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The Rise and Stall of Non-Governmental Organizations in Development

Abstract: Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) role in development evolved from marginal to major over the second half of the XX century. In the early 1990s the increase of support for NGOs in countries receiving foreign aid was an effect of donors' attempts to circumvent the recipients' state institutions as these were considered corrupt and/or ineffective. This support took place under the slogan of good governance. Both national and international NGOs remained the favored child of donor agencies up to 9/11, 2001. The superseding long war on terror had an impact on the strategy towards NGOs, too. Namely, it has been acknowledged that NGOs' activities should undergo closer scrutiny. This approach tightened the control over NGOs and also resulted in national and international NGOs' self-censorship.

Keywords: NGOs' functions, development, good governance, securitization of aid.

The aim of this paper is to critically discuss the circumstances that triggered the evolution of both national and international non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) role in international development cooperation and the growing reticence towards these entities following the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001. The change of the role of NGOs is an issue both topical and relevant, having in mind the professed importance of NGOs for democratization processes. Unlike most existing literature's focus on the capacity of NGOs to fulfill their mission, this paper will pay closer attention to exogenous factors that may in fact limit these societal actors' ability to remedy the shortcomings of the state and the market in national and international affairs alike.

Thus both the external and intra-organizational circumstances conditioning the performance of NGOs in development will be analyzed. This paper would also endeavor to test a thesis endorsed by one of the ardent critics of contemporary international development cooperation. In his seminal book *White Man's Burden* William Easterly' argued for the inclusion of a wider scope of social entrepreneurs (NGOs as well as local businesses and "decently functioning" local governments) in the design and implementation of development policies and programmes (Easterly 2008: 303).

To understand the evolution of INGOs from marginal to significant actors in international affairs and to explain the observed backlash towards these organizations following the conflation of security with development, it is important to briefly present their history.

Short history of INGOs

Since the XIX century, when the first NGOs operating in more than one country were established, INGOs have reportedly grown into fully-fledged “global actors” (Anheier and Themudo 2005: 185). According to the 2000 edition of the Yearbook of International Organizations, in the beginning of the XXI century there were 1839 active inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) and 18916 active INGOs (in Loś-Nowak 2004: 31). According to other researchers, since 1850 more than 35000 INGOs have “debuted on the world stage” (Boli and Thomas 1999: 20). The word “debuted” is important here, because—just like domestic NGOs—international NGOs have no obligation to inform other institutions when they disband. Before briefly presenting the statistical dimensions of the development of the INGO sector since its inception, it is necessary to highlight the most relevant circumstances that gave rise to the growth of the INGO population. As Akira Iriye argues, “the number and functioning of [international] organizations may be taken as a good measure of the degree of ‘globality’ at a given moment in time” (Iriye 2002: 9). Indeed, the emergence and development of INGOs and IGOs alike have unquestionably been part and parcel of the process of globalization. As Michael Schechter persuasively argues, “globalization has simultaneously contributed to the weakening of states’ and intergovernmental organizations’ abilities to govern, especially in the economic sphere, while strengthening civil society in many countries in the world and planting the seeds for an evolving global civil society” (Schechter 1999: 61). Globalization has brought to the door of developed and developing countries alike the awareness that we live in an interconnected world and therefore we have the moral responsibility but also the self-interest to engage in activities aiming at leveling the disparities between the more advanced and less developed regions in the world. Having in mind the abundance of literature concerning globalization, here it is only necessary to limit oneself to briefly mentioning the most important dimensions of this phenomenon, i.e. those on which the development of the INGO sector seems to be a corollary of.

Clive Archer has identified four major types of global interaction: communication, transportation, finance and travel (Archer 1992). Iriye, however, highlights one even more important for the understanding of the development of INGOs embodiment of globalization. It is a phenomenon he calls “global consciousness” or “internationalism” (Iriye 2002). Globalization as a state of mind seems to have had a decisive influence on both social and business entrepreneurship. Yet, as Iriye convincingly argues, global consciousness that fuelled the rise of international NGOs “cannot be equated with capitalist inquisitiveness” (Ibid.: 12). INGOs are the offspring of Western liberalism to the extent it promotes individual entrepreneurship, rights and freedoms. Ronnie Lipschutz even argues that global civil society is a product of “globalist liberalism” (Lipschutz 2005: 229). Thus Lipschutz highlights the fact that although the origins of liberalism as such can be traced back to Western political and economic thinking, liberalism has gained an autonomy of its own.

At this point it is relevant to mention one rarely considered factor that may account for the significant increase in the number of newly established INGOs. Namely,

according to a hypothesis that draws on demographic-structural theory, the acceleration in INGO numbers during the last 50 years was caused by the post-war baby boom and a crisis in the credential system (Turner 2010: 81). After testing the hypothesis according to which it was the growing supply of credentialed professionals, rather than the greater demand for their services, that has been the proximate mechanism for the surge in INGOs, Turner concludes that the growth of INGOs is due to the “cyclical demographic-structural processes [which] have increased intraelite competition over the last half-century” (Turner 2010: 83, 88).

In fact, this conclusion is in tune with supply-side economic theories (Hansmann 1987: 29–33). Succinctly, supply-side economic theories lay emphasis on the contribution of individuals engaged in NGOs. These types of INGOs as well as the eruption of new social movements during the last decade of the XX century have been hailed as a “globalisation from below” (Ekins 1992 and Dirlík 1998 in Madon 2000), thus drawing attention to the grass-roots origins of “global consciousness.” In other words, INGOs are much more than an outcome of liberalist tendencies. As other researchers have persuasively argued, NGOs also serve as “ethos groups” (Szawiel 1982) or “epistemic communities” (Iriye 2002).

Epitomes of individuals exhibiting global consciousness are social entrepreneurs. The understanding of social entrepreneurs as autonomous agents in a globalizing world has been gaining prominence since the 1980s. As Paola Grenier maintains, social entrepreneurship is a phenomenon specifically relevant to globalization as it connects and mediates between the global and the local while being committed to a particular place and issues (Grenier 2006). One of the most prominent examples of a social entrepreneur is Muhhamud Yunus and his revolutionary microcredit system. In 1983 Yunus, who views credit as a fundamental human right, established the Grameen (Village) Bank and started providing small loans to entrepreneurs too poor to qualify for traditional bank loans. Although operating at a national level, social entrepreneurs like Yunus frame issues as globally significant as indeed poverty alleviation and women empowerment are internationally relevant problems. Thus, social entrepreneurs can be viewed as mediators between the local and the global (Grenier 2006).

In one of her earlier works focusing on “new pioneers,” Paola Grenier depicts the “people behind global civil society” (Grenier 2004). She interviewed global activists and identified three routes into becoming a “new pioneer:” “just global,” “global potential from local success” and “local meaning from global ideas” (Ibid.). Grenier found out that the people who make global civil society are often people educated, proficient in several languages and from middle-class backgrounds (Grenier 2004: 147–148). New pioneers tend to become professionals who have previously had experience working in local or global institution, which have influence on the daily lives of ordinary people worldwide.

For instance, Peter Eigen who in 1990 was the regional director of the World Bank for East Africa and who had witnessed first-hand the destructive impact of corruption on development work, tried to tackle the issue via the institution he worked for. When he found it impossible to do this, he retired early and took to crisscross the

world in search for supporters for the initiative to fight corruption. By the end of 1992 a substantial group of adherents founded Transparency International's board of directors and advisory council (Galtung 2000). Nowadays there are plentiful examples of such "rooted cosmopolitans" (Tarrow 2005: 7). The variety of personalities and motives characterizing INGOs' participants is well demonstrated in Haratyk's analysis of a segment of Polish global civil society (Haratyk 2011). However, how did this "internationalism" institutionalized most often in NGOs evolve?

Shirin Madon identifies three generations of INGOs, each of which is indicative of a distinctive mode of action employed by INGOs since World War II. The first generation of post-WWII INGOs represented large charity relief organizations like Oxfam and the Red Cross, which focused on delivering welfare services to the poor or dispossessed (Madon 2000: 2). The second generation of INGOs from the 1960s tried to promote local self-reliance by supporting intermediate INGOs, whereas since the 1980s the third generation of INGOs concentrated on mobilising public opinion on a global basis on issues neglected by national governments (*Ibid.*). In the area of development cooperation, this change of INGOs' modes of action and agendas is reflected in the evolution of development approaches since the 1950s. As Colette Chabbott's overview of international development approaches' impact on (I)NGOs' role found out, the focus in development has shifted from economic growth through equitable growth to sustainable development (Chabbot 1999: 239).

Table 1

decade	Development approaches	Role for (I)NGOs
1950s	Comprehensive economic planning; Industrialization and community development	Minor: emergency relief
1960s	Economic growth;	Limited: technical assistance, schools, and hospitals
1970s	Dependency Equitable growth Micro/domestic: poverty alleviation; basic human needs Macro/international: New International Economic Order	Limited: small-scale rural social service delivery pilots and development advocacy
1980s	Structural adjustment and social dimensions of adjustment	Significant: social service delivery to the poor
1990s	Sustainable development	Major: development and dissemination of environmentally sound innovations and modern contraceptives
post 9/11.2001	<i>Security-development nexus</i>	Controlled: <i>disciplining and taming of civil society</i>

Adapted from Chabbott 1999: 239 except for the last row, which draws on relevant literature, including Howell et al. 2006: 8.

It can be argued that—up to 2001, when the long war on terror (LWOT) started—"internationalism" has evolved from the "doing for" through "doing with" to the "advocating" approach accordingly. There is also a trend towards regional, specialized or even single-issue NGOs gradually ousting the more universalistic-oriented

organizations which predominated in the formative years of the INGO sector. This development finds empirical confirmation in the data of newly-founded INGOs (Boli and Thomas 1999: 31).

The evolution of INGOs into single-issue organizations can be explained by the concomitant development of IGOs. As Ramesh Thakur demonstrates on the example of Amnesty International (AI) and the United Nations, INGOs have evolved into single-purpose organizations, while IGOs are usually general-purpose organizations (Thakur 1999). Importantly, IGOs and INGOs play complementary roles. For example, whereas the UN appears to be more capable in setting international human rights standards and reprimanding selected governments only, AI is better able to investigate human rights abuses at the grass-roots level in all countries (Thakur 1999: 257, 259). This division of roles reflects that fact that “AI is of, by, and for individuals; the United Nations is of, by, and for governments” (Ibid.: 252).

The specialization of (I)NGOs also reflects their changing role illustrated in Table 1. The most important development regarding INGOs, however, has been the pivotal role ascribed to them by development agencies. Howell et al. highlight the intuitive, yet often overlooked, thesis that development agencies’ appropriation of civil society as “critical to democratization, good governance, and development” can be traced back to the 1980s when Eastern European dissidents revived the idea as an analytic concept and a mobilizing discourse (Howell et al. 2006: 9). This reinterpretation of civil society’s potential coupled with the dissatisfaction with state-led development in the newly independent post-colonial states resulted in framing civil society as a panacea. However, working with Northern and Southern NGOs alike turned out to be far more complex than donor agencies and national governments in newly democratic states could foresee.

The development-security nexus which emerged after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 was however the decisive blow to the pivotal role ascribed to NGOs in some transition and developing countries. The UK Department for International Development—DFID’s strategy from 2005 was called *Fighting poverty to build a safer world*. A strategy for security and development is indicative of the conflation of security with development. Referring to the so-called security-development nexus, Erin Simpson argued that “development discourse, development resources, and the public support for development are at risk of being high-jacked by an agenda that, in reality, has little to do with development” (Simpson 2007: 263). In the case of transition countries like the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan or China the resulting backlash against civil society takes the form of overt repercussions where international and local NGOs are being “monitored” (Howell et al. 2006: 12–16) and development agencies expelled.

The more subtle type of backlash against civil society, however, can be detected in donor practices and policies gaining prominence after 9/11. Namely, in an attempt to focus on accountability and effectiveness issues, donor agencies ended up working with a limited number of NGOs. As a result, those newly established NGOs, which also tend to be more politically active although having less resources or previous experience in cooperation with donors, were ineligible for funds (Howell et

al. 2006: 18). Indeed, the increasing involvement of NGOs in the forums on aid effectiveness has been well documented (*Aid effectiveness... 2011*). Nonetheless, the shift towards state budget support coupled with United Nations' call for "greater candour about the qualities of civil society participants" (*United Nations 2004: 27*) and the promotion of "disciplined networking" with these organizations (*Ibid.: 28*) are indicative of the "implicit backlash" against civil society (*Howell et al. 2006: 17*). As James Paul argues, NGOs "could not sustain the enthusiasm and optimism that had been the hallmark of the global conference decade" and therefore "influential groups felt that civil society should form its own alternative zone for policy reflection and action" (*Paul 2011: 10*). This development led several NGO leaders to found the World Social Forum established in January 2001 in Porto Allegre Brazil.

An illustration of the clampdown on INGOs can be provided by the analysis of changes in the institutional framework affecting the activities of these organizations. There follows an overview of five major themes that have emerged with respect to laws affecting NGOs proposed or enacted from 2007 until 2009: restrictions on the formation, operation, and activities of NGOs in comprehensive NGO framework laws; increasing restrictions on foreign funding to NGOs; international cooperation laws that place prohibitions on NGO exchanges of knowledge, capacity, and expertise across borders; implications of government funds to support civil society; and use of tax incentives to support government policy toward civil society (*The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law 2009*).

The wind of change affecting INGOs has not subsided. On September 24, at the 2012 Clinton Global Initiative in New York, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made the following statement "Today, much of our development assistance is still invested through one group of partners—international NGOs. They have expertise and local knowledge, and they can respond quickly when needed. We want to continue our successful relationships with them, but we also need to broaden and increase our network of partnerships to advance our work in development" (*Clinton 2012*). In fact, back in 1996, Edwards and Hulme professed that "The present popularity of NGOs with donors will not last forever: donors move from fad to fad and at some stage NGOs, like flared jeans, will become less fashionable" (*Edwards and Hulme 1996: 227* in *Lewis and Kanji 2009: 183*).

To better understand why (I)NGOs's role in development cooperation evolved from marginal to major and the consequent recoil of state and IGOs' support for their activities, it is necessary to dwell in more details on the concept of good governance. The term has become commonplace by now and has been implemented in developing and developed nations alike. The idea of good governance in the area of development cooperation was in tune with the tenets of the Washington consensus, which used to be the dominant approach until South-generated competitive paradigms like the Beijing and the Santiago consensus challenged it. The Washington consensus which emerged at the end of 1980s as a donor-originating, neoliberal paradigm initiated a turn away from state-led policies and the substitution of these with market-led ones. In lieu of state-led development and as a remedy for state

fallacies like corruption, aid fungibility, accountability issues, cumbersome administration or ineffective use of resources, support for NGOs was introduced to bypass state institutions.

NGOs as Good Governance

As a result of the above presented tendencies, NGOs have emerged as one of the main medium for good governance. In fact, the concept of good governance was coined by the World Bank in 1989 to cope with the “crisis of governance” in Africa ([World Bank 1992: 5](#)). Since that time, good governance has been promoted as a solution to governance-related problems not only in the developing nations, but worldwide. The understanding of good governance endorsed in the United Nation’s Agenda for development offers a universal definition whereby: “Good government implies the wisdom and the historical responsibility to know when to let market forces act, when to let civil society take the lead, and when government should intervene directly” ([An Agenda for Development 1994](#)). In practice, however, in countries receiving official development assistance (ODA), the strive for good governance has meant circumventing corrupted and/or inefficient aid recipients’ governments by supporting the non-governmental sector, which as an effect has reportedly become a “shadow state” (Sen 2000 in [Bankole 2008a: 19](#)).

The increasing role of NGOs in global governance has been accompanied by growth of resources available to national and international NGOs alike. Reportedly, International NGOs still “raise more money for development assistance than the entire UN system” ([Barder et al. 2010: 10](#)). It is important to note that some donors provide earmarked funding for NGOs, while other development agencies treat civil society as cross-cutting sector. The latter approach results in underestimation of resources that eventually go to NGOs. Yet other donors involve NGOs in their activities without explicitly declaring this as their developmental objective ([Howell and Pearce 2001: 92](#)). This makes it impossible to provide an accurate estimation of the actual funds that go to NGOs in development assistance.

In spite of the increase of attention and resources for development NGOs, NGOs’ ability to influence decision-making in both donor agencies and recipient countries’ governments’ remains limited. This is especially true for international NGOs, which—unlike IGOs—have not been recognized by nation-states as possessing legal international personality. Predictably, when NGOs come to oppose IGOs, they are often crushed ([Beausang 2002: 20](#)). Their being organizational “outlaws” ([Judge 1997](#)) notwithstanding, NGOs’ roles in service-delivery and representing the voice of the poor have been supplemented in recent years by their growing ability to enter into policy dialogue with donors and their own governments. Although international NGOs can only act under “self-authorisation” ([Boli and Thomas 1999: 37](#)), their legitimacy and effectiveness are enhanced by the fact that NGOs are able to exercise moral authority ([Florini 2000](#)). Thus, as suggested above, although during the first three forums on aid effectiveness NGOs’ contribution remained token, during the last fo-

rum in Busan in 2011 NGOs did participate in negotiations on the highest level (*Aid effectiveness... 2011*).

The climate conducive to the development of the NGO sector in the 1990s was not met with uncritical response. For instance, Andrew Hurrell opined that “there is nothing normatively special or sacred about [global] civil society. It is an arena of politics like any other in which the good and the thoroughly awful coexist” (*Hurrell 2005: 44*). Other observers drew attention to the fact that NGOs seem to be the “favored child” of official agencies and are viewed as a “panacea” for the problems of development (*Edwards and Hulme 1998*).

As it turned out, by redirecting support from states to NGOs, a number of unintended consequences of the preferential treatment of NGOs surfaced. The most potentially harmful unintended side-effect of aid earmarked for NGOs is the underdevelopment of state institutions in the areas “taken over” by NGOs. Reportedly, subsidies for NGOs have likewise weakened existing state institutions by creating conditions for brain-drain from the governmental to the Third sector (*Karajkov 2007*). Namely, by offering higher remunerations and opportunities for career development, international donors have unwillingly undermined the capacity of state institutions (*Ibid.*). At the same time, the case of donor support for NGOs in the area of social assistance in one of the post-conflict countries receiving ODA is indicative of the preference exhibited by donor institutions to support the establishment of para-business organizations registered as NGOs rather than cooperate with existing relevant local institutions (*Holiček and Rašidagić 2007: 155*).

The preferential treatment of NGOs did not impact negatively the state sector only. Reportedly, the support for newly-established NGOs in developing countries has had negative impact on existing, indigenous forms of civil society, too. After analyzing the influence of international actors on social policy development in post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bob Deacon and Paul Stubbs concluded that the introduction of “competing and inconsistent visions and activities” implemented by ethnicized, local, national and international, state and non-governmental institutions, has reinforced “new feudalist” trends (*Deacon and Stubbs 1998*).

It seems the support for NGOs under the slogan of “good governance” had undermined both state institutions and indigenous forms of civil society. One would be tempted to conclude that it is therefore NGOs themselves that are to blame for the recent recess in preferential treatment. However, one should be cautious before drawing such a conclusion. Namely, it seems it is development assistance policies, and not international and local NGOs as the beneficiaries or partners of development cooperation, that should bear the brunt as criticism against support for NGOs accumulates. To corroborate this view, let us remember that think-tanks in countries receiving development assistance are weak due to the watchdog function fulfilled by international organizations present in those countries (*Chimiak 2011*). NGOs are rarely in the position to negotiate the conditions of their involvement in development cooperation. Those conditions are set by donors. What more, this mode of cooperation with NGOs refers to both official aid and official development assistance.

As far as the former of these types of foreign funding goes, Joanna Regul-ska had studied the “delayed commitment” of US public donors to building local democracy in Poland. She argued that the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and other donors failed to establish early enough the right priorities for reinforcing local democracy via supporting NGOs. Regul-ska maintained that the NGO sector began to receive more financial support from US public donors only in 1994, and this attention did not provide equal opportunity for all NGOs in Poland. Furthermore, “rather than having a flexible approach that can be derived from local circumstances and localized needs, public donors had a standard “menu” from which potential providers could choose when applying for funding” (Regul-ska 1998: 74).

Fourteen years later, when Poland is already a EU member state and as such receives support in the framework of the European Social Fund, the fact that only a limited number and type of NGOs is successful in tapping such opportunities for financing has not changed. Namely, in 2012 only 6% of social organization in Poland implemented projects (co)financed by the European Social Fund. What more, these were organizations that possessed resources and previous experience in applying for such grants (Nałęcz and Goś-Wójcicka 2012). It should be remembered, however, that external support for NGOs in countries which had a peaceful transition to democracy differs from ODA that goes to post-conflict states or to developing countries.

In the case of post-conflict states which concurrently undergo transition to democracy and post-conflict reconstruction, support for civil society should be both means and an end in development cooperation. Unlike post-communist states in Europe which received official aid to support their transition to democracy and the development of civil society, in BiH the ODA earmarked for civil society was a tool to overcome the legacy of the conflict (Chimiak 2011). At the same time, research shows that neighborhoods and newly established NGOs working on behalf of, rather than together with, their beneficiaries do not contribute to overcoming ethnic divide in the communities (Pickering 2006). In other words, horizontal weak ties are more conducive to healing post-conflict communities than top-down initiatives organized by NGOs on behalf of the end beneficiaries.

Nonetheless, NGOs seem to be best equipped to initiate what came to be known as “development from below.” The capacity of individuals and local institutions alike was to be built via their involvement in development initiatives. NGOs became “platforms through which local people could be mobilized for development purposes” (Bankole 2008a: 20). Thus, although civil societies’ role in the development process was acknowledged as central, decision-taking still rested with the institutions which distribute the resources. The validity of criticisms of preferential treatment of NGOs notwithstanding, one can only agree with Menno Kamminga that “there is still much more reason for concern about the negative impact of “irresponsible” governments than about “irresponsible” NGOs” (Kamminga 2005: 111). The lack of unanimity regarding the extent of NGOs’ impact notwithstanding, it would be important to illustrate *how* national and international NGOs participate in governance.

NGOs' Functions in Governance

Archer has identified several functions international organizations perform (Archer 2001: 92–108). The functions INGOs fulfill are as follows: interest articulation and aggregation (the World Zionist Congress, the Salvation Army); the establishment of norms and values in international relations (the Anti-Slavery Society), recruitment of participants in the international political system (women INGOs), socialization (Esperanto INGOs), rule-making (International Standardization Organization), rule-application achieved via publicity and moral pressure (the International Committee of the Red Cross, Amnesty International), providing information (the International League against Rheumatism, Scouts World Bureau) and operations or simply service-providing (Caritas, Oxfam). In fact, among the functions performed by both IGOs and INGOs, it is only rule adjudication that is reserved solely for IGOs. This observation is indicative of the established presence—even if it does not always translate into impact—of NGOs in national and international affairs alike.

Ramish Thakur developed somewhat different typology of international organizations' functions. However, his classification merits attention, as it refers to INGOs only. Thakur enumerates the following functions INGOs fulfill in international relations: “consciousness-raising or value promotion; agenda-setting; lobbying to shape the terms of the instructions given to delegates at multilateral and IGO forums, and to implement international commitments; monitoring; and direct action” (Thakur 1999: 261). Besides engaging in direct action, some INGOs practice another, sometimes controversial, mode of action, i.e. they function as pressure groups (Łoś-Nowak 2003). INGOs like Climate Action Network (f.1989) or Basel Action Network (f.1997) are examples of organizations practicing direct action and acting as pressure groups. Pressure groups are involved in lobbying in the European Union, too (Kurczewska 2011). Another example of functions INGOs perform is to be found in Quisha Ma's book, who gauges the role INGOs play in China. Namely, she argues that INGOs function in China as “catalysts,” “glue” and as “diplomats” (Ma 2006: 180). The typologies of functions INGOs perform are certainly not exhaustive; albeit, they indicate the wide spectrum of roles INGOs can and do play in international affairs.

In addition to service-provision during humanitarian crisis, these organizations' contribution is likewise evidenced in the realm of advocacy. The consultative function of NGOs refers to their involvement in civil dialogue with decision-makers at national and international level alike. The structured involvement of civil interest groups in decision-making at EU level is a relatively recent phenomenon (Obradovic and Vizcaino 2006: 19). The “European governance: a White paper” suggests five principles underpinning good governance: openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence (European Governance 2001: 10), the application of which in turn guarantee the proportionality and subsidiarity in decision-making processes at EU level (Ibid.: 10–11). By catalyzing the collection of views and formulation of policies with the intention to monitor the implementation of those policies at national level, the European Commission's role is to act as “policy entrepreneur” and “watchdog of EU interests” (Obradovic and Vizcaino 2006: 20).

The civil dialogue process has been formalized and operative since January 2003 through the adoption of the so-called minimum standards and general principles for consulting interested parties (*Towards a reinforced culture 2002*). Placing proposals on the internet for comments has reportedly widened the scope of consulted groups; however, the downside of open web consultations is that these undermine bi-lateral discussions between the Commission and certain civil interest groups (*Obradovic and Vizcaino 2006: 25*). At the same time, this approach encourages civic groups to organize in umbrella organizations, thus maximizing their chances to have their voice heard in the civil dialogue process. The analysis of the experience of Polish women's civic groups' Europeanization indicates, however, that minorities' voices are lost in European umbrella organizations (*Fuchs 2006: 63*). Therefore, the proliferation of advocating entities, although seen as counterproductive by the EU, would cope with the legitimization deficit in the EU (*Ibid.*).

The analysis of Europeanization on Czech trade unions and employers' associations (*Manseldova 2006*) and Czech environmental NGOs (*Buskova and Pleines 2006*) indicate that (up to the middle of the first decade of the XXI century) it was the EU that had bigger impact on those organizations than the other way around. As a result, although Czech environmental NGOs promote as well as monitor the implementation of EU regulations (*Ibid.: 52*), they are too small to make a difference in the umbrella organizations they have joined at the EU level (*Ibid.: 53*). In addition to strengthening the capacity of national civic groups to influence domestic politics and advocate for EU regulations, the Europeanization of civil society groups has encouraged entities (like civil society organizations or the Economic Chamber) that have not been involved in national civil dialogue to cooperate (*Manseldova 2006: 76–77*). In other words, the impact of Europeanization on NGOs' advocacy capacity has been mixed, at least during the first years after the Czech Republic joined the European Union.

Generally speaking, the right of civil dialogue participants to receive feedback from the European Commission is not guaranteed (*Obradovic and Vizcaino 2006: 28*), the reason being that the Commission considers the provision of such right as eroding the effectiveness of the decision-making process. Arguably, no comprehensive approach has been developed so far regarding the requirements that have to be fulfilled by interest groups involved in EU decision-making. The minimum standards have been found to apply to the pre-drafting stage of legislative proposal formulation only (*Ibid.: 30–31*). In fact, recent developments indicate that the relationship between the European Commission and civil interest groups are subject to greater formalization and regulation as non-profits are to adjust their internal structure to the EU good governance requirements, which may in effect discourage them from engaging in civil dialogue as such (*Ibid.: 43–44*).

As far as the advocacy function of NGOs in East-Central Europe is concerned, the weak and limited scope of advocacy activities of NGOs in these countries is accounted for by these organizations' unsatisfactory "rootedness" (*Makowski 2012: 42*). On the one hand, it is the general public's tendency to formulate their opinion on the basis of media messages and, on the other hand, the NGOs' increasing disengagement with

their constituency that explains the prevalent image of NGOs' advocacy initiatives as ones limited to targeting vulnerable groups' rights while neglecting issues related to the functioning of democracy (*Ibid.*: 41).

Another function fulfilled by INGOs is their support for local civil societies. INGOs play under-appreciated role in supporting domestic civil societies. In spite of their perceived as limited number and operating purview, in China since the middle 1990s INGOs have become "a powerful and even crucial element in facilitating the growth of autonomous and grassroots Chinese NGOs" (*Ma 2006: 168*). As far as NGOs engaged in development are concerned, John Clark contends that only these NGOs that are "moving beyond a "supply-side" approach, concentrating on the delivery of services..., to a "demand side" emphasis, helping communities articulate their preferences and concerns so as to become active participants in the development process" (*Clark 1991: 593*) are emerging as crucial ingredients of civil society. This same argument can be found in the communitarians' conviction, which favors the "doing with" over the "doing for" approach voluntary organizations assume when working with their members and beneficiaries.

Yet another INGOs' function that merits attention is social diplomacy. The vision of INGOs' role still predominant in the literature regards INGOs as simply "participants" in international affairs (Bierzanek and Simonides 1999 in *Koźlicka-Glińska 2006: 119*), or even as either "intermediaries" or "impermanent and cheaper subcontractors" (*Decaux 1999: 910*). Nonetheless, as Koźlicka-Glińska justifiably maintains, since many INGOs are not merely "participating" in world and national politics, the theoretical thinking about INGOs should up-grade its stance towards non-state actors and take into account the fact that more and more INGOs are exercising what has become known as "social diplomacy" (*Koźlicka-Glińska 2006*). A good example of social diplomacy is the work of development INGOs.

An unprecedented example of social diplomacy is what has been called a "new diplomacy." Davenport analyzed the "going beyond the traditional NGO roles of direct humanitarian aid and advocacy" initiatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines which convened their own meeting to pursue the complete ban of landmines (*Davenport 2012*). This example of "new diplomacy" was indeed "inexplicable in the context of conventional international relations" (Doland and Hunt 1998: 393 in *Ibid.*).

Another relevant, though sometimes under-appreciated, function INGOs fulfill, is educating citizenry and bringing professional innovation. In the context of official aid, Kevin Quigley drew attention to one very important side-effect of the co-operation between Polish and foreign donors in the 1990s. Although he acknowledges that a "small, elite population" has mostly benefited from the common enterprises and training sessions, "these projects, with varying degrees of success, have exposed Poles to new ideas and approaches, as well as connecting a variety of individuals with common interests" (*Quigley 1997: 54-55*).

Piotr Gliński points to some other beneficial effects of foreign non-financial aid. Besides furnishing local NGO activists with professional and organizational skills, foreign foundations have also contributed to the fostering of volunteer culture in

Poland. Besides, Gliński contends that it is due to these foreign organizations' efforts that Polish governmental institutions have become increasingly aware of the problems of the fledgling Third sector (Gliński 1999). Another side-effect of Western know-how introduced to Poland was examined by Wojciech Sokołowski. He highlighted the far-reaching consequences of what he called "organizational isomorphism," i.e. the selective emulation of organizational forms, for the Polish non-profit sector. He illustrated this point by analyzing professional innovation, which—in his opinion—has been brought about by Western health care and social service professionals (Sokołowski 2000).

Having identified the most important functions NGOs fulfil in international relations, it would be relevant to briefly discuss the (I)NGOs' role in international affairs from the theoretical point of view.

Theoretical Perspectives

After perusing the relevant literature, one can't but agree with Bob Reinalda, who opines that the main reaction in international relations theory to NGOs seems to be "NGOs exist, but..." (Reinalda 2001: 15). Witold Morawski expressed a similar view by arguing that "the role of civil society should be appreciated, though not overestimated" (Morawski 2012). The predominance of this dismissive attitude to INGOs notwithstanding, it is possible to deduce about the role international organizations play in world society even from the earliest (and most conservative as far as the role of non-state actors are concerned) theories on international relations. A helpful classification to start with is Clive Archer's typology of four major schools of thinking in the literature on international organizations. Archer distinguished between traditionalist, revisionist, structuralist and globalist schools (Archer 1992). The realist and neo-realist perspectives that belong to the "traditionalist" school epitomize the state-centric model of international relations.

In fact, realism has not lost its appeal to contemporary international relations theorists. One of the champions of this mode of thinking has developed the so-called "cosmopolitan realism," which acknowledges that co-operation and conflict among states is influenced by non-state superpowers and actors, too (Beck 2005: 12). This "cosmopolitan realism" eventually takes into account the importance of non-state actors such as transnational corporations and transnational civic movements, but also the growing presence of non-civic initiatives like the terrorist network. The "cosmopolitan" attitude advocated by Ulrich Beck is contrasted by him with the "national" one. In Beck's opinion, whereas the national approach used to be characterize what he calls the "first modernity," the cosmopolitan attitude is typical for the "second modernity." These reservations notwithstanding, realists' mode of thinking is intrinsically unwilling to adequately gauge the role non-state actors play in international affairs.

A step forward in this respect makes the "revisionist" school, which acknowledges the role and importance of non-state actors (including INGOs). This school seems to

be best known by its so-called functionalist and interdependence branches. Following the authors of the interdependence theory Keohane and Nye, Ann Hudock highlights the important distinction between interconnectedness and interdependence. Hudock writes that interdependence exists “where there are reciprocal, yet not necessarily symmetrical, costly effects of transactions” (Hudock 1999: 25). Thus, according to interdependence theory the potential effectiveness of both IGOs and INGOs is understood as a corollary of these organizations’ ability to acquire resources indispensable for their existence. In spite of their contribution to organizational analysis literature, however, the authors adopting interdependence perspective fail to notice the autonomous role international organizations can play in international relations and national politics alike. Boli and Thomas are right to argue that according to the interdependence and functionalist theorists international institutions are simply viewed as “reducible to state interests” (Boli and Thomas 1999: 16).

Unlike the mostly neglectful attitude towards INGOs assumed by the theoretical perspectives discussed above, representatives of the “structuralist” school tend to ascribe significant power to both IGOs and INGOs’ ability to effect a change on global and domestic politics alike. The various Marxist-derived views place emphasis on the structures of world politics being formulated by economic factors (Archer 1992). Thus, unlike “traditionalists” who focus on interstate relations and “revisionists” who deal with interest groups, the “structuralists” have adopted a social class-oriented level of analysis. Third World theorists, who have also assumed a “structuralist” perspective, exhibit ambiguous attitude towards INGOs, which they view as either “tools of salvation” or “instruments of exploitation” (Ibid.).

The dependency perspective, which focuses on the legacy of colonialism practices, is yet another representative of the “structuralist” school. As an author from the global South claims, “voluntary agencies ... were born and nurtured as part of the colonisation process ... and not as the product of the altruistic desires of some individuals” (James 1995: 4). World-system theories discussed by Boli and Thomas similarly regard for example the spread of human rights discourse as merely an expression of cultural imperialism or “capitalist domination” (Boli and Thomas 1999: 15). Although comparable examples of determinist thinking should be credited for challenging modern Western views and highlighting important arguments regarding this unforeseen interpretation of INGOs’ activity in the global South, such mode of thinking seems to lead to a blind track.

Unlike the representatives of the schools discussed so far, the so-called “globalists” place greatest hope in international organizations and especially in INGOs. Namely, arguing that global problems need global solutions, representatives of the “globalist” school actually call for greater grass-roots or INGOs activism, which should make up for governments’ reported lack of commitment or inability to solve the problems of the Planet Earth (Archer 1992). Instead of speaking about abstract and impersonal “international relations,” the “globalists” opt for regarding this realm of interactions between national governments and trans-national entities as “world society” (Ibid.). By doing so they lay emphasis on co-operation rather than confrontation as the guiding principle of the “world society.”

Thus, it can be said that “globalists” set the trend of regarding INGOs and other types of international grass-roots activism like the anti-globalist movement as legitimate, necessary as well as significant actors in international affairs. As Ramesh Thakur puts it, “the world needs NGOs so that they can operate outside the framework of the states-system in order to put pressure on states on a variety of fronts” (Thakur 1999: 265). Another example of the “globalist” school is Boli and Thomas’ world-polity institutionalist perspective on world culture and organizations (Boli and Thomas 1999). One of the most important contributions of their world-polity theory is the identification of five global cultural principles which constitute the world polity and are embodied by INGOs. These “fundamental cultural themes” are namely called universalism, individualism, rational voluntaristic authority, the dialectics of rationalizing progress and world citizenship.

INGOs are viewed by Boli and Thomas as impersonating and spreading universalism in two major respects. Firstly, INGOs’ field of activities reflect human needs and purposes that are common to all people. Secondly, any person on earth is free to join INGOs. Besides, everyone can become a beneficiary of INGOs activities (Ibid.: 35). At the same time, INGOs emerge as the true embodiment of individualism. Individualism can be discerned in INGOs’ structure, because the majority of INGOs’ membership consists either of individuals or of associations of individuals. Furthermore, without the commitment of individuals, none of the universal aims espoused by INGOs can be put into practice. Directly following from this claim is the next cultural theme identified by Boli and Thomas, which they called “world citizenship.” This principle puts emphasis on the in-born right and capacity of each person on earth to pursue his or her interests via participating in common activities like those implemented by INGOs. Thus, INGOs enable all citizens to get personally involved in solving common or individual problems rather than be content with ceding their right to influence decision-making processes to their elected representatives.

INGOs likewise represent one of the most active forces involved in the advocacy as well as the implementation of the principle of rational and humanized progress. The concept of “development” that has come to substitute the XIX century idea of progress highlights the idea that economic growth has to go hand in hand with the improvement of the welfare of citizens (Chabbott 1999). As Chabbott demonstrates, INGOs were at least partly responsible for the emphasis on individual human rights and progress based on science in international development. What more, development is certainly not the sole field of activity where INGOs have been the major forces shaping the discourse and the practice of the issue in question. For example, the international women’s movement has played a leading role in spreading world-cultural ideas about women (Berkovitch 1999). As Berkovitch demonstrates, women INGOs have successfully lobbied IGOs thus bringing about the tremendous expansion of activities and ideas regarding women’s issues on international and domestic level alike, including developing countries (Ibid.). Development and women INGOs are just two instances of the effectiveness of INGOs’ activities worldwide.

Discussion

The above-presented analysis testifies to the contention that global civil society, as exemplified by the activity of international and national NGOs, is a field of forces characterized by conflict as well as cooperation (Miranda 2007: 104). In spite of the contradictions inherent to that field, those NGOs often represent innovative approaches to new and old development problems. However, the mentioned above long war on terror and the consequent conflation of development with security resulted in the restriction of the diversity of civil society by highlighting the technical service delivery roles of NGOs to the detriment of their potential emancipatory and political functions (Howell et al. 2006: 17).

Yet, as more recent research showed, rather than triggering formal constraints enforced upon INGOs by governments, counterterrorism measures resulted in INGOs' self-censorship (Bloodgood and Tremblay-Boire 2011: 167). Reportedly, the climate of uncertainty has encouraged organizations to become "conservative regarding funding and political advocacy, relying on more established, thus safer, activities" as well as created inefficiencies and wasted resources by making INGOs spend more resources on "accounting, reporting, legal fees, and bureaucratic checks for compliance" (Bloodgood and Tremblay-Boire 2011: 168). Hence, the conflation of development and security affected adversely INGOs, and in the long run this impact lead to the internalization of restrictions on behalf of INGOs.

James Paul convincingly argues that nowadays NGOs must cope with "government conservatism, funding difficulties, and private sector pressure—while also confronting multiple global crises: rising hunger, climate change, and global economic instability" (Paul 2011: 12). Paul, however, suggests how to turn crisis into opportunity: "NGOs can draw strength, though, from emerging grassroots movements and global democratic openings such as the "Arab spring" and anti-austerity mobilizations" (Ibid.: 12). This suggestion is most relevant in the cases of conflict or post-conflict areas as, "it is in the most disrupted societies where the proliferation of international nongovernmental activity and influence is greatest" (Deacon et al. 2007: 236). INGOs keep being indispensable in the immediate aftermath of nature and man-made emergencies. It is their subsequent sustained involvement in peace-building and democracy-supporting initiatives in recipient countries and in advocacy initiatives in donor countries that are at stake.

Indeed, the most important challenge is how to take the activity of NGOs "beyond mere palliative and "fire brigade" response" (Bankole 2008b: 56) to the level of guaranteeing civil society's involvement in achieving sustainable development. The overview of the recent history of (I)NGOs role in national and international affairs alike testifies to these organizations' potential to bring about palpable change, even in adverse circumstances. Currently all actors on the international arena are aware that a new model of cooperation is needed where stakeholders, including but not limited to (I)NGOs, could interact in a way that caters to the needs of both powerful and vulnerable nations and groups. Importantly, it is not only states and international institutions that should work out more inclusive framework to allow citizens

to contribute to decision-making processes. INGOs themselves should also adapt to changing circumstances and develop new modes of cooperation both with their beneficiaries and with policy-makers. It seems William Easterly's call for involving a wider scope of stakeholders comprises a recipe to cope with the current problems of INGOs. Unexplored partnerships could help (I)NGOs as well as beneficiaries, constituencies and donor agencies in putting into practice the promise inherent in theories of civil society, democratization and development.

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