'Actor'. If IGOs are really just collections of states pursuing their own interests, then they are the wrong unit of analysis. On the other hand, if we take seriously their ability to shape state behaviour or even state interests and identities, they become social facts worthy of study.

We might also be more inclined to examine what goes on inside these organizations, particularly those with substantial bureaucracies. As for whether they 'matter', that will also depend on the unit of analysis. For the realist, to matter is to affect the highest level of international security; and IGOs cannot accomplish this. For the liberal, they matter in their ability to channel state behaviour and to overcome collective action problems and similar impediments to cooperation. For the constructivist, the issue goes deeper, as IGOs can create ideas, shape behaviour and become part of the larger 'conversation' among actors that shape identities. But are IGOs really necessary? Can that conversation go on without them?

One other question arises: do IGOs lead world politics in any particular direction? Traditional liberalism, with its implied teleology, assumed that IGOs as actors were moving the world towards a more desirable endpoint, where cooperation would slowly replace conflict: in other words, Kant's belief in 'progress'. Neoliberalists have left out the teleological elements of classical liberalism, but the emphasis on cooperative behaviour still implies that IGOs are forces for good, and make the world safer and more harmonious. It is also true that most constructivists analysis focuses on the creation of 'good' ideas, like transnational identity or the elimination of certain forms of warfare, rather than 'bad' ideas - although these exist also, as has already been pointed out. But constructivists differ on whether there is some necessary direction that IGOs move world politics, and neoliberalists also – despite their focus on cooperative behaviour – are reluctant to make ideological claims. Even if IGOs matter, how they matter and when remain contested issues. Few modern theorists of any school are willing to go as far as the early liberal idealists; yet at the same time, even those liberals did not see IGOs as so much important in themselves; rather they gave shape to more general aspirations for a natural harmony. Bodies like the UN and its subsidiaries still embody wishes for a better world, but few theorists will endow them with real agency towards bringing that about.

Further Reading

discourse, but also by extra-academic change, in particular the rise of IOBs in post-Cold War governance. It is still strongly empirical, with a policy-oriented focus on increasing the effectiveness of specific inter-organizational cooperation frameworks such as European Union (EU)-North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) relations. Even though idiosyncratic single case studies dominate, the rich empirical findings offer excellent starting conditions for theory-guided research.

Second, the field is still in a period of experimentation. Due to the lack of a lead author and text comparable to Barnett and Finnemore (2004) for sociological institutionalism or Hawkins et al. (2006) for principal-agent theory, a variety of diverging approaches are tested, many of them importing research questions, methods, concepts and findings from sociology and economics. Theoretical avenues vary strongly. Frequently they combine established IR theories such as bureaucratic politics approaches or new institutionalist theories such as organizational culture approaches with variants of organization theory. This strongly interdisciplinary and multi-theoretical approach that bridges the rationalist-constructivist divide allows uncovering the multifaceted rationale of institutional agents as they consider cooperating with other organizations.

This chapter aspires to accomplish three goals, devoting one section to each. The first one is to try to demonstrate the relevance of interorganizationalism as a promising research programme that deserves sustained scholarly attention. The second goal is to review the academic record of analysing IOBs. The third is to offer some guidance for future research with a particular focus on theory building and comparative designs.

The Relevance of Inter-Organizational Networking in Global Governance

In recent years a plethora of buzzwords has entered the discourse of those who occupy pivotal positions in the expanding web of global governance. Taken together they point to ‘partnering’ (or ‘teaming’) as an emerging norm of good governance in international affairs. Practitioners agree that nothing less than a paradigm shift is asked of them. Instead of closing up self-contained organizations from their environment, they have to follow new rules: transparency, information-sharing and policy coordination. Traditionally closed organizations such as security or intelligence organizations particularly sense the magnitude of this shift, as they move from the ‘need to know’ to a ‘need to share’ principle and hesitantly cross former red lines of non-cooperation.

The major goal of partnering is to achieve more ‘coherence’, ‘synergy’ or ‘unity of effort’. Whether officials are tasked to battle international criminal networks of money laundering or drug trafficking (Geerschaper and Dupont 2007), fight international terrorism or pandemics (Bensahel 2006) or provide aid to developing countries, refugees or victims of natural disasters (Riddell 2007), they all need to coordinate closely with multiple partner organizations in order to respond more effectively to the transnational nature of today’s challenges.

Take stabilization and reconstruction or what former United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali termed ‘multifunctional peacebuilding’. The United States (US) government has pinned down ‘unity of effort’ as one of the ‘Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction for its armed forces. In this seminal guide to peace operations unity of effort is defined as ‘the outcome of coordination and cooperation among all actors, even when the participants come from many different organizations with diverse operating cultures’. Coordination starts with reaching a ‘shared understanding’ of the problem and a ‘shared strategic goal’. It implies joint prioritization and ‘a high degree of sensitivity’ to the interests of others. Because ‘everything is connected to everything else’, peacebuilding has to be framed as ‘an interlocking system of systems. Security requires the rule of law, essential services require governance, the rule of law is dependent on security, sustainable economies are dependent on the rule of law’ (USIP 2009: 18, 30). Such a ‘spider web of interdependence’ calls for ‘as much integration as possible’.

Inter-organizational coordination crosses the traditional boundaries of states and institutions. It takes place on four interconnected levels (also De Coning 2010: 20-21): 1) across departments or agencies within individual organizations, national or international; 2) among different governmental organizations and NGOs within one country; 3) among various state and non-state actors in multiple transnational configurations; and 4) between ‘internationals’ and ‘locals’ in a given country context.

The idea of partnering has inspired profound programmatic and institutional change. Progress seems to be most pronounced in security affairs, especially with regard to peacebuilding (Koops 2009, Lipson 2007a, 2007b, 2008). Coordination problems are widely discussed as a factor contributing to the sobering post-Cold War record so far (Gowan 2008, Jones 2001, Paris 2009). On the national level the ‘whole-of-government approach’ has become the leitmotif for improving coordination (Bensahel 2007, Patrick and Brown 2007). For example, the US administration created the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization in 2005 to allow for the rapid deployment of experts on rule of law, planning and governance, which are provided by eight different governmental agencies. The British government established a Stabilization Unit in 2007, jointly owned by the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development, to plan, fund and staff operations such as the British civil-military Provincial Reconstruction Team in Helmand, Afghanistan. Likewise the German government adopted an Action Plan for ‘Civilian Crisis Management’ in 2004, which is implemented by an inter-ministerial working group of representatives from the Foreign Ministry and the Ministries of Defence, Interior and Economic Cooperation and Development.

On the international level the most prominent concepts are the ‘comprehensive approach’, originally framed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and taken over by NATO in 2006 (Josten 2008, Petersen et al. 2010, USIP 2009), the UN’s ‘Integrated approach’, which is also adopted by the EU (Ahmed
et al. 2007, Campbell and Kasperson 2008, Nowak 2006), and the "3D (diplomacy, development and defense) concept" (S. Weiss et al. 2009). Major organizational innovations include the EU Civil-Military Cell or the UN Peacebuilding Commission. It is remarkable that the UN and the EU, facing tremendous challenges from within to harmonize the policies and programmes among their diverse agencies, designed their approach primarily to improve internal coherence, whereas NATO, as a much more hierarchical organization, lacking major civilian capabilities that are crucial for mission success, has drafted its approach as a truly holistic undertaking.

Anyone who participates in global governance today is hard pressed to follow the partnering norm. However, the inflationary use of catchwords points to a vexing deficit the new concepts try to fix. Practitioners like to call it "stove-piping" (or "siloing"). It is the habit of cooperating only hierarchically within one's own chain of command, but not horizontally with other service-providers in a shared task environment. It causes dysfunctions ranging from duplication, waste of resources and rivalry to unintended consequences such as forum shopping or even aggravation of the problem to be solved. It fundamentally puts into doubt the ability of the 'international community' to solve transnational problems jointly.

There are multiple interacting causes for stove-piping. First, governance today is increasingly heterarchical, based on bargaining among actors who all vigilantly guard their decision-making autonomy. Thus cooperation is voluntary. On the national level governance is characterized by a mix of hierarchical, top-down decision making along traditional chains of command and, to a growing extent, of heterarchical coordination across governmental agencies and NGOs and within private-public partnerships. On the international level relations are predominantly heterarchical, due to the anarchical character of the international system. Thus coordination among the almost 200 official donors of international aid plus some 50 major NGOs worldwide is largely independent and voluntary. As a result Donors often compete with each other to fund identical skills and services; they employ an army of administrators and contract consultants with similar skills and specialties, creating parallel systems, structures and processes, often to oversee similar sorts of projects and programmes' (Riddell 2007: 360).

Second, boundaries separate organizations. There is little knowledge about what others in the same domain are doing, especially within traditional boundaries, such as between intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and NGOs, the national and the international level or between civilian and military organizations are crossed. The more bureaucracies are obliged to cooperate, the more they have to bridge organizational cultures, such as between hard- and soft power approaches. The increasing web of interregional cooperation, such as between the EU and the African Union, is particularly prone to miscommunication and misperception.

Third, partnering runs counter to the self-centeredness of organizations, which protect their own authority, autonomy and visibility (Biermann 2009a: 43). Battles over turf (Yost 2007: 130), or what is euphemistically called 'scope issues', arise where functional overlap erodes the relevance of individual organizations. Fourth, networking raises issues of complexity management. 'We cannot network with everyone', the complaint goes. Multilevel coordination is so demanding that there is a tendency to focus on one's own agency.

Fifth, in order to move reluctant organizations to cooperate, manifold new coordinating bodies are set up. However, most of them are advisory, even though there is agreement that the existence of 'hub' organizations increases the effectiveness of coordination (Paris 2009: 75). Consequently complaints about 'too many meetings' proliferate. Sixth, partnering runs counter to the modus operandi of some organizations. In particular, intelligence services or consumer organizations have to strike a delicate balance between information sharing and protecting sensitive data via classification and privacy rules. Finally, quality of leadership strongly impacts IORs. Factors such as change of personnel or interpersonal conflict among key boundary spanners can even cause cooperation to break down (Schäferhoff 2009).

Stove-piping creates a huge expectation-reality gap. Sometimes political shocks reveal blatant coordination failure and stimulate vigorous efforts to increase the effectiveness of coordination. The massacre of Srebrenica, which triggered the end of the NATO-UN 'dual key arrangements' and the first peacebuilding action-set in Dayton, was such a shock (Biermann 2008a: 16); 9/11 similarly affected the 16 national intelligence services on the national level, triggering the landmark 9/11 Commission Report, which resulted in a substantial restructuring of the US intelligence network. 'The scale of the catastrophe forced walls to break down', remarks one former Central Intelligence Agency official confidentially.

The Academic Record

Since the Second World War three phases of inter-organizational research can be distinguished, each driven by intersecting intra-academic and extra-academic dynamics.

The Cold War Neglect

The defining feature of the first phase, up to the mid-1980s, is the rising significance of IORs in national and transnational governance, contrasting with a striking neglect of the topic in IR. Inter-organizational networking is not a post-Cold War phenomenon. Already the early post-war period of rapid institution building required substantial interaction, much of it intangible via dominating roles among overlapping organizations. Thus the design and future of the 1948 Brussels Treaty Organization was from its inception inextricably intertwined with the design and scope of NATO and UN. Since all of them had a strong security dimension and overlapping memberships, issues of institutional autonomy, duplication and choice loomed large (Biermann 2008b: 23-9, Yost 2007: 31-41). Similarly, within the UN system overlapping mandates soon stimulated both cooperation and rivalry.
The realist paradigm, which perceived international organizations (IOs) as quantitatively negligible, as well as the legal-formalistic approach to IOs prevented a systematic analysis of IOs in the 1950s and 1960s (Rochester 1986: 782-97). Still a closer look into these early years offers illuminating insights. Pointing to inter-organizational coordination on the international level during the Marshall Plan years and on the national US level during the Vietnam War, veteran politicians claim that inter-organizational cooperation was just "out of fashion" in the latter Cold War years and resurfaced in the 1990s. Much of it is a "revival of the wheel."

Inter-agency cooperation on the national level, however, was thoroughly investigated, in particular within the US government, starting with Allison's *Essence of Decision* (1971). Its three models of decision making—the organizational process and the bureaucratic politics model in particular—triggered a stream of literature analysing key dimensions of IOs, such as organizational interests, strategies and bargaining, which are transferable to the international level. The bureaucratic politics literature offers illuminating insights particularly for those who focus on distributional conflict among organizations. Allison's work, complemented by Halperin's (1974), was heavily and rightfully criticized on many counts. The most fundamental criticism was Allison's disregard for the authority of the president in what he characterized as the "pulling and hauling" among executive agencies. This deficit compromised Allison's analysis of the focus of decision making, the inter-agency bargaining process and the intentionality of outcomes. However, the lack of hierarchy is exactly what characterizes inter-bureaucratic bargaining today. A major point of controversy has emerged: how much central direction should be inserted into networks in order to improve effectiveness (Herzhausen 2007: 26-30)?

Paradoxically, one of the few comparative works seriously discussing IOs was a book on *inter-organizational relations*, namely *The Anatomy of Influence* by Cox and Jacobson (1973: 361-8). The case studies pointed to serious "boundary issues" among organizations with overlapping jurisdictions, including competition for competences and resources. Debating the issue-specific role of governments, executive heads and international bureaucracies, the volume is still thought-provoking for those investigating the nexus between intra- and inter-organizational decision making.

At that time the number of international NGOs (INGOs) had begun to rise dramatically, followed by a more moderate increase of IGOs, which reversed in 1985. Membership as well as mandates grew in parallel (Union of International Associations 2006: 33, 131, 146). The EU and the OSCE began cooperating closely during the Helsinki Conference in 1975 (Comercon 1993). The new focus within the discipline on transnational politics, interdependence and non-state actors opened a window to begin investigating IOs systematically. However, the predominant functionalist, state-centric understanding of organizations, coupled with the emerging neo-institutionalist paradigm, shifted attention further away from organizations as actors *sui generis*. Institutionalist soon turned towards regimes. Rochester (1986: 784, 798), reviewing the post-war literature on IOs, diagnosed a "steady erosion of scholarly interest" and asked whether the sub-field "exists any longer except in name only". Not only did IOs become the "ugly duckling" of IR theory (Verbeek 1998), the tiny plant of inter-organizational study withered.

The Rediscovery of Networking

Two mutually reinforcing developments, one intra-academic and one extra-academic, stimulated the emergence of a substantive research agenda on IOs. The intra-academic one is neatly tied to the rediscovery of organizations by "new institutionalism", the extra-academic one to the rise of inter-organizational networking in post-Cold War security governance.

In the mid and late 1980s several publications appeared calling for a revitalization of the research agenda on IOs in IR (Marchi and Osen 1989). Several pointed to a "sleepy and persistent" gap between the deplorable state of organizational research in IR and the thriving study of organizations in organization theory (Ness and Brechin 1998: 245). Sociology and economics had treated organizations as one of their dominant fields of study throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Organization theory had shifted from a closed to an "open systems" perspective, investigating the impact of varying environments on organizational output (Scott 2003: 82-101). The result was a "vast, but highly fragmented literature" on IOs (Oliver 1996: 241). Scholars had analysed the structure of IOs, such as inter-organizational groups (Schiope 1987) and agreements (Gortfiedson and White 1981) as well as the specific role of boundary spanners (Aldrich and Herker 1977, Tushman and Scanlan 1981), but also problems of coordination (Van de Ven and Walker 1984). Resource dependence theory was a well-established sub-field (Mizruchi and Yoo 2002, Pfeffer and Salancik 1978) and research had broadened to include entire networks (Aldrich and Whetten 1981, Baker and Faulknor 2002). "New institutionalism" was soon to emerge, with one specific focus on organizational fields and the mimetic processes within them (DiMaggio and Powell 1991).

Ness and Brechin (1988: 29) directed the attention of IR scholars to this literature as a "fruitful field of enquiry", arguing that networks "have not yet received the systematic attention they demand". Since organization theory had thus far focused on relations among profit and non-profit organizations on the national level, IR attention to IOs promised to feed back into organization theory (Mayntz 2009). Jönsson (1986), applying network theory to his analysis of the international aviation network, was to my knowledge the first to import major concepts from organization theory into IR. However, throughout the 1990s his publications (1993, 1995) remained largely isolated in the theory-driven literature but see Noelke 1994). Only literature on institutional overlap began to emerge (Aggarwal 1998, Young 1999). The institutional turn first seemed largely to ignore IOs.

Extra-academic change was more consequential. By the late 1980s the rising number of INGOs and IOs had resulted in what Young (1999: 187) calls institutional "congestion", dense institutional spaces where a plethora of organizations coexist and overlap. Dense institutional spaces invite inter-organizational interaction. The *Yearbook of International Organizations* (Union of International Associations 2006: 178).
169, 171) found a more than two-fold increase of links among INGOs, and even an almost four-fold increase among NGOs since 1986. Thus networking seems to follow institutional congestion. However, these measures are crude. The Yearbook only counted the number of cross-citations in official texts. We still lack basic facts and figures about this process as well as research on its causality (Biermann 2008a: 156-62).

The issue-area where inter-organizational research was to surge most was post-Cold War security governance in Europe. The reasons were, first, the breakup of the frozen Cold War security architecture and thus uncertainties about the future roles of NATO, OSCE and the EU and, second, the rise of non-military dimensions of security and the accompanying need to systematically link soft and hard power approaches. This coincided with the new, ambitious requirements of 'mutual reinforcement', which materialized first in Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia and Namibia. The 'interlocking institutions' concept NATO Secretary-General Manfred Wörner launched in fall 1990 was designed to woo the EU as an emerging security actor into partnership (Nerlich 1994). In 1992 the OSCE was more responsive, introduced its own terminology ('mutually reinforcing Institutions') and started cooperation with NATO. The growing awareness that resource pooling and provision were inevitable to bring sustainable peace to places such as Bosnia or Kosovo became a major motivation to accept the loss of autonomy networking entails. 'Learning through failure', in particular on the Balkans, was crucial for overcoming the multiple obstacles to meaningful cooperation (Biermann 2008a: 161).

Inter-organizational networking expanded throughout the 1990s. Institutional density and overlap continued to grow as mandates and memberships expanded and unprecedented challenges pushed organizations into closer cooperation. Much of the empirical literature looked at the emerging new security system in Europe, particularly at the positional embeddedness of the OSCE (Buchbaum 1993, Cameron 1995, Peters 1997, Zarnier 1997).

The Emergence of a New Research Programme on Interorganizationalism

Further push factors were needed for interorganizationalism to emerge as a research programme. Most consequential were additional extra-academic triggers: the multiplication of security providers in Europe, in particular the rise of the EU as a serious partner and rival for NATO; the growing disillusionment with the meagre record of international peacebuilding operations, as ambitions expanded and the requirements for networking grew; and several shocks bringing home the need for much closer inter-organizational cooperation, including 9/11, the tsunami in the Indian Ocean (2004) and hurricane Katrina (2005).

Linguistic innovation again signalled conceptual and institutional change. The ironic twist 'interlocking/interblocking' had ridiculed the buzzword of the 1990s. The new neologisms resulted from a self-critical re-evaluation of cooperation so far and demonstrated the dedication to re-invigorate the partnering idea. Thus in 2006 NATO launched the 'comprehensive approach', being aware that only close cooperation with others can compensate for its lack of civilian capabilities, which were increasingly perceived to be crucial for the success of missions such as in Afghanistan. A series of roundtable discussions and reports followed. At the Bucharest Summit in 2008 an Action Plan was adopted (Petersen et al. 2010). The comprehensive approach figures prominently in NATO's new Strategic Concept of 2010.

Simultaneously a multidimensional reform process within the UN started following the Brahimi Report, designed to close the 'gapping hole' UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan diagnosed within the UN system. One measure was to establish an independent Study Group, which published the Report on Integrated Missions in May 2005. Another was to form a High-Level Panel on UN System-Wide Coherence, which presented its report, Delivering as One, in November 2006. A third was to create the Peacebuilding Commission, bringing together all relevant actors within the UN to develop integrated strategies for specific complex missions (Paris 2009: 65-74). Further resolutions of the General Assembly and reports of the Secretary-General followed, including a cross-agency inventory of UN Capacities in Peacebuilding, which revealed significant overlap of mandates and resources among the 31 surveyed UN departments, agencies, funds and programmes. The EU, itself aspiring to become 'more coherent' in its 2003 Security Strategy, pursued similar measures to orchestrate civilian and military crisis management between the Council Secretariat and the Commission (Nowak 2006). The 'whole of government approach' was the domestic-level corollary.

This revival of the partnering rhetoric was not, however, simply a marketing strategy. There was some fine-tuning following lessons learned. First, the focus was now more task- than agency-oriented. Second, there was more stress on long-term, institutionalized cooperation, allowing joint planning. Third, awareness that governments and INGOs had to open up far more to NGOs grew. Fourth, there was a growing realization that many coordination problems originated from the national inter-agency and the intra-institutional level within INGOs. Finally, the debate was more realistic as to the limits of synergy. The aforementioned Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction argued that integration 'is a challenge that has yet to be met ... Full integration may be achievable within individual states or organizations, but may be very difficult to attain across disparate systems' (USIP 2009: 19).

The rededication to the partnering norm triggered a surge of studies geared towards increasing the effectiveness of INGOs. The advent of the European Security and Defence Policy and the EU-NATO Berlin Plus Agreements received particular interest (Howorth 2007, Reichard 2006, Yost and Djurovic 2006), as did the intensifying, more cooperative EU-UN relations (Orega 2005, Tardy 2009) and the effect on the OSCE (Tudya 2002). The 'integrated approach' of the UN became another major research topic (Ahmed et al. 2007, Campbell and Kaspersen 2008, Gowar 2008). This literature is distinctly empirical and intergovernmental. Most of it is dyadic (some specifically considers cooperation 'in the field') (Kapferer/Heschl 2009, 2010).
Perspectives for Future Research

In 1993 Jönsson (464) observed that much of the literature on IOs is 'largely idiosyncratic rather than nomothetic. The weak or altogether lacking theoretical underpinning has resulted in eclecticism and inadequate cumulation of knowledge.' Interorganizationalism is a field where such trends are also observable, particularly in the study of interacting security institutions. Therefore, the recent turn towards theory-driven analyses is encouraging. However, even within this branch there is a risk of fragmentation and eclecticism. The heterarchical nature of academia and the lack of a theoretical core within interorganizationalism stimulate diversity and innovation, which is essential at this early exploratory stage. However, as the research programme heads in multiple directions, it risks losing focus, coherence and direction. One reason is the lack of an in-depth dialogue within the field, in particular among scholars applying different theoretical lenses or focusing on different issues-areas. Most evident is the disconnect between empirical and theory-driven scholars. Eclecticism is also a risk, since much of the literature is interdisciplinary and requires a more nuanced treatment of organization theory. The limits of transdisciplinarity across disciplines need to be carefully considered (Mayntz 2009). Therefore, in order to allow for truly cumulative research, academics working in the field need to comprehensively screen and evaluate the rapidly augmenting knowledge already generated, build on and test that knowledge across issues-areas and time in comparative case studies and aim at theory building.

Some of this is consolidation of knowledge already gained. Most scholars so far investigate coordination problems, intending to distill policy recommendations on how to improve interorganizational cooperation. Cooperation and conflict probably are the key dimensions of interorganizationalism, which can be closely linked to the mainstream of IR theory, including the early realist-institutionalist debate and new institutionalism. So far we have identified some major causal factors for uncooperative IO behaviour, such as the quest for autonomy, primacy and control, asymmetric relationships, culture gaps and lack of responsible leadership. However, solid empirical testing has just begun. Whether we have identified all causal factors, how they shape organizational behaviour and how they vary in different settings and interact requires sustained research. In this respect, the literature on interacting security institutions offers rich empirical data.

Beyond our knowledge base there is much uncharted territory. Five dimensions merit particular attention. First, we lack basic large-N data on the rise of interorganizational networking. We can see only speculate about the origins, magnitude and stability of the trend. One way to approach these questions is to chart the evolution of cooperation across partnerships in organizational fields, preferably in different issue-areas, and note the number of inter-organizational agreements, boundary spanning activities or liaison missions over time. Another is to trace the discourse on IOs.

Second, we know little about the genesis and evolution of networking. Why do organizations start cooperating, why and how do relationships mature or decay and how do entire networks come into existence? These questions call for process tracing. They also inspire research on rational design and intentionality. Furthermore they raise issues of socialization and learning, which allow cross-fertilization with constructivist research in other fields.

Third, we need research on the properties of IOs. The density of ties across dyads, within organization sets and organizational fields could be compared. Types of transaction (information and resource flows) could be distinguished. The design of inter-organizational bodies could be evaluated and degrees of institutionalization compared.

Fourth, inter-organizational networking probably expands the agency character of IOs. It is extremely difficult for member states to control the flow of information and resources across organizational boundaries. How do they design the role of proximate principals, executive heads and bureaucrats? Who are the boundary spanners within organizations? How is formal and informal coordination balanced? This perspective links intra- and inter-organizational research and fits well into the direction of current organizational research.

Finally, the analysis of larger network configurations is most rewarding, but also demanding. Starting with the smallest, a triad, is advisable. There are multiple unknowns. How do organizations assume specific network positions? How do these positions shift over time? Can we identify centrality and periphery, especially the emergence of hub organizations and processes of marginalization? How can we delineate the boundaries of networks? Furthermore, networks have an independent causal effect on organizational behaviour. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) drew our
attention to system effects of networks, specifically to isomorphism. Positioning and emulation were identified as two major ripple effects of networks (Biermann 2008a: 169-72). Are there others? Can we trace the causal mechanisms? Finally, some literature points to a lack of accountability within decentralized, amorphous networks dominated by informal and intransparent decision making. How can individual organizations be held responsible?

The research programme is in its infancy, but the start is promising. Since institutional linkages ‘will become much more common in coming decades as international institutions proliferate and inevitably bump against one another’ (Reastola and Victor 2004: 306), it is worthwhile to invest in the theory and practice of inter-organizational networking.

Further Reading

Recommended for further reading are Biermann (2008a), Dingwerth et al. (2009), Herhausen (2007), Mitrokhin and Yoo (2002) and Yost (2007).

Civil Society and NGO: Far from Unproblematic Concepts

Norbert Görtz

Although of different backgrounds, the terms ‘civil society’ and ‘non-governmental organization’ (NGO) are used largely synonymously in discussions about non-state actors. Both are ambiguous and carry many variations in definition. Sometimes they are used in a comprehensive manner that includes for-profit enterprises. In a literal sense even criminal organizations might be regarded as NGOs. However, both terms primarily refer to the sphere of voluntary associations or non-profit organizations, sometimes called the ‘third sector’ (following state and market). As such, both terms generally attribute a positive meaning.

The term ‘civil society’ can be traced to ancient Greece and has a mainly domestic connotation. By the beginning of the nineteenth century it had acquired roughly the meaning we associate with it today. In contrast, the term ‘NGO’ is an invention of the twentieth century that experienced its breakthrough as a term taken into use in the United Nations (UN) Charter in 1945. Despite the distinction made therein, NGOs are often equated with international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the NGO nomenclature remains largely tied to the sphere of international relations. Thus the term ‘NGO’ can be regarded as referring to international aspects of civil society. However, the notion of a ‘transnational civil society’ or ‘global civil society’ has made a breakthrough recently as well. The current experience of globalization blurs traditional distinctions and suggests the application of a hitherto domestic concept to wider contexts.

The buzzwords ‘civil society’ and ‘NGO’ have figured in political and scholarly debates for the past two decades. They are closely connected to the rise of concepts like ‘global governance’ and ‘good governance’, which have become prominent since the end of the Cold War. Both ‘civil society’ and ‘NGOs’ represent the core of what is commonly associated with non-state actors, and they are frequently considered ‘forces for good’. This chapter provides, first, a brief overview of the conceptual history of civil society and NGOs, followed by a sketch of the 200-year development of this type of non-state actors. Third, a selection of scholarly accounts is presented. The chapter concludes by suggesting a conceptual hierarchy between