

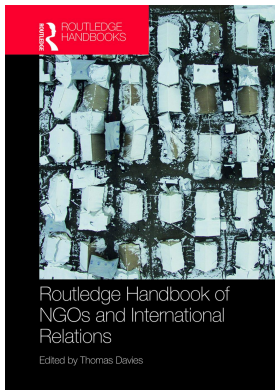
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NGOs' interactions with states

Sarah S. Stroup

For scholars of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in international relations (IR), the subject of state–NGO relations has been unavoidable. Challenging the state-centric history of the field, research on NGOs in IR has proceeded in two broad waves. In the 1990s, scholars within the first wave directly challenged the dominant focus on states as actors and demonstrated that NGOs influenced both state policy and social practice. Starting in the early 2000s, a second wave of NGO research has taken up a broad array of topics, including the varieties of relationships that NGOs and states can enjoy (Stroup and Wong 2016). Today, states are rarely the sole focus of IR scholarship even as scholars recognize their central role in global politics. For NGOs, the state can be a key regulator, a source of revenue, a target for policy change, a partner in international action, or some mix of the above.

This chapter reviews the substantial literature on NGOs' interactions with states, dividing the discussion into four sections. The first tackles the analytical challenge of identifying the populations of interest, both states and NGOs. For this review of NGO–state interactions and influence, I cast a wide net to include both international NGOs (INGOs) and national or local NGOs. The second section describes patterns of NGO–state interactions, drawing upon existing typologies of NGOs' relations with other actors (Johnson 2016; Najam 2000; Stroup and Wong 2017). Next, I explore the factors that shape these NGO–state relations. The final section examines how and when NGOs influence state practices.

States and NGOs in international relations (IR)

In contemporary global politics, states are both relatively few in number and easy to identify. Granted, the population of states has changed, as the marked growth and decline in the number of states over two centuries is a critical element of the international system (Fazal 2011). In addition, the defining characteristics of states have also evolved, as revealed in the substantial literature on the changing meaning of sovereignty (Krasner 2001; Hall and Biersteker 2002). Still, relative to NGOs, the population of states has been fairly stable. In the twentieth century, the number of states quadrupled (Coggins 2011), but the number of INGOs grew by as much as sixty times (Davies 2014: 6).

By contrast, simply identifying the NGO population is a perennial challenge. IR scholars tend to focus on international NGOs (INGOs), groups that are defined as independent organizations, working in multiple countries, and whose primary aim is to promote common goals at the international level. This standard NGO definition excludes certain groups (social enterprises, national NGOs, some advocacy groups) while including actors that appear tangential to global politics, such as the European Window Film Association. In addition, NGOs are governed at the national, not global, level (Martens 2002), and varied definitions of NGOs, non-profits, and charities (Stroup 2012) make it difficult to separate out INGOs in a uniform way.

NGO scholars have used several ways to delimit the population under investigation. One practical approach is to simply rely on the rules used by existing databases on INGOs, including the Union of International Associations *Yearbook* (Murdie 2014; Bloodgood 2011), the National Center for Charitable Statistics (US), or the EU Transparency Registrar. Another strategy has been to study NGOs by issue area (such as human rights or environmental protection) or by strategy (such as service delivery (Büthe et al. 2012) or advocacy (Prakash and Gugerty 2010)).

The focus in IR on INGOs does not capture the full dynamics of NGO–state relations. INGOs, active in several countries, do seek to shape the policies of states, but they are as concerned with intergovernmental organizations and transnational corporations. Meanwhile, local and national NGOs, such as the Brazilian Worker's Party (Teivainen 2002), are partners of INGOs and important interlocutors with their home states. In fact, many official agencies are abandoning the strict distinction between international and national NGOs.

In short, in an era of policy interdependence, NGOs face a range of political opportunities and overlapping authorities that do not neatly separate into domestic and international spheres (Farrell and Newman 2016). Thus, the subsequent discussion explores the role of both local NGOs and INGOs, drawing from comparative politics as well as IR.

Patterns of interaction

The image of state–NGO conflict is a powerful one in both popular conceptions and academic treatments, but the actual patterns of NGO–state relations are quite varied. Cooperation might be more likely in activities like service delivery, involving state financing of NGOs, than in instances of NGO advocacy requiring critiques of state policy. Yet functional demands and resource flows are just two possible drivers of NGO–state relations, and a useful typology should describe a variety of outcomes without privileging particular explanations.

We can describe NGOs' relations with states as falling into one of four categories – conflict, cooperation, competition, and cooptation. These types are distinguished according to the ends and means of the states and NGOs involved (Najam 2000; Stroup and Wong 2017). A *cooperative* relationship is one in which the NGO and state share both strategies (means) and goals (ends). A *conflictual* (or confrontational) relationship exists when NGOs have different goals and different ideas of how to achieve them. A *competitive* relationship exists when NGOs and states share the same goals but employ different strategies to achieve them.¹ Finally, *cooptation* exists when one actor's resources are brought to serve the ends of another; here, states and NGOs will share strategies but not goals.

Conflict

The dominant theme in early research on INGOs was conflict between states and NGOs. Challenging the central place of the state in IR required demonstrating that the power of

the state was limited. NGO–state conflict is perhaps most clearly documented in the literature on human rights, where advocacy NGOs directly condemn state practices. Consider the boomerang and spiral models of NGO–state interaction developed by human rights researchers (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse-Kappen et al. 1999). In the boomerang model, activists blocked by their home country government throw their concerns to external activists, who then bring pressure from the outside on the offender government. The spiral model expanded the analysis of this dynamic across multiple stages of domestic–international linkages. Both begin from the premise of a repressive state unwilling to listen to the demands of domestic NGOs, driving those NGOs to find sympathetic partners abroad (Clark 2001; Hopgood 2006).

In general, NGO–state conflict is likely when the two parties differ over the desirability of the ends or goals pursued by states (Johnson 2016). In addition, when states commit to legal or normative principles but then behave in ways inconsistent with those principles, NGOs might call states to account (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Beyond human rights, NGOs in environmental protection, humanitarian relief, arms control, and beyond have directly challenged state practices (Carpenter 2014; Tarrow 2005; Busby 2010). In the 1970s, Greenpeace replaced “staid conservation-oriented discourse” with “impassioned antics” to protest nuclear tests and whaling (Zelko 2013: 4). The foundational myth of the medical relief group MSF depicts Red Cross doctors compelled to speak out against the actions of Nigerian troops in the late 1960s (Redfield 2013). In the 1990s, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines brought together international and national NGOs to shame states for allowing the production and use of indiscriminate weapons (Florini 2000).

Cooperation

States and NGOs also enjoy close, cooperative relationships. The most robust treatment of this cooperation comes from scholars of the development sector, where NGOs and INGOs have been frequent partners in service provision and the delivery of foreign aid. In the 1990s, Northern aid donors increasingly turned to NGOs as conduits for official development assistance. Donors believed that international and local NGOs, unlike their own staff or their local government partners, had a special capacity to deliver aid efficiently while also being accepted as a legitimate form of support for local enterprise and civil society (Edwards and Hulme 1996; Fowler 1991; Zanotti 2010; Brass 2016).

In the mirror image of conflict, states and NGOs cooperate when they share a commitment to goals. If a state’s behavior is inconsistent with its principled or legal commitments, NGOs could condemn those states, as above, but might also cooperate with the state to bring their practices in line with those commitments. That cooperation may be more likely when states lack the capacity (rather than the willingness) to achieve goals like poverty alleviation (Lewis and Kanji 2009) or election monitoring (Hyde 2011). Well beyond the development sector, then, cooperation between states and NGOs can also be robust. Since the 1980s, NGOs have been granted increasing access to international institutions by states (Tallberg et al. 2013; Betsill and Corell 2008; Pallas and Uhlin 2014). This NGO participation may enhance the regulatory powers of states (Raustiala 1997). In the security arena, middle-power states interested in establishing an influential niche work with international NGOs to advance new treaties (Rutherford et al. 2003). In her examination of international climate change negotiations, Betzold (2014) shows that NGOs lobby both influential states as well as responsive states more likely to hear their claims.

Competition

Conflict and cooperation among states and NGOs receive much more attention than the other two relationships, competition and cooptation. While the rise of non-state actors such as NGOs does not necessarily come at the expense of state power, there are frequent instances of competition between states and NGOs. Competition in service provision frequently arises in areas of weak state capacity. In Kenya, Haiti, and Afghanistan, international humanitarian NGOs provide large-scale, formal, and long-term service provision (Rubenstein 2015). At the international level, donor preferences for either bilateral or NGO aid may mean that states and NGOs are competing for outside resources. In post-conflict settings, for example, international actors tend to privilege either elite, state-led capacity building (Barma 2017) or “reconstruction from below” with NGOs (Hillhorst et al. 2010).

NGOs and states can also compete as advocates, as regulators, and as authorities. At inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), INGOs and states compete to influence the choices of various other actors (Tallberg et al. 2013; Avant et al. 2010). For example, states and NGOs are potentially competing sources of information on human rights conditions in Universal Periodic Reviews of the UN's Human Rights Council (Sweeney and Saito 2009). In working to regulate corporate practices in a variety of sectors (Green 2013; Auld 2014), for example, NGO-led private standards often substitute for state regulation. Finally, NGOs and states may compete for legitimacy in the eyes of various publics when engaging in various aspects of global governance. Environmental NGOs that employ direct enforcement tactics against illegal fishing argue that their actions are the legitimate enforcement of international law where states are unwilling or unable to act (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Bondaroff 2014). As representatives, NGOs compete with states as legitimate representatives of various voices. In fact, the rise of INGOs in global governance was in part built on the idea of a “democratic deficit” at state-created institutions (Dingwerth 2007; Dryzek 2012; Anderson 2009; Price 2003).

Cooptation

Cooptation in the NGO–state relationship receives relatively little attention within international relations. Weak actors generally receive little attention in IR, and continued state-centrism seems to exclude the possibility that states might serve the interests of NGOs. In the government–NGO relationship, cooptation “is nearly always discussed as what governments try to do to NGOs, and is a universally negative thing” (Najam 2000: 388). This makes cooptation an outcome that may be both rare and difficult to identify. As Scholte (2002: 297) writes, civic activists can become coopted, “even contrary to their intentions and self-perceptions.” States are unlikely to admit their subservience to NGOs and advocacy groups (Busby 2010). Even if rare, assimilation and appropriation within the state–NGO relationship violates many assumptions about state–civil society relationships and demands explanation.

Cooptation of NGOs by the state has received substantial attention in comparative politics and public administration. Government-organized NGOs (GONGOs) employ the NGO organizational form to boost legitimacy and attract outside resources (Mercer 2002; Spires 2011). Salamon (2015) describes the “nonprofitization” of the welfare state around, as various governments outsource welfare provision to NGOs while maintaining strict oversight and control. In IR, cooptation has been taken up in several ways. It is a constant concern for NGOs whose legitimacy turns on their independence (Steffek and Hahn 2010). For example, in the Iraq war, NGOs that worked with the United States to ensure the “coherent” delivery of humanitarian aid were accused of being coopted by belligerent states and sacrificing their neutrality (Stoddard 2006). In the development

sector, critics argue that the “good governance” agenda of the 1990s involved welfare provision by coopted NGOs that reinforced processes of social control rather than empowerment (Manji and O’Coill 2002: 579). Reimann (2006) showed that the Japanese state led the creation of an INGO sector but often seeks to coopt the groups.

Can states be coopted by NGOs? In Bangladesh, critics of microfinance argue that NGOs like BRAC serve as a shadow state, commandeering the repressive powers of the state as well as the traditional power of the community (Karim 2011). In Malawi, the requirements of international donors supporting HIV/AIDS interventions direct the way in which state resources are employed (Swidler 2006). While NGO cooptation of the state may be more likely in post-colonial contexts of state weakness, globally powerful states may also see their resources or institutions in service to NGOs. For example, in the United States, the State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor has been referred to as the “NGO inside the building” for its support of “the NGO agenda” (Stroup 2012: 35).

Factors shaping NGO–state relations

While sustained cooptation may be relatively less common, the patterns of NGO–state relations are as varied as the populations of NGOs and states. IR scholars have made great strides in identifying the range of factors that shape NGO–state relations. At least four dimensions are important – the issue area, NGO characteristics, state-level factors, and the flow of resources.

Issue area

The above catalog of NGO activities across a range of sectors should dispel the notion that issues like human rights promotion or environmental protection necessarily place functional demands on NGOs that privilege certain approaches toward states. While certain strategies – like the construction of transnational networks (Keck and Sikkink 1998) – may appear obviously successful, scholarship from a variety of intellectual traditions reveals that our understanding of appropriate and effective NGO strategies emerges through social and political processes (Neumann and Sending 2010; Krause 2014; Watkins et al. 2012; Reimann 2006).

Across sectors, emergent issues tend to begin with confrontational condemnation of state failure, followed by negotiation and compromise with the state (Tarrow 1994). Yet, as discussed above, cooperation may be more frequent in development, while conflict may dominate in human rights. In environmental protection, state delegation to INGOs for enforcement of international law is rare; instead, INGOs compete to design new private environmental regulations (Green 2013). In human rights (Simmons 2009) and environmental protection (Betsill and Corell 2008), INGOs devote substantial attention to international laws and organizations. This leads INGOs to target certain parts of the state, favoring diplomats and externally oriented bureaucrats over local officials.

The importance of NGOs to the state may also depend on the size of the NGO population, which can vary by issue area and across time (Bush and Hadden 2017). The substantial population of INGOs in international relief and development is basically unavoidable for both donor and host states. By contrast, NGOs dedicated to global finance and security are relatively rare, perhaps resulting from state hostility to civil society input on these issues (Price 2003; Dryzek 2012; Scholte 2013). Depending on changing norms of good practice within sectors and across NGOs, existing patterns in state–NGO relations are subject to change.

NGO characteristics

Even faced with specific functional demands or the varied institutional environments described below, NGOs can still have substantial freedom to select various approaches to states. Three particular features of an NGO are likely to shape its strategic approach to states – its principled commitments, its authority, and its peer influence.

NGOs are presumed to exist separate from states, but in practice, an NGO's "non-governmental" nature may be more or less important. In the humanitarian relief sector, independence from states and other actors is ostensibly a foundational principle, yet some NGOs are less concerned with defending the process by which they engage with states (Stoddard 2006), and adherence to the principle of independence has been uneven (Barnett 2011). Some groups like MSF and the ICRC do still choose to vocally proclaim their independence (Forsythe 2005; Redfield 2013), reflecting in part their different principled commitments.

NGOs also vary in the authority that they enjoy, and concerns over their status may drive them to choose particular strategies with states. Leading or gatekeeper INGOs (Bob 2005; Carpenter 2014) tend to collaborate with states more frequently than their lesser-known peers (Stroup and Wong 2017). Obscure NGOs with little access to policymakers may proclaim their independence as a marker of their legitimacy and default to harsh criticism of states. The principled commitments above might thus reflect NGOs' pragmatic concerns about defending their credibility (Gourevitch et al. 2012).

Finally, NGOs are subject to various pressures from their peers, which can shape their strategic approach to states (Prakash and Gugerty 2010; Raustiala 1997). Hadden (2015) argues that NGO adoption of contentious protest tactics emerged via diffusion through NGO networks. Alternately, Lecy et al. (2010) argue that NGOs face a segmented advocacy market, in which various tactics appear to limited audiences. These different accounts imply more or less NGO capacity to inform the preferences of their supporters.

State characteristics

NGO–state relations depend in large part on the particular characteristics of the state. Scholars have identified level of development, regime type, and domestic regulatory structures as important state features that shape the NGO–state relationship. Consider development first. Whether differentiated as developed/developing or North/South, a state's interaction with NGOs will be conditioned by the types of local demands for NGOs. In poverty reduction and beyond, Northern NGOs headquartered in industrialized democracies face opportunities for advocacy and gather resources to send abroad, while Southern NGOs (both local and INGOs) deliver services, promote political and social change, and build the capacity of the local government (Lewis and Kanji 2009: 12–13). The trajectory of particular developing countries can also shape the strategies of environmental advocates, as in Brazil (Hochstetler and Keck 2007).

Regime type also alters state–NGO relations. The sizeable comparative civil society literature documents a range of relationships between states and private associations (Salamon et al. 2017; Anheier 2014), but democratic polities founded on principles of citizens' self-rule are more amenable than authoritarian states to citizen participation in private associations like NGOs (Smith and Wiest 2005).

This could suggest that NGO–state conflict is more frequent in authoritarian settings. Groups like Amnesty International thus focus their reporting on countries with more severe human rights abuses (Ron et al. 2005), while environmental NGOs may shame democratic states less

frequently (Murdie and Urpelainen 2015) or face severe restrictions on their activities (Henry 2010). The spiral model of human rights change (Risse-Kappen et al. 1999) is built on the idea of an authoritarian state initially unwilling to consider domestic NGOs' claims. Yet regime type is an imperfect guide for understanding any one state's NGO relationships. Rohrschneider and Dalton (2002) find that level of democracy has little effect on levels of NGO activity in the environmental sector. In addition, in both IR and comparative politics, recent scholarship has explored the frequency of cooperation between autocratic regimes and NGOs. In relationships of "amicable contempt" (Heiss 2017), NGOs and autocratic states can both threaten and support the existence of the other. In election monitoring, for example, pseudo-democratic regimes may invite in election observers at risk of critique in an attempt to access outside resources (Hyde 2011). Human rights NGOs selecting locations for their permanent office may employ a "Goldilocks" logic, selecting regimes that are not too repressive but also not too open (Barry et al. 2015). For reasons that may have more to do with the NGO than with the state, democracy-promotion NGOs have been able to maintain their presence in autocracies through "regime-compatible" programming (Bush 2015).

Finally, because of the great diversity of NGO–state relations across economic and political categories, IR scholars have brought renewed attention to the institutional settings provided by the state that help shape different "varieties of activism" (Stroup 2012). Several dimensions of state structures shape NGO–state relations (Prakash and Gugerty 2010). For example, membership in NGO-like private associations declines with higher levels of statism (the centralization of power and dominance of the status apparatus) (Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas 2001). Bloodgood et al. (2014) also find systematic differences in the regulation of NGO registry and political and economic activity across several dozen OECD countries, with corporatist systems more restrictive than pluralist ones. These environments shape the way NGOs approach states and IGOs (Stroup and Murdie 2012; Andonova et al. 2017).

State approaches to civil society affect not only the composition of the NGO sector at home, but also the states' influence abroad. As DeMars and Dijkzeul (2015: 292) argue, the "accelerating global proliferation of NGOs today is *prima facie* evidence of the successful inscription of Western pluralism on the world, as much by attraction as by projection." Still, while democracy may enable NGOs to set up shop and engage in external action, many other factors (discussed below) shape the content of NGOs' transnational activities (Hanegraaff et al. 2015).

In addition, these political environments are not immutable. At the national level, the design and implementation of state approaches toward NGOs can be shaped by NGOs themselves (Teets 2014). In Kenya, NGOs "have come to comprise part of the *de facto* organizational makeup of the state" (Brass 2016: 3). At the global level, global dynamics can substantially alter state–NGO relations. For example, in the 1980s, in African states weakened by structural adjustment and democratic transitions, vast new spaces became available for NGOs (Fowler 1991; Robinson 2017). More recently, NGO–state relations have been deeply affected by a wave of civil society clampdowns (Christensen and Weinstein 2013). In Egypt, India, Russia, Ethiopia, and beyond, states have instituted new restrictions on NGO activities, including stricter registration and reporting requirements and limits on foreign funding to domestic NGOs (Dupuy et al. 2016; Chaudhry 2016).

Resource flows

The source of NGO income plays a key role in NGO–state relations, as the partners and targets of NGO efforts can also be the hand that feeds them. Government support to INGOs has grown substantially over the past several decades. The privatization of many state functions and growth

in the number of potential NGO partners have encouraged many NGOs to seek steady financial support from states (Edwards and Hulme 1996; Mitchell and Schmitz 2014).

A substantial body of work describes how government funding affects NGOs' strategies. Interest in maintaining access to funds can drive INGOs to design programs more in line with the preferences of the donor (Ebrahim 2005; Gent et al. 2015; Krause 2014). There are also effects on the NGO relationship with host states. Reliance on official or government resources can promote more conciliatory programming that complies with rather than challenges authoritarian regimes (Bush 2015). Because official aid agencies encourage NGO professionalization and service provision, NGOs are less involved in the sort of interest mobilization and grassroots advocacy that might challenge host states (Lang 2013; Banks et al. 2015; McMahon 2017).

Given this evidence, analysts have long warned of cooptation. Yet the effects of official aid are conditioned by the volume of funds, the diversity of NGO income streams, and the requirements of donors. A growing share of official aid channeled through NGOs may reflect the weakness of donor agencies rather than an intention to coopt NGOs (Cooley and Ron 2002; Lancaster 2007; Dietrich 2016). Many NGOs have also cultivated a diversity of income sources to avoid capture by specific donors (Mitchell 2014). Finally, donors can attach different conditions to their support for NGOs. For example, the recently terminated Partnership Programme Agreement in the UK offered both substantial and unrestricted support to a small group of INGOs (Stroup 2012). Donors' varied preferences around bypassing host states and program design shape the financing of NGOs.

States and NGOs are not unitary actors, which complicates analysis of their relationships. Oxfam's advocacy division may be issuing harsh critiques of the UK Treasury while Oxfam program officers are working closely with the Department for International Development in the field. Ultimately, the contours of any one state-NGO relationship – conflictual, cooperative, competitive, and cooptive – depend on the issue at hand, the priorities and power of the NGO, the wealth, freedoms, and regulations of the state, and the financial ties (if any) among the two actors.

Influence

NGOs and states increasingly interact as the size and prominence of NGOs has grown globally. Who influences whom? The first wave of NGO research in IR documented instances of INGO influence to critique the exclusive focus on state actors (Price 2003). These studies, critical in opening the door to NGO researchers, also selected on the dependent variable by taking up positive cases of INGO influence on states and IGOs. Most NGO research today instead seeks to unpack how, when, and why NGOs shape state policy and practice.

There are three big problems in studying INGO influence: it may not exist, it is difficult to document, and INGOs themselves may be reticent to claim credit. First, some scholars use this to dismiss the importance of NGOs. Samy Cohen (2005) highlights the capacity of “post-modern” states to adapt to globalization, and posits that most NGOs lack the ability or desire to influence governments. Drezner (2008) argues that NGOs and other private actors play a limited role at best in regulating the global economy. In some sense, these skeptical accounts are valuable correctives to the unrealistic hopes placed in NGOs to powerfully and perfectly represent a range of voices from a position of unconstrained independence (Dany 2012), but most NGO research recognizes the potential if not actual influence of NGOs.

Second, as is characteristic in all research on the role of private interest groups (Hojnacki et al. 2012), scholars of NGOs struggle to isolate the effects of NGO action in a dynamic policy process (Busby 2010). Third, NGO access and authority can depend on a perception that they

are apolitical or weak, leading many INGOs to downplay their influence. In service delivery, many NGOs present themselves to their host states as meeting environmental or health needs with precise and beneficial programs that have no broader political effects (DeMars and Dijkzeul 2015; Manji and O’Coill 2002). For other INGOs targeting powerful states, their authority can rest on a perception that they are righteous but weak (Rubenstein 2015; Stroup and Wong 2017). It is thus possible that existing research offers a conservative estimate of NGO influence.

Other chapters in this volume offer more specific discussions of NGO influence in various regions and issue areas. Much of the early literature on INGO influence focused on their role as norm entrepreneurs that redefine state identity and interest (Finnemore 1996; Price 2003; Florini 2000). We can also conceive of INGOs as entering different stages of the policy process, including issue emergence, agenda setting, policy design, implementation, and monitoring (Avant et al. 2010; Weiss 2016).

Carpenter (2007) has drawn attention to the role of INGOs in issue emergence and the fact that many problems are “lost causes” (Carpenter 2014), never taken up by states or IGOs. As the politics of INGO networks determine which issues emerge, particular INGOs frame and then take these issues to the policy agendas of powerful states (Bob 2005; Clark 2001; Florini 2000). NGOs also design policies. In climate change, HIV/AIDS, debt relief, and global justice, INGOs can drive policy gatekeepers to adopt moderately costly policy changes when the issues are framed to align with existing values (Busby 2010). The NGO Article 19 used its expert and moral authority to successfully design freedom of information laws (Berliner 2016). Global and local NGOs have driven health policy in Malawi, Nigeria, and Senegal (Robinson 2017). In the implementation phase, NGOs can fill capacity gaps or amplify state efforts. Joint military and INGO action in humanitarian aid can help distribute costs and improve the human rights and security of the affected population (Bell et al. 2014). NGOs can act as agents for state principals in implementing health programs (Dionne 2018; Murdie and Hicks 2013) or democracy aid (Bush 2015). Finally, NGOs may be particularly influential as monitors of state behavior. Franklin (2008) shows that criticism can lead to short-term reduction in state repression in Latin America. Non-democracies may be particularly susceptible to the effects of INGO shaming (Hendrix and Wong 2013). In environmental protection, INGOs strategically fill governance gaps by targeting states with relatively low domestic environmental activism (Murdie and Urpelainen 2015).

NGOs can affect various stages of the policy process at states. Two final insights from the extant research deserve note. First, influence has no normative content – a strong influence over states from NGOs can yield dysfunctional outcomes or bad policy. Second, a lack of INGO influence over states may reflect not INGO weakness but rather a proliferation of possible targets for INGOs. Today, states are *an* (but perhaps not *the*) important target for NGO activity.

Conclusion

Among the many disciplinary approaches to the study of NGOs, IR scholars are particularly well situated to understand the diversity of relationships among states and NGOs. While NGO research took off in IR as part of a critique of state-centrism, research now reveals a much more complex picture than critical NGOs limiting state autonomy. States and NGOs interact in an increasingly crowded field of global governance, struggling to influence both one another as well as the practices of intergovernmental organizations and corporations.

Research on NGO–state relations today proceeds through an exciting and diverse array of lenses. For example, as IR takes up many other actors besides states, scholars have revisited the fundamental concepts of power and authority, often explicitly exploring the forms of power

and authority exercised by NGOs (Barnett and Duvall 2004; Avant et al. 2010). NGOs have the ability to produce categories of meaning and draw upon their expertise and moral authority. Other scholars have turned away from actors altogether and examined practices in global politics, including those adopted or promoted by NGOs (DeMars and Dijkzeul 2015; Neumann and Sending 2010).

These lines of inquiry, combined with continued attention to variation among NGOs, promise to reveal new dimensions of NGO–state relations. Are declining growth rates in the INGO population (Bush and Hadden 2017) and increasing restrictions on INGO activities by host states (Dupuy et al. 2016) indicative of larger changes in the demand for or legitimacy of NGOs? Alternately, will expanding legitimacy of NGOs or continued demand for their services mean that more governance tasks will be taken up by NGOs instead of states? Research on NGOs no longer happens in the shadow of the state, but instead demonstrates how specific NGOs and states work around, through, and over one another. The rich empirical record that has emerged not only demonstrates the diversity of the NGO sector but also raises fundamental questions about the role of NGOs in constraining or enhancing the power and authority of states.

Note

1 Najam (2000) refers to this relationship as one of complementarity. This is a slightly different and arguably more optimistic assessment of side-by-side activity that might reflect a de facto division of labor. My own view is that NGOs and states are more frequently viewed as substitutes rather than complements, though this likely reflects an IR scholar's heavier attention to regulation and advocacy rather than service delivery.

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