

Irrera, Daniela. *NGOs, Crisis Management and Conflict Resolution: Measuring the Impact of NGOs on Intergovernmental Organisations*. Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2013. xix + 168 pages. Hardcover, \$109.00.

Daniela Irrera, a Professor of political science and international relations, critically examines the relationship between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organisations (IGOs). Her book strategically analyses, in depth, the organisational structure, aims and mandates of NGOs and the participation of NGOs with respect to intergovernmental decision-making processes.

Chapter One, consistent with the existing literature, examines international civil society as a set of world-system actors. In the United Nations (UN), the institutionalisation of dialogue between IGOs and NGOs and other civil-society organisations has been achieved by delegating to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) the task of attributing to NGOs what is termed ‘consultative status.’ The ECOSOC model has been claimed to rule the relationships between civil-society organisations and regional and local IGOs. However, in organisations like the European Union (EU), other aspects come into play. The participation of civil-society associations in the policy-making process of the EU is crucial to strengthening the legitimacy of the integration process.

Chapter Two focuses on the formal and informal procedures that shape interactions between NGOs and the UN and EU. The support of expertise as well as in-field knowledge and action that NGOs are able to offer to world and regional organisations allows IGOs to meet the most recent challenges they are facing. The challenging nature of social and political conflicts around the world has brought about a parallel transformation of the tools major states employ for conflict management and, consequently, humanitarian intervention, and this has opened political space for NGO influence. The increased number of violent conflicts since the 1970s, the worsening of economic and social conflicts in many transitional countries (especially during the 1980s), and the devolution of violence control and management to the UN and other regional organisations at the end of the Cold War, are the main political factors explaining the rising number of humanitarian interventions.

Chapter Three focuses on the ability of NGOs active in the field of conflict management and peace-building activities to face and adapt to the changes affecting global security. Although peacekeeping operations are not included in the UN Charter, missions for controlling truces and ceasefires, and for interrupting aggression and violence among states, have been promoted by the Security Council under the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter (as confirmed by several examples in Africa and Asia). Frequent employment of peacekeeping missions contributed to making these missions the main tool of management of peace and international security, as well as to changing significantly the purposes and methods of the missions and making them more effective. In other words, a specific approach to conflict management and humanitarian intervention has been developed by the main international organisation responsible for global security, and this approach has created room for the action of NGOs in crisis and conflict management.

Chapter Four stresses the potential for coordination as well as the principal differences and frictions. Within the EU system, cooperation with neighbouring countries and the developing world can be considered an anticipation of a more structured approach to peace and security management. Through participation in official programs, European NGOs have promoted many initiatives on humanitarian aid, especially in Africa. This has provided NGOs with an important opportunity for engagement in conflict prevention and management, and for expanding NGOs' active role in EU peace missions' deployment. Closely related, Chapter Five deals with the NGOs' participation in EU operations and humanitarian emergencies. Special attention is given to the relation between NGOs and EU institutions responsible for security and foreign policy, and for humanitarian interventions.

Finally, the last chapter of the book is underpinned by empirical data from a survey of representatives from twenty-eight humanitarian NGOs and networks of NGOs that are active in the fields of humanitarian assistance and peace-building, as well as conflict transformation and mediation. It demonstrates that the role of non-state actors in the deployment of humanitarian interventions is destined to grow in the near future and it promotes our understanding of such a development.

It is difficult to find an identifiable weakness in this book. Academics in a wide range of fields including development, international studies and public policy—especially those in African states—will find this book to be an enlightening read. It will also prove to be of great relevance to practitioners and policymakers in NGOs, IGOs, research centres and regional agencies.

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