC is the most significant organization in the Red Cross Movement, a global umbrella movement comprised of three distinct international organizations and about 190 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, for at least two reasons. First, it enjoys a special status under international law, which facilitates its work; it is neither a non-governmental organization in a conventional sense, nor is an intergovernmental one formed by states. Second, the evolution of international humanitarian law owes much to its active presence in the domain of international law. The Red Cross Movement has been the leading force and impetus behind the codification of both The Hague and the Geneva Conventions imposing duties on States and individuals during times of war and peace. The role of the States in the process has been limited, and for the most part, insignificant. Their contribution to the evolution of international humanitarian law has been in the form of responding to the calls made by the Red Cross, of participating in the conferences held to draft the documents on the matter, and of accessing the conventions adopted at those conferences. The Movement emerged as a response to the dire consequences of deadly warfare, and its impacts on the civilians. The primary motive behind the movement was the protection of the lives of non-warring entities during wartime, and of the wounded and those who had been taken as prisoners of war. The protection provided by the Movement in this regard is two-fold: on the one hand, it has managed to ensure the codification and implementation of a comprehensive set of international legal instruments that are to be observed by a large number of States. On the other hand, it also provides first-hand and direct humanitarian aid to those individuals who have been affected by the warfare. For further details on the activities of the Red Cross Movement, see, N. O. Berry, *War and the Red Cross: The Unspoken Mission* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997) and J. F. Hutchinson, *Champions of Charity: War and the Rise of the Red Cross* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).

\(^{95}\) Charnovitz, “Two Centuries of Participation: NGOs and International Governance,” pp. 189-190.


\(^{97}\) Dinah Shelton, “The Participation of Nongovernmental Organizations in International Judicial Proceedings,” *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 88, Issue 3, 1994, pp. 611-642. However, Shelton also demonstrates that NGOs have become more active even in the application of international legal rules. Shelton surveys the participation of NGOs in the proceedings of the International Court of Justice, the European Court of Justice, the European Court of Human Rights, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights as amici curiae. While the reach of the NGOs to the International Court of Justice is limited, they have a broader discretion in getting involved in the proceedings of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights. And lastly, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights "has the most extensive amicus practice." *Ibid.*, p. 639.
entities and those actors, including the consultative role recognized to the civil society actors under the UN system. For instance, some hold that global civil society is not outside the international legal order anymore. Christenson contends that world civil society is now under the protection of “a transnational legal process,” indicating that international law does not merely apply to nation-states or other international organizations formed by states. In regards to the role of NGOs under the UN arrangements, Diane Otto argues that even though the consultative status that NGOs have under the UN System may not be completely satisfactory, this role at least “provides an opportunity to support a move towards democratic reform of the UN by carving out a more substantial role for NGOs as a voicepiece for multilayered transnational identities that are barely audible in the current state-dominated system.”

Likewise, in a rather optimistic article it is argued that “NGO participation may in time become an acknowledged legal right, and future global policy coordination may look like quite different.” Rutherford, with a contending approach, argues that NGOs can change the context and course of the discussions and negotiations on a particular issue. He gives the example of land mines issue, wherein NGOs transformed the debate from a military and security issue to a humanitarian problem. Rutherford also concludes that under certain conditions NGOs are able to create international law. It is also noted that despite the fact that the traditional method of international law making is still prevalent, NGOs also have the necessary capability, resources, and will to influence “the emergence, formulation, and monitoring of international norms.”

B. INTERNATIONAL POLITICS PERSPECTIVE:

1. Input of the Civil Society Actors in the Creation of International Norms and Standards:

Many NGOs promote international standards on protection of human rights. They create appropriate conditions in which those standards develop, and come up with new ideas and proposals for implementing those rules. Human rights NGOs have assumed a significant role in the creation of regional and international human rights regimes—especially since the end of WWII. Steiner and Alston note the substantial legal contribution of civil society actors,

102 Ibid., p. 111.
105 Keck and Sikkink, Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics, p. 79. It would not be fair to limit the influence and contribution of civil society actors active in the field of human rights to the advancement of internationally recognized norms and principles to the era beginning at the end of WWII. Burgers found that the human rights movement was active even before Second World War. This movement was kept alive despite the states’ insistence and determination to treat their citizens in any way they chose. This attitude of states did not change during or after the War. However, the NGOs continued their activities for the purpose of maintaining an international order based on the respect for the basic human rights of individuals. Burgers mentions several attempts made by civil organizations in this regard. Those include How shall We Win?, a pamphlet issued by the Movement for Federal Union in 1940, An International Bill of Rights?, a proposal presented by the Catholic Association for International Peace in 1941, The International Bill of Rights and Permanent Peace Concordance, published under the aegis of the Twentieth Century Association in 1943, and A Statement of Essential Human Rights, published by the American Law Institute in 1944. Jan Herman Burgers, “The Road to San Francisco: The
A high proportion of the most significant initiatives to draft new international instruments to establish new procedures and machinery, and to identify specific governments as violators have come as a result of concerted NGO campaigns designed to mobilize public opinion and lobby governmental support.\textsuperscript{106}

As a logical consequence of the intense participation in and contribution to international law making, almost all human rights regimes now inevitably involve NGOs.\textsuperscript{107} They have been very influential in the development of international human rights laws through their consultative or observer status in treaty bodies, formal international conferences for the creation of treaties, and international meetings such as preparatory conferences for formal international conferences.\textsuperscript{108}

There are numerous examples of NGOs and other civil society collectivities having a substantial impact on the creation of international standards and norms. Those include the UN Charter, the first salient reference to international human rights, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the most authoritative document in the field of human rights which for the first time makes note of some fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals. NGOs, again, played a crucial role in the creation of the Covenants (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).\textsuperscript{109} Some major international NGOs, including the International League for the Rights of Man and the International Commission of Jurists, have been involved in the promotion and adoption of those two authoritative documents.\textsuperscript{110}

After a time of relatively slow progress with regard to human rights matters during the 1950s and 1960s, “by the mid-1970s monitoring of human rights through UN bodies started to take off. Several treaties were negotiated, then ratified by individual states.”\textsuperscript{111} This shift can be mostly attributed to the détente in global politics at the time. The tension between two major blocs was eased, and a platform of partial mutual understanding was established. However, other factors contributed to the process as well. Many of the achievements in the field of human rights have been the direct consequence of NGO monitoring and pressure.\textsuperscript{112} For example, “in the 1970s and 1980s many states decided for the first time that promotion of human rights in other countries was a legitimate foreign policy goal and an authentic

\textsuperscript{107} Welch, \textit{Protecting Human Rights in Africa: Roles and Strategies of Non-governmental Organizations}, p. 48. It has been noted that the regime that has emerged since the end of the WWII in the field of human rights tends to be of universal character, embracing all humans. This universalism manifests itself in the fact that “human rights in principle accrue to all individuals, regardless of their citizenship and residency.” See Christine Min Wotipka and Francisco O. Ramirez, “World Society and Human Rights: An Event History Analysis of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Atlanta, August 2003, p. 2. Therefore, it should not be surprising to witness a large scale involvement of civil society actors in such a universal issue as human rights.
\textsuperscript{108} Mertus, \textit{From Legal Transplants to Transformative Justice: Human Rights and the Promise of Transnational Civil Society}, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 72-73.
\textsuperscript{111} Welch, \textit{Protecting Human Rights in Africa: Roles and Strategies of Non-governmental Organizations}, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{112} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 57.
expression of national interest. This decision came in part from interaction with an emerging global human rights network.”

The 1970s is of great importance in that both the number and activities of human rights nongovernmental organizations grew substantially. As they have grown in number and become increasingly organized, NGOs have increased their impact on standard setting in the field of human rights. Amnesty International’s campaigns, both on the national and international level, were very influential over the UN initiatives on torture in the 1970s and 1980s. The International Commission of Jurists, a non-governmental organization whose main focus is on contributing to the process of treaty making, played remarkable roles in preparatory stages of the African Charter of Human and Peoples’ Rights of 1981, and in the adoption of the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture in 1987. Tuijl explains some of the successes of NGOs in that particular period of time:

NGOs have consistently continued their efforts to strengthen the UN human rights system and have succeeded in influencing the formulation of different UN treaties and conventions, such as the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. Often, NGOs led the way in proposing new institutional arrangements in order to embody UN responses to human rights abuses. Their influence is visible in the creation of such mechanisms as the UN expert body to examine disappearances, the working group on arbitrary detention, the establishment of Special Rapporteurs, and the creation of the position of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The efforts of NGOs like Amnesty International also contributed to the adoption of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 1984. NGOs have also made substantial contributions to the creation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989. In this regard, the Ad Hoc NGO Group on the Drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was formed in 1983. The group succeeded in participating in drafting process of the Convention, and made contributions to the substantive articles of the Convention.

115 On the substantial contribution of the Amnesty International to the development of a comprehensive international human rights law, Ann Marie Clark notes that “the norms that we recognize today as part of human rights law have for the most part been created through a process in which Amnesty International and a few nongovernmental organizations have been key participants.” Ann Marie Clark, Diplomacy of Conscience: Amnesty International and Changing Human Rights Norms (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 5.
116 Donnelly, International Human Rights, p. 11.
118 Tuijl, “NGOs and Human Rights: Sources of Justice and Democracy,” p. 496.
120 Claire Breen, “The Role of NGOs in the Formulation of and Compliance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict,” Human Rights Quarterly, Vol. 25, Issue 2, 2003, p. 457. Breen also demonstrates that NGOs can play an important role in the formulation of a comprehensive treaty dealing with such sensitive issue as children’s rights. She examined the case of the impact of efforts of the NGOs on the adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This case proves that NGOs can shape the outcome of treaty negotiations if they remain subscribed to their objective. While the initial results of the negotiations held for the purpose of adopting a satisfactory treaty have disappointed the
Under the Convention, NGOs have a role in monitoring the implementation of the Convention. In other words, NGOs not only contributed to the formation of the Convention on Children’s Rights, but also acquired a role to monitor its implementation. Article 45 of the Convention reads as follows:

In order to foster the effective implementation of the Convention and to encourage international cooperation in the field covered by the Convention:
(a)…[T]he Committee may invite the specialized agencies, the United Nations Children’s Fund and other competent bodies as it may consider appropriate to provide expert advice on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their respective mandates.

NGOs have also become more effective on the regional level. In the early 1970s, African human rights NGOs began receiving aid from external governments and other aid suppliers. The reason for this was that African governments were ineffective in providing even basic services. Therefore, NGOs simply took over certain roles of those governments. As a consequence of the diminished efficiency of African governments, regional and international NGOs started to play more eminent roles throughout the Continent.

The end of Cold War created new opportunities for effectively addressing human rights violations, and for creating more productive protection mechanisms; “[t]he end of the Cold War represented a seminal moment for the human rights movement. In less than three decades of active campaigning, non-governmental advocates had made human rights a common and powerful language and could claim no small part in the widespread attention to civil liberties and democratic reforms in countries throughout Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe.”

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Communist system eliminated the barriers between the Western World and former Soviet allies. This helped establish cooperation on a range of global issues, including human rights. Over several decades, the Communist bloc, under the lead of Soviet Union, has mostly advocated for economic, collective and community rights, while Western countries have paid more attention to civil, political and individual rights. With the removal of the distinction between the West and the Communist World, human rights concerns became more prominent on the global agenda.

Of the occasions concerning human rights issues, the Second World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993, is the first and the most prominent. The Conference saw the largest gathering

NGOs, their insistence and perseverance has led to the formulation of the Optional Protocol, a much more enhanced tool than the previous one.

This case also proved that sometimes the success of civil society actors can be more striking than expected. For instance, the NGO network formed for the purpose of influencing the formal negotiations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child did not expect that its impact would have been so visible that “a role for NGOs would be spelled out in the implementation portion of the Convention.” See Cynthia Price Cohen, “The Role of Nongovernmental Organizations in the Drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,” Human Rights Quarterly, Vol. 12, Issue 1, 1990, p. 145.


Welch, Protecting Human Rights in Africa: Roles and Strategies of Non-governmental Organizations, p. 45.


Donna J. Sullivan notes the success of civil society actors in the Vienna Conference as follows: “The June 1993 World Conference on Human Rights witnessed the extraordinary success of efforts by women's rights activists
on human rights issues with the participation of not only state representatives and international organizations, but also members of non-governmental organizations. Over 1500 non-governmental organizations were represented in the Conference, and 2100 officials from 171 countries and 3600 representatives from various non-governmental organizations attended the sessions.

The NGOs represented at the conference contributed to the final product of the Conference in many respects. The principle that “one set of rights cannot be used to bargain for another” was included in the text as a result of the efforts of NGOs. The Vienna Conference also witnessed a great advancement towards the recognition of women’s human rights, which was partially the result of another major contribution of non-governmental organizations. Women’s Rights Network directly lobbied the participants of the Conference to include the concerns of the network in the Conference agenda.

The intention of the advocates of women’s rights was not to claim different rights for women but to make clear that discrimination against women or violation of women’s rights are not different or less important than any other human rights violations. NGOs have been largely involved in not only the general meeting held in Vienna, but also in regional preparatory meetings for the Conference. Even after the Conference ended in June, NGOs with regional focuses continued to influence the proceedings. As a result of NGO pressure, at the end of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ (ASEAN) ministerial meeting in July 1993, the ministers declared that “ASEAN should also consider the establishment of an appropriate regional mechanism on human rights.”

Even though those efforts have not resulted in a mechanism as proposed in the text of declaration as yet, the fact that the statement above was included in the document should be regarded as a great breakthrough. Asian nations have long been known for their reluctance to make strong commitments on human rights issues, with the pretext that the existing mechanisms on human rights are of Western origin, and thus, contradictory to Asian values, which emphasize the importance of society, rather than of individuals.

Two years after the Vienna Conference, another major meeting - specifically on women’s rights this time - was held in Beijing in 1995. NGOs, as usual, played significant roles at different stages of the worldwide to end the historic disregard of human rights violations against women.” Donna J. Sullivan, “Women's Human Rights and the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights,” American Journal of International Law, Vol. 88, Issue 1, 1994, p. 153.

130 The influence of civil sector of world politics at the conference was expressed as follows: “The NGOs held their own parallel Forum in advance of the official conference and despite efforts to restrict their access to both the preparatory Geneva meetings and in Vienna, the sheer scale of their presence and particularly in the case of women’s groups, their persistence and level of organization, ensured that the final conference was less insubstantial than at least some of the diplomats might have wished.” Kevin Boyle, “Stock-taking on Human Rights: The World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna 1993,” Political Studies, Vol. 53, Issue 1, 1995, p. 82.
131 Tuijl, “NGOs and Human Rights: Sources of Justice and Democracy,” p. 496.
132 Keck and Sikkink, Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics, p. 186.
134 In this regard, NGOS held several regional caucuses, and they also participated in the official regional preparatory meetings for Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. In all those meetings and caucuses, NGOs managed to convince the government representatives that violations of women’s rights are urgent issues that need to be addressed at the upcoming conference. Sullivan, “Women's Human Rights and the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights,” pp. 153-155.
Conference. The proliferation of NGOs in the non-Western world became sharply evident during the meeting.\textsuperscript{136} The initial document of the Conference contained many ambiguities. International Women Movement developed complex strategies to effectively deal with the problems derived from these ambiguities. In the end, the Movement succeeded in making direct contributions to the final document of the meeting. In addition to this, there were a number of other cases in which government representatives included the proposals of NGOs in the documents.\textsuperscript{137}

C. RELATIONS BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS AND STATE:

One of the greatest ongoing debates within the IR scholarship is whether nation states are losing control and prominence. The proponents and opponents of the state-centric paradigm are almost equally ardent and prolific in defending and substantiating their arguments and positions. For this reason, one could find numerous works on this quite controversial issue.\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{136} Donnelly, \textit{Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice}, p. 149.
\textsuperscript{138} Even those who contend that non-state actors are playing important roles in the conduct of global politics – explicitly, or implicitly- sometimes refer to the supremacy of the nation-state. Even though their works underline the significance of non-state actors, the distinction between the actors of world politics seems to be problematic: when referring to the salience of non-state actors, those works in general employ such terms as non-state actors, non-governmental organizations, transnational networks, or organizations, and so on. The problem here is that each label has a reference to the nation-state. Two exceptions are worth mentioning: R. B. Hall and T. J. Biersteker (eds.), \textit{The Emergence of Private Authority in Global Governance} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). The title implies that there two types of authority: public authority, that is nation-state, and private authority, that is, all other actors, including, transnational networks, organizations, corporations, criminal networks. However, even this approach is not appropriate for describing the non-state actors: one could ask why we need to believe that state is the public authority. The second exception seems to remove this deficit: James Rosenau, \textit{Distant Proximities: Dynamics Beyond Globalization} (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003). Rosenau, one of the most prolific scholars of global politics, examines the nation-state as a center of authority. In his opinion, in contemporary globalized world, states are not the only authorities governing the peoples of the world and interactions at all levels. In this regard, states are not enjoying the dominant position, as they used to, in global politics. The reason for this assertion is that many new entities, in his conceptualization, spheres of authority (SOAs) have emerged, and continue to emerge. There are various and sundry SOAs. Considering the large number and variety of actors playing their own roles in global politics, Rosenau contends that global politics is so complex and sophisticated that states can no longer be regarded as the sole authorities and conductors of all kind of global or local activities; “the central institution of modern society [which is the nation-state] may no longer be suitable as the organizing focus of inquiry.” P. 294. An SOA, which is expected to perform at least a supplemental role to the one performed by states in Rosenau’s formulation (p. 294), can be “an issue regime, a professional society, an epistemic community, a neighborhood, a network of like-minded, a truth commission, a corporation, business subscribers to codes of conduct, …a social movement, a local or provincial government, a diaspora, a regional association, a loose confederation of NGOs, a transnational advocacy group,…a terrorist organization,…and so on across all the diverse collectivities.” P. 295. In Rosenau’s view, those SOAs legitimized themselves; having reduced the number of states that once had extensive authority the same as their counterparts had long enjoyed in the past. Rosenau argues that the view that stability in the global system cannot be maintained without strong and effective states’ dominance is a misperception (p. 296). To put it differently, stability does not require a limited number of authorities, some of which are assumed to ensure the continuity of established system. With SOAs actively and effectively involved in global matters that were long addressed mainly by states, it is possible to maintain a long-standing stability. Therefore, for Rosenau, the issue of whether states are losing control and new authorities –either as supplement to or substitute for states- are emerging is not controversial. What is debatable, however, is how the new social contracts between SOAs and the public, and states and the rest of authorities will be interacting and arranging the
What is more controversial is the position of the civil society actors in world politics in relation to the status of the nation-state. There are numerous issues that need to be clarified in this regard, including the relationships between states and civil society actors, the influence of civil society actors on the actions of states, the lack of accountability of civil society organizations and so on.

Perhaps the most important question is, why do civil society actors exert pressure on state authorities? The simplest answer is the non-compliance of state with their transnational obligations. Skogly and Gibney contend that all actors in world politics, especially the nation-states, have transnational human rights obligations imposed upon them by customary international law, treaty law, soft law (which incorporates the decisions and other relevant outcomes of the international and UN bodies), and case law, composed of the rulings of international courts and other relevant bodies. Despite this, states have consistently failed to act in accordance with the obligations imposed by their commitments under international law.

For this reason, the civil society sector gets involved in the process, aiming to influence states’ actions, and force them to comply with their obligations. Another question becomes relevant at this point: how successful can the civil society sector be in changing states’ behaviors and making them comply with their obligations? It is not an easy task to assess the influence of the NGOs on states’ behaviors, or on the adoption of an international instrument on a particular subject that concerns the relevant NGOs, as there are numerous factors involved such processes.

Some argue that civil society actors could be quite influential. For instance, Price demonstrates that NGOs can be successful not only in relatively easy issues, but also in those directly related to the security interests of states. While the argument that states are usually keen to preserve their prerogatives, especially when it comes to their perceptions regarding their own security, is found by many to be plausible, the involvement and influence of the NGOs in the international campaign to ban the use of land mines marks a serious challenge to this assumption. During the negotiations, the NGOs ensured adoption of a package of compromise that would not have been accepted by the states in the absence of the civil society pressure because of considerations on preservation of national interests.

Rutherford also highlights the increasing role played by NGOs in international politics, and draws attention to the fact that they are able to change states’ behaviors even in situations sensitive to national relationships between themselves. It is worth recalling that ‘social contract’ is a renowned notion developed by Rousseau to explain the relationship between ‘state’ and ‘society’. Hence, Rosenau would indirectly suggest that this notion needs to be reformulated so as to embrace SOAs.

140 For instance, it is noted that “the community of nations exhibited almost no willingness to hold individual states accountable for human rights violations when Amnesty International started its public campaigning.” Clark, Diplomacy of Conscience: Amnesty International and Changing Human Rights Norms, p. 4.
141 The underlying assumption here is that “aware of the monitoring role NGOs may play, (States) may be less willing to provide these actors with tools that could be used against them.” Törnquist-Chesnier, “NGOs and International Law,” p. 254.
143 For instance, Albin shows that NGOs can make positive contributions to the international negotiations, and successfully convince the delegates participating in those negotiations to come to their terms. Cecilia Albin, “Can NGOs Enhance the Effectiveness of International Negotiation?” International Negotiation, Vol. 4, Issue 3, 1999, pp. 371-387.
He also argues that the involvement of NGOs in the international treaty-making processes reduced closed door negotiations, thereby making the conduct of world politics more transparent.\textsuperscript{145} Likewise, it is argued that the involvement of NGOs in humanitarian activities has led to the adoption of more ethical and ‘humanitarian’ foreign policies by states.\textsuperscript{146} 

However, others challenge this view, asserting that the civil sector’s influence on states’ actions can be quite less than expected. For instance, the argument that NGOs are influential in the decisions of governments is contested by Clark, Friedman and Hochstetler.\textsuperscript{147} They assert that while governments have seemed responsive to the demands of civil society actors, this “does not necessarily mean acceptance of NGO perspectives.”\textsuperscript{148} 

Similarly, Dicklitch and Lwanga show how the work of human rights NGOs is hampered by the presence of the limitations, obstructions and difficulties they have to confront. According to the authors, Ugandan human rights NGOs have had a limited role in creating a positive human rights culture in their home country, as historically rooted repression has created a dominant feeling of fear among the public, a fact that has made people indifferent to what those organizations offer.\textsuperscript{149} As a consequence, “[Ugandan human rights NGOs], not willing to risk state repression or lose foreign aid, thus resort to non-contentious human rights issues that do not engage the regime or test the resolve or interest of society to demand for human rights for all.”\textsuperscript{150} 

Those who have adopted a middle-of-the-road approach, argue that states and civil society actors are not in conflict most of the time, and tend to cooperate with each other. To them, civil society actors can be most successful when they use cooperation instead of conflict and a militant approach.

For instance, Forsythe presents the case of the Red Cross as an example of a worldwide movement that both conserves the state authority and influences its decisions with regard to the protection of fundamental human rights of the individuals, especially during war time. He argues that the Red Cross, in order to proceed with its actions on sensitive issues, cooperates with the states on the one hand, and promotes the development of a comprehensive law of armed conflict to confine the ability of states to act freely on the other. Over time, it has gained acceptance and recognition by playing its conventional roles and transformed itself into a quasi-supranational authority helping “liberalize the nation-state system.”\textsuperscript{151} 

Martens similarly recognizes the possibility of cooperation between states and civil society actors, noting that “NGOs are not always opponents to governmental institutions and do not always challenge their policies. Rather, they are often directly involved in the design of policies and may shape political processes from inside the official arenas.”\textsuperscript{152} 

\textsuperscript{145}Kenneth R. Rutherford, “Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Politics in the Twenty-First Century,” \textit{American Foreign Policy Interests}, Vol. 23, Issue 1, 2001, p. 27.  
\textsuperscript{148}Ibid., p. 35.  
\textsuperscript{150}Ibid., p. 482.  
\textsuperscript{152}Martens, “Examining the (Non-)Status of NGOs in International Law,” p. 1.
Adopting a similar line of argument, Afsharipour examines the impact of concerted efforts by NGOs working in the field of women’s rights in Bangladesh. There, they were able to convince the government to ratify the Convention, thus imposing obligations on signatory States regarding the protection of women’s rights. The study shows that local NGOs can be successful especially when they manage to establish ties and cooperate with the government in regards to the issue they are working on.\footnote{Afra Afsharipour, “Empowering Ourselves: The Role of Women’s NGOs in the Enforcement of the Women’s Convention,” \textit{Columbia Law Review}, Vol. 99, Issue 1, 1999, pp. 129-173.}

In a study surveying the activities of the international campaign to ban land mines, Cameron suggests a number of lessons that can be learned from the global movement to ban land mines. He argues that this campaign proves that establishing partnership between civil society organizations as well as between those organizations and governments is an effective method to achieve better results. Additionally, certain global problems can be resolved under the leadership of a coalition of like-minded governments, even in the presence of a strong opposition. Moreover, he argues that formal and restrictive diplomatic forums that tend to exclude the participation of diverse actors are no longer viable.\footnote{Maxwell A. Cameron, “Global Civil Society and the Ottawa Process: Lessons from the Movement to Ban Anti-Personnel Mines,” \textit{Canadian Foreign Policy}, Vol. 7, Issue 1, 1999, pp. 85-102.}

Considering cases like the above, Carothers notes that the rise of civil society does not always mean the decline of state. According to him, the case is quite the opposite; civil society will find more opportunities to flourish under a strong, stable and effective government.\footnote{Carothers, “Think Again: Civil Society,” p. 26.}

1. The Sociological Perspective:

The sociological perspective of civil society actors is much more comprehensive than other perspectives, as it is more concerned with the individuals, rather than the organization itself, and its legal setting. For this reason, the individual behaviors, and the collective behavior formed by those individuals are the major focal points of sociological inquiry into civil society actors. The consequence of this approach is the abundance of works on social movements, links between the fair and democratic representation within civil society organizations and the role of the citizens within the movements.\footnote{For instance, see among others, Susan Burgerman, \textit{Moral Victories: How Activists Provoke Multilateral Action} (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001), Matthew Evangelista, \textit{Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War}, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999), and Ann Florini (ed.), \textit{The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society} (Tokyo and Washington: Japan Center for International Change and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999).} The individualistic approach adopted in those works make them much more solid, and perhaps more reliable.

One of the most popular and frequently cited works that could be regarded as a sociological work is that written by Keck and Sikkink.\footnote{Keck and Sikkink, \textit{Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics}.} This work is very important because it is a comprehensive reference explaining the successes and achievements of some prominent transnational activist networks.

Contending that the discipline of international relations still lacks a comprehensive theoretical framework on transnational activism, Keck and Sikkink assert that recent decades have witnessed scholars of global politics extending the limits of the field; however, no significant academic studies have emerged until recently. Even though their study is not entirely theoretical, it provides future researchers with a basis for applicable theories to be built on. It mainly examines how transnational advocacy networks emerged, how they work, and how effective they are.
Keck and Sikkink assert that advocacy networks are quite effective, as they promote norm implementation. The networks do this by targeting actors, usually states, and by monitoring their compliance with the established rules. Given the dominance of states in global politics, the fact that the advocacy networks, which normally have no formal power or authority, are able to alter the states’ practices is impressive. The power of transnational advocacy networks derives from the cooperation and convergence among local activist groups. When the local groups do not regard themselves as powerful enough to alter the state’s practices, they seek international allies. In so doing, they gain political leverage which helps them to get the state to comply with their demands.

The authors called this process “The Boomerang Pattern.” This lucid and strong analysis explains the emergence of networks and why the states often meet the demands of local activist groups, even though the former have a certain authority over the latter. In answering the question of “how do transnational advocacy networks work?” the authors classify and formulate the tactics those groups utilize: “information politics,” “symbolic politics,” “leverage politics,” and “accountability politics.”

Another important example of sociological perspective on civil society actors is the article entitled “Transnational social movement organizations in the global arena,” by Smith, Pagnucco, and Romeril, which compares “a subset of international non-governmental organizations called transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs),” with “national social movement organizations.” The authors selected seven TSMOs, which are operating in fields ranging from human rights to the environment. These are Amnesty International, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Oxfam, Peace Brigades International and War Resisters International. Five dimensions of the organizations are examined in the article: “founding and mission; leadership structure; membership; resources; and tactics”.

The authors contend that TSMOs are now significant actors in global politics, as they “educate national and sub-national groups as well as individuals directly about, for example, global environmental problems, human rights, or health issues.” In performing this duty, they operate at three levels: “people-to-people, state and transnational.”

“Globalization From Below: The Power of Solidarity” by Brecher, Castello and Smith, is another major sociological work examining the impact of organized people. In this study, the authors discuss a series of ideas from the leading activists of currently popular social movement, namely “globalization from below,” a strong reaction against “globalization from above”, which is corporate-driven and hegemonic in nature.

The authors offer an alternative paradigm in the debate over globalization. They not that until recently globalization has been viewed from the perspective of “economists, pundits, corporate

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158 Brysk has found that even a national social movement aiming to improve human rights standards could be effective to a considerable degree by reaching out to the international system. There are two important factors facilitating the recognition of the cause of a national movement by the international community. One is simply the sensitive nature of the issue. Human rights matters can easily draw the attention of different sectors of the global community. Second is the existence of a transnational network active in the matter the national movement is involved in. Transnational NGOs can bring the national case to the world agenda, creating a greater impact and pressure on the attitude of the repressive government. Alison Brysk, “From Above and Below: Social Movements, the International System, and Human Rights in Argentina,” Comparative Political Studies, Vol. 26, Issue 3, 1993, pp. 280-281.


executives, and the leaders of the world’s richest nations.” However, this perspective, constitutes their own “unique” view, which is “globalization from above.” 161 Those who advocate this kind of globalization have also argued that “their” globalization benefits (and will benefit) everyone. This assumption later proved to be untrue. As a consequence, resistance gradually developed to counteract “globalization from above” throughout 1990s. People became aware of this “insurgency” in 1999, “when tens of thousands of protesters brought the Seattle meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to a halt.” However, it is still uncertain whether this resistance will be successful in the long term.

The authors argue “people can indeed exercise power over globalization, but only by means of solidarity that crosses the boundaries of nations, identities, and narrow interests. A corporate driven, top-down globalization can only be effectively countered by globalization from below.” That is, resistance against the “bad” globalization has to be global itself, and transcend national boundaries if those who have been affected by the dire consequences of globalization to combat it effectively. Thus, the book calls on those affected to be aware of their potential power, “the power of solidarity,” and to exercise this power.

Claiming that globalization was “caused by people acting with interest-seeking new economic opportunities, creating new institutions, trying to outflank political and economic opponents,” the authors strongly believe that it is possible to alleviate the dire impacts of globalization from above.

As noted earlier, works from the sociological perspective refer to the individuals rather than the organizations as the most important and influential actors in civil society. This observation is relevant to the issue of accountability of civil society actors, 162 a strong criticism voiced against their omnipresence, 163 on the grounds that there is no mechanism holding them liable for their actions, and that they do not ensure fair representation. 164

Some argue that there is not necessarily a connection between civil society and democracy. For instance, Hall and Trentmann note on this matter that “civil society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was not particularly well equipped to handle the demands or questions derived from popular politics.” 165 Similarly, Gordenker and Weiss note:

NGOs themselves are not necessarily democratic, which raises the question of who represents what to whom. Elections are hardly frequent occurrences within NGOs, which do not function the

161 The distinction between “globalization from above” and “globalization from below” was made by Richard Falk. “Globalization from above” represents globalization promoted by global capital holders and large multinational enterprises whereas ordinary masses respond to this sort of globalization by their own global movement from “below.” See, Richard Falk, Predatory Globalization: A Critique (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2000).
162 For an analysis of political responsibility of transnational advocacy organizations, see Lisa Jordan and Peter van Tuijl, “Political Responsibility in Transnational NGO Advocacy,” World Development, Vol. 28, Issue 12, 2000, pp. 2051-2065. The authors argue that the relationships among the transnational NGOs are problematic with a special reference to political responsibility.
163 It is noted that “nongovernmental organisations clearly operate in every geographic range from the community to the transnational.” Gordenker and Weiss, “NGO Participation in the International Policy Process,” p. 545.
164 For instance, Blitt draws attention to the questions raised with regard to the NGOs’ alleged non-accountability and misrepresentation of the public, and seeks answers to those questions. He asserts that it is the NGOs who are responsible for alleviating the criticisms directed against them within the context of the issue of accountability and greater legitimacy. In this regard, Blitt argues, they need to maintain regulatory measures of their own, if they “truly are committed to defending the important role carved out by human rights organizations and advancing the cause of human rights.” Robert Charles Blitt, “Who Will Watch the Watchdogs? Human Rights Nongovernmental Organizations and the Case for Regulation,” Buffalo Human Rights Law Review, Vol. 10, Issue 2, 2004, pp. 261-399.
way representative governments do. And the elites of large NGOs at the summit or even at lower levels of expenditures may hardly be different from those of IGOs [Intergovernmental Organizations] or the governments that they supposedly confront. NGO leaders may push their own personal agendas rather than those of constituents.  

These objections are challenged by some sociologists who argue that because most civil society actors depend on individuals, it is the individuals who actually drive the organizations. In this regard, the emergence of transnational grassroots movements challenges the view that transnational actors in general lack democratic and fair representation and accountability. While it is true for the most part that nongovernmental actors are the real players behind the development of norms and standards in the field of human rights, the collaborative efforts of individuals within the governments and intergovernmental organizations should be acknowledged as well.  

This analysis suggests that the success of civil society organizations is mainly attributable to the eagerness and efforts of the individuals concerned about global problems. For this reason, continued success very much depends on the perpetual involvement of individuals in social movements and other forms of reaction. Upon the examination of the involvement of global civil society actors in UN Summits as major events having the potential to change the direction of global politics, Pianta concluded that "the future of civil society and social movements on global issues remains tied to their roots in society and their autonomy in asserting their values and identities, carrying out activities, proposing alternatives and achieving change."  

V. CONCLUSION:  

While there are numerous works focusing on the salience, influence, and efficiency of civil society actors, almost none of them can be regarded as theoretical accounts. Mainstream theories, while acknowledging the importance of non-state entities as actors in international politics, do not make strong references to their theoretical value.  

This indifference is quite understandable, given the challenges posed by the complexities and ambiguities involved with civil society actors. Those include definitional difficulties, lack of features common to all civil society actors, and the very diverse characters of civil society actors. Therefore, it is not an easy task to develop a paradigm that would ensure full comprehension and understanding of the complex domain of global civil society.  

The instances of coalition building between NGOs and other civil society actors, and alliances between civil society actors and like-minded states supportive of their campaigns are far more complex than the sketch briefly drawn here. For example, the NGO Coalition for an International Criminal Court (CICC), an alliance of NGOs dedicated to the creation of a fair, independent and strong permanent international criminal court, involves over 2,000 organizations, most having different missions and mandates. It is a truly global entity, with strong regional and local ties. Separate coalitions exist within CICC; so, it is not only a coalition of individual NGOs, but also a coalition of coalitions. At the  

170 Gordenker and Weiss note on this matter that “much remains to be done to approach a comprehensive theory of NGOs, either along social lines or from some other direction.” Gordenker and Weiss, “NGO Participation in the International Policy Process,” p. 544.
inception, it was designed as a temporary movement; however, over time it has become more institutionalized. It now differs from transnational movements and campaigns. Moreover, unlike conventional civil society actors, CICC has established links with governmental authorities; for instance, it accepts funding from various governments.

From an international law perspective, CICC is quite important, as it has been one of the leading forces behind the adoption of the Rome Statute establishing the first permanent international criminal court (ICC) in particular, and the evolution of international criminal law in general. From an international politics perspective, it could be seen as a major indicator of the decline of state, and the emergence of a more participatory and pluralistic global governance. From a sociological perspective it is notable in that it has successfully mobilized a large number of citizens around a single issue.