CHAPTER 19
International Organizations

This chapter begins with a survey of various kinds of international organizations, which may include both multinational corporations (MNCs) and transnational criminal organizations (TCOs). Some are intergovernmental (IGOs), while others are nongovernmental (NGOs). Their number and variety makes a watertight definition highly problematic. Their history can be traced back to ancient China, although they became more numerous from the beginning of the nineteenth century as advances were made in both communications and transportation technologies. Early NGOs included groups like the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions, founded in 1823. The subsequent section of the chapter, which deals with IGOs, is dominated by further discussion of the UN. For their part, NGOs can be defined as self-governing organizations independent from governments, which do not make or distribute profits. The chapter explores in detail the range of bodies covered by the NGO acronym. It concludes with a discussion of broader social movements, and the concept of an international civil society.

Chapter Outline

- **What Is an International Organization?**
- **The Emergence of International Organizations**
- **Colonialism and the Spread of European Power**
- **Intergovernmental Organizations**
- **Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)**
- **Social Movements and International Civil Society**
- **Conclusion**

Key Terms

Anarchy
Authoritarian
Concert of Europe
Cosmopolitan democracy
Global governance
Interdependence

Interest group
International civil society
International regime
Internationalism
Nationalism

Nongovernmental organization
  (NGO)
Power politics
Regionalization
Social movement
Sovereignty

Discussion Questions

1. Does the increased role of IOs in the last century help or hinder efforts to secure peace?

2. How do today's communications and transportation technologies effect the operation of IOs? Would you consider this a positive, negative, or neutral effect?

3. Do social movements further the cause of a cosmopolitan democracy? If so how, and if not, how not?

4. What are the challenges to the sovereign-state system posed by the rise of an international civil society?

5. Are there certain issue areas that are better handled by IOs than by states? If so what are they, and what factors influenced your conclusion?

6. Do IOs spread political culture and norms?

7. How is international civil society affected by globalization?

8. Why are some critical of IGOs and view them as purveyors of colonialism?

Further Resources

* http://www.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/organisations.aspx?view=d
  List of IOs in which Canada participates, hosted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

* http://www.apec.org/
  Home page for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

* http://www.wango.org/resources.aspx?section=ngodir
  Worldwide NGO Directory gateway

- https://icscentre.org/
  International Civil Society Centre

- http://www.un.org/en/rights/
  United Nations web page dedicated to issues of human rights

- http://www.ngo-monitor.org/index.php
  NGO Monitor home page

- http://unu.edu/publications/articles/residual-colonialism-in-the-21st-century.html
  Residual Colonialism in the Twenty-First Century