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0521484413 - Bringing Transnational Relations Back in: Non-State Actors, Domestic Structures and International Institutions

Edited by Thomas Risse-Kappen

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## Setting the agenda

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# 1 **Bringing transnational relations back in: introduction**

*Thomas Risse-Kappen*

## **Introduction**

Transnational relations, i.e., *regular interactions across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an intergovernmental organization*,<sup>1</sup> permeate world politics in almost every issue-area. About 5,000 international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) – from Amnesty International and Greenpeace to the International Political Science Association – lobby international regimes and inter-state organizations for their purposes.<sup>2</sup> Some promote international cooperation, while others try to prevent regulatory regimes which would interfere with the activities of private citizens. Some of the approximately 7,000 multinational corporations (MNCs) with subsidiaries in other countries have gross sales larger than the gross national product (GNP) of even major countries and, thus, create adaptation problems for the foreign economic policies of many states. More loosely organized transnational alliances appear to be everywhere, too. Transnational dis-

<sup>1</sup> This definition builds upon, but slightly modifies the original definition of transnational relations by encompassing both trans-societal and trans-governmental relations. I will later address the concept of transnational relations in more detail. For the original definitions see Karl Kaiser, "Transnationale Politik," in Ernst-Otto Czempiel, ed., *Die anachronistische Souveränität* (Cologne-Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1969), pp. 80–109; Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Introduction," in Keohane and Nye, eds., *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. xii–xvi.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion see Young Kim, John Boli and George M. Thomas, "World Culture and International Nongovernmental Organizations," paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the American Sociological Association, Miami Beach, 1993. See also Jackie Smith, "The Globalization of Social Movements: The Transnational Social Movement Sector, 1983–1993," paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the American Sociological Association, Los Angeles, August 5–9, 1994.

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sident movements in Eastern Europe helped to topple the Communist regimes in 1989. Western social movements set the public agenda on peace and environmental questions in many countries during the 1980s. Transnational groups of scientists – “epistemic communities”<sup>3</sup> – contributed to a growing global awareness about various environmental issues. *Transgovernmental* networks among state officials in sub-units of national governments, international organizations, and regimes frequently pursue their own agenda, independently from and sometimes even contrary to the declared policies of their national governments. Such knowledge-based or normative principle-based transnational and transgovernmental issue networks seem to have a major impact on the global diffusion of values, norms, and ideas in such diverse issue-areas as human rights, international security, or the global environment. But there is no reason to assume that transnational relations regularly promote “good” causes. Transnational terrorism poses a serious threat to internal stability in many countries, while some scholars have identified Islamic fundamentalism – another transnational social movement – as a major source of future inter-state conflicts.<sup>4</sup>

Almost nobody denies that transnational relations exist; their presence is well established. But despite more than twenty years of controversy about the subject, we still have a poor understanding of their impact on state policies and international relations. Transnational relations do not seem to have the same effects across cases. How is it to be explained, for example, that the spread of democratic values and human rights toward the end of this century, promoted by various INGOs and transnational alliances,<sup>5</sup> has affected some countries more than others – the former Soviet Union as compared to China, former Czechoslovakia as compared to Romania, and South Korea as compared to North Korea? Why have “epistemic communities” and INGOs been able to set the agenda on global warming in Japan and in many European Union (EU) countries, but apparently less so in the United States? How do we explain that the transnational peace move-

<sup>3</sup> See Peter Haas, ed., *Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination*, special issue of *International Organization*, 46, 1 (Winter 1992).

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Beau Grosscup, “Global Terrorism in the Post-Iran-Contra Era: Debunking Myths and Facing Realities,” *International Studies*, 29, 1 (1992), pp. 55–78; Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?,” *Foreign Affairs*, 79 (1993), pp. 22–49.

<sup>5</sup> On this aspect see Kathryn Sikkink, “Human Rights, Principled Issue-Networks, and Sovereignty in Latin America,” *International Organization*, 47, 3 (Summer 1993), pp. 411–41.

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ments of the early 1980s in Western Europe and North America had a lasting impact on German security policy, made a significant short-term difference in the US, but had almost no influence on French foreign policy?<sup>6</sup>

This study suggests that the debate of the 1970s on transnational relations closed the book on the subject prematurely and that it is worthwhile to revive it. The earlier arguments set up the controversy in terms of a "state-centered" versus a "society-dominated" view of world politics. We claim instead that it is more fruitful to examine how the inter-state world interacts with the "society world" of transnational relations. If the conditions under which transnational actors matter are clearly specified, the claim that "the reciprocal effects between transnational relations and the interstate system" are "centrally important to the understanding of contemporary world politics"<sup>7</sup> can be made with greater confidence.

The main question to be asked in this volume is therefore: *under what domestic and international circumstances do transnational coalitions and actors who attempt to change policy outcomes in a specific issue-area succeed or fail to achieve their goals?*

Our question is *not* what difference transnational relations make in international politics in general. This would require one to vary empirical case studies with regard to the existence or non-existence of non-state actors. The methodological difficulties of such an approach seem to be almost insurmountable, since we do not know enough about the universe of cases to be able to specify whether our case selection constitutes a reasonably representative sample. Rather, we will take a more modest and feasible approach by comparing cases in which transnational coalitions and actors consciously sought to influence policies, mainly state behavior in the foreign policy arena. We take the existence of transnational coalitions and actors who aim to change policies in various issue-areas as the point of departure. The issue-areas investigated include the international economy (chapters by David Cameron, Peter Katzenstein and Yutaka Tsujinaka, Cal Clark and Steve Chan), the environment (chapter by Thomas Princen), international security (chapters by Katzenstein and Tsujinaka,

<sup>6</sup> See David Meyer, *A Winter of Discontent. The Freeze and American Politics* (New York: Praeger, 1990); Thomas Rochon, *Mobilizing for Peace: The Anti-Nuclear Movement in Western Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

<sup>7</sup> Keohane and Nye, "Introduction," p. xi. For a discussion see also M.J. Peterson, "Transnational Activity, International Society, and World Politics," *Millennium*, 21, 3 (Winter 1992), pp. 371–88.

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Matthew Evangelista), and human rights (chapter by Patricia Chilton). We look at the policy impact of transnational actors such as MNCs (Katzenstein and Tsujinaka, Clark and Chan), INGOs (Princen), transnational and transgovernmental actors within international institutions (Cameron, Katzenstein and Tsujinaka), as well as loose alliances among societal groups (Evangelista, Chilton). We look at the differential impact of these actors on highly industrialized states (Cameron, Katzenstein and Tsujinaka), on former Communist countries (Evangelista, Chilton), and on industrializing as well as less developed states (Clark and Chan, Princen). Finally, the transnational relations investigated here vary with regard to their embeddedness in bilateral and/or multilateral institutions – from the EU (Cameron) and the US–Japanese alliance (Katzenstein and Tsujinaka) to the East–West détente of the Cold War (Evangelista, Chilton), and North–South relations (Clark and Chan, Princen).

The volume builds upon and integrates two theoretical approaches which have been developed independently from each other and have rarely been brought together – the concepts of *domestic structures* and of *international institutions*. They both deal with structures of governance, they both have generated fruitful empirical research, and, thus, together enlighten this inquiry.

This book argues, in short, that the impact of transnational actors and coalitions on state policies is likely to vary according to:

- 1 differences in *domestic structures*, i.e., the normative and organizational arrangements which form the “state,” structure society, and link the two in the polity; and
- 2 degrees of *international institutionalization*, i.e., the extent to which the specific issue-area is regulated by bilateral agreements, multilateral regimes, and/or international organizations.

Domestic structures are likely to determine both the availability of channels for transnational actors into the political systems and the requirements for “winning coalitions” to change policies. On the one hand, the more the state dominates the domestic structure, the more difficult it should be for transnational actors to penetrate the social and political systems of the “target” country. Once they overcome this hurdle in state-dominated systems, though, their policy impact might be profound, since coalition-building with rather small groups of governmental actors appears to be comparatively straightforward. On

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the other hand, the more fragmented the state and the better organized civil society, the easier should be the access for transnational actors. But the requirements for successful coalition-building are likely to be quite staggering in such systems.

Domestic structures and international institutionalization are likely to interact in determining the ability of transnational actors to bring about policy changes. The more the respective issue-area is regulated by international norms of cooperation, the more permeable should state boundaries become for transnational activities. Highly regulated and cooperative structures of international governance tend to legitimize transnational activities and to increase their access to the national polities as well as their ability to form “winning coalitions” for policy change. Transnational relations acting in a highly institutionalized international environment are, therefore, likely to overcome hurdles otherwise posed by state-dominated domestic structures more easily.

### Refining the concept of transnational relations

An effort at renewing the debate about transnational relations has to overcome conceptual and empirical hurdles. The odds are against such an enterprise, since the earlier debate on the subject failed to clarify the concept which then did not generate much empirical research – except for the study of MNCs – and withered away.<sup>8</sup> The first debate essentially resulted in confirming the state-centered view of world politics. There are several reasons for this outcome.

The original concept of “transnational relations” was ill-defined. It encompassed everything in world politics except state-to-state rela-

<sup>8</sup> Among the most important works of the earlier debate are Walter Bühl, *Transnationale Politik* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1978); Czempiel, *Die anachronistische Souveränität*; Annette Baker Fox, Alfred O. Hero Jr., and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., et al., eds., *Canada and the United States: Transnational and Transgovernmental Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976); Harold Jacobson, *Networks of Interdependence. International Organizations and the Global Political System* (New York: Knopf, 1979); Keohane and Nye, eds., *Transnational Relations and World Politics*; Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Power and Interdependence* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1977); Werner Link, *Deutsche und amerikanische Gewerkschaften und Geschäftsleute 1945–75: Eine Studie über transnationale Beziehungen* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1978); Richard W. Mansbach, Yale H. Ferguson, and Donald E. Lampert, *The Web of World Politics. Non-State Actors in the Global System* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1976); Edward L. Morse, *Modernization and the Transformation of International Relations* (New York: Free Press, 1976); James N. Rosenau, *Linkage Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1969); James N. Rosenau, *The Study of Global Interdependence. Essays on the Transnationalization of World Affairs* (London: Frances Pinter, 1980); Peter Willets, ed., *Pressure Groups in the Global System. The Transnational Relations of Issue-Oriented Non-Governmental Organizations* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982).

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tions. But transnational capital flows, international trade, foreign media broadcasts, the transnational diffusion of values, coalitions of peace movements, transgovernmental alliances of state bureaucrats, INGOs, and MNCs are quite different phenomena. To study the policy impact of transnational relations becomes virtually impossible if the concept is used in such a broad way.

This volume does not deal with transnational relations in an all-encompassing sense. It is not about *interdependence*, defined as patterns of interactions which are mutually costly to disrupt or break.<sup>9</sup> The volume also does not consider *transnational diffusion effects* of cultural values and norms or the impact of international communication networks on public attitudes and national societies. It is hard to develop propositions about these effects that can be measured empirically.<sup>10</sup>

This volume focuses on the policy impact of transnational relations maintained by clearly identifiable actors or groups of actors and linking at least two societies or sub-units of national governments (in the case of transgovernmental relations). Moreover, the transnational coalitions and actors considered are purposeful in the sense that they attempt to achieve specific political goals in the "target" state of their activities.

This sub-set of transnational relations still leaves a whole range of different actors. With regard to purpose, the volume concentrates on two types of actors – those motivated primarily by instrumental, mainly economic, gains and those promoting principled ideas as well as knowledge.<sup>11</sup> The former include multinational corporations

<sup>9</sup> See Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence*. For a review of the "interdependence" literature concluding that there was no "integrated theoretical model" and that the concept only generated "impressionistic descriptions" rather than rigorous empirical research see Beate Kohler-Koch, "Interdependenz," in Volker Rittberger, ed., *Theorien der internationalen Beziehungen* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990), pp. 110–29, 125. See, however, James Rosenau and Hylke Tromp, eds., *Interdependence and Conflict in World Politics* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1989); James Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics. A Theory of Change and Continuity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); Ernst-Otto Czempiel, *Weltpolitik im Umbruch. Das internationale System nach dem Ende des Ost-West-Konflikts* (Munich: Beck, 1991).

<sup>10</sup> For pioneering work in this direction see the studies on the "world polity" initiated by John W. Meyer and other sociologists, for example, George M. Thomas, John W. Meyer, Francisco O. Ramirez, and John Boli, ed., *Institutional Structure. Constituting State, Society, and the Individual* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1987); John Meyer, "The World Polity and the Authority of the Nation-State," *ibid.*, pp. 41–70; John Meyer and Brian Rowen, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structures in Myth and Ceremony," in Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter Powell, eds., *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> I owe these categories to suggestions by Kathryn Sikkink; see her "Human Rights, Principled Issue-networks, and Sovereignty." On knowledge-based networks see

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(chapters by Katzenstein and Tsujinaka, Clark and Chan), while the latter range from INGOs (chapter by Princen), transnational coalitions among human rights groups, peace movements, arms control experts, and central bankers (chapters by Chilton, Evangelista, Cameron) to transgovernmental networks among state officials (chapters by Cameron, Katzenstein and Tsujinaka).

The notion of *transgovernmental coalitions*<sup>12</sup> raises additional conceptual problems. Transgovernmental relations could be regarded as the transnational equivalent of bureaucratic politics.<sup>13</sup> They are all-pervasive in world politics, since interactions among heads of states and governments only form a very small portion of inter-state relations. But conceptualized in this way, transgovernmental relations would become virtually indistinguishable from inter-state relations so that the notion loses any analytical strength. To put it differently, the parsimonious “government-as-unitary-actor” model should not be abandoned in the international realm too easily. Only those networks among governmental actors which cannot be captured in the framework of inter-state relations will be considered here. Sub-units of national governments have to act on their own in the absence of national decisions, not just on behalf of their heads of state implementing agreed-upon policies. Transgovernmental coalitions are then defined as networks of government officials which include at least one actor pursuing her own agenda independent of national decisions. The European Committee of Central Bank Governors monitoring the European Monetary System (EMS), for example, represents a transgovernmental institution given the independent status of some of its powerful members (e.g., the German Bundesbank; see Cameron’s chapter). Transgovernmental coalitions among senior officials of various North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) governments

Peter Haas, *Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination*; Peter Haas, *Saving the Mediterranean* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Ernst Haas, *When Knowledge Is Power* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990).

<sup>12</sup> See Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “Transgovernmental Relations and International Organizations,” *World Politics*, 27 (1974), pp. 39–62.

<sup>13</sup> The classic studies are Graham Allison, *Essence of Decision. Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1972); Morton Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1974). There is one important conceptual difference between Allison’s original concept and the notion of transgovernmental relations as used in this volume. Allison’s bureaucratic actors are primarily motivated by instrumental goals, i.e., they want to increase their turf, their budget, and the like. But bureaucratic and transgovernmental coalitions might as well be motivated by principled ideas.



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have been found to shape the transatlantic relationship significantly.<sup>14</sup> When Chancellor Kohl reaches an agreement with President Mitterrand on EU matters, however, such interaction can be conceptualized as inter-state relations and the concept of transgovernmental relations is unnecessary.

The transnational coalitions and actors investigated in this volume can be distinguished according to the degree of their institutionalization.<sup>15</sup> In order to qualify as a transnational *coalition*, the interaction has to occur with regularity over time. A merely “tacit alliance” across national boundaries would not be considered a transnational coalition.<sup>16</sup> Transnational alliances operate on the basis of both implicit and explicit rules based on informal understandings as well as formal agreements. Examples of informal networks include most transnational “epistemic communities” and transgovernmental coalitions. In this volume, two chapters examine the policy impact of rather loose transnational alliances formed across the East–West divide during the Cold War (Evangelista, Chilton).

The most highly institutionalized forms of transnational relations are INGOs and MNCs. They consist of bureaucratic structures with explicit rules and specific role assignments to individuals or groups working inside the organization. The policy impact of INGOs and MNCs will be examined in the chapters by Katzenstein and Tsujinaka, Clark and Chan, and Princen.

Two trends can be observed with regard to the institutionalization of transnational relations over time. First, the number of INGOs has exploded throughout this century, particularly during the 1970s and 1980s – from 176 in 1909 to 832 in 1951, 1,255 in 1960, 2,173 in 1972, and 4,518 in 1988.<sup>17</sup> This is particularly true for INGOs representing trans-

<sup>14</sup> See Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation among Democracies. The European Influence on US Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); also Helga Haftendorn, *Kernwaffen und die Glaubwürdigkeit der Allianz* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> I follow Keohane’s definition of institutions as sets of rules which shape expectations, prescribe roles, and constrain activities. See Robert O. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989), pp. 3/4.

<sup>16</sup> For example, “hawks” in both the US and the former USSR frequently played into each other’s hands during the Cold War. Implicit transnational alliances can be analyzed in the framework of “two-level games” and are not part of this project. On “two-level games” see Robert Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games,” *International Organization*, 42, 3 (Summer 1988), pp. 427–60; Peter B. Evans, Harold K. Jacobson, Robert D. Putnam, eds., *Double-Edged Diplomacy. An Interactive Approach to International Politics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> Data in Jaap de Wilde, *Saved from Oblivion: Interdependence Theory in the First Half of the 20th Century* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1991), p. 36; Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics*,

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national social movements. Their number has increased from 1983 to 1993 by 73 per cent, from 319 to 533.<sup>18</sup> This trend helps to clarify the debate about whether or not transnational relations have increased over time. With the exceptions of capital mobility and of direct foreign investments, it is hard to sustain the thesis that transnational relations as such have multiplied. However, as others have noted before,<sup>19</sup> the data show that the institutionalization of transnational relations has definitely increased.

Second, this institutionalization took place in parallel to, but recently surpassed the creation of inter-state institutions. In 1909, there were on average less than 5 INGOs per International Governmental Organization (IO). From the 1950s to the early 1970s this ratio increased to about 7–9 INGOs per IO. From the late 1970s throughout the 1980s, the growth rate of INGOs surpassed the increase in inter-state organizations. In 1988, the UN counted 4,518 INGOs and 309 IOs, i.e., a ratio of more than 14:1.<sup>20</sup>

Even if we can observe a trend toward the institutionalization of transnational relations, it is not clear that, therefore, they should affect state practices. Various examples suggest that neither institutionalization nor economic power alone are decisive for the policy impact of transnational actors:

In the *environmental issue-area*, “epistemic communities” – i.e., networks of professionals with an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge<sup>21</sup> – and INGOs are often pitched against economically powerful MNCs. In the case of the ban

p. 409. For a discussion of INGOs and transnational social movements before 1945 see Charles Chatfield, “Networks and Junctures: International Nongovernmental Organizations and Transnational Social Movements to 1945,” paper presented to the Workshop on International Institutions and Transnational Social Movement Organizations, University of Notre Dame, April 21–23, 1994.

<sup>18</sup> For details see Smith, “The Globalization of Social Movements.”

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Samuel Huntington, “Transnational Organizations in World Politics,” *World Politics*, 25 (April 1973), pp. 333–68; Joseph Nye, “Transnational Relations and Interstate Conflicts: An Empirical Analysis,” in Fox *et al.*, *Canada and the United States*, pp. 367–402, 383/384. For a more recent analysis see Kim *et al.*, “World Culture and Nongovernmental Organizations.” For arguments disputing the increase in transnational interactions see, for example, Janice E. Thomson and Stephen Krasner, “Global Transactions and the Consolidation of Sovereignty,” in Ernst-Otto Czempiel and James N. Rosenau, eds., *Global Changes and Theoretical Challenges* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989), pp. 195–219; Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

<sup>20</sup> Calculated from data in de Wilde, *Saved from Oblivion*, p. 36, and Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics*, p. 409.

<sup>21</sup> See Peter Haas, *Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination*.