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Review Essay

Clowns to the Left, Jokers to the Right: Complexity in State and Nonstate Relations

THOMAS O'BRIEN

Centre for International Security and Resilience, Cranfield University, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom

Social Movements in Global Politics

David West

Cambridge, Polity Press, 2013, ISBN: 9780745649597 (hardback), £55.00, ISBN: 9780745649603 (paperback), £16.99, 224pp.

States, Nonstate Actors and Global Governance: Projecting Polities

Edward A. Fogarty

Abingdon, Routledge, 2013, ISBN: 9780415655941 (hardback), £80.00, 218pp.

Processes of globalisation have placed pressure on states to manage competing internal and external challenges, with the proliferation of nonstate actors and influences at the international level also leading to an increasingly complex pattern of relations. Alongside social movement groups, private corporations and international organisations have emerged as important actors, placing state interactions firmly in a multi-level environment. Despite this apparent shift, recent research has suggested that states continue to play a central role in shaping and constraining the behaviour of non-state actors and managing competing demands. This continued importance has recently been identified in attempts to introduce best practice in transnational manufacturing processes (Locke, 2013). The pattern of

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interaction between state and nonstate actors and how this shapes the authority of sovereign states therefore requires further attention.

The two books considered in this essay together address the role of social movements at the domestic and international level. Common to both is an attempt to move beyond the notion that the state is the sole actor of concern, with nonstate actors playing a minor role. The interconnected character of the international system leads to recognition that the state is one actor among many. In order to demonstrate this position West focuses on extra-institutional politics, detailing how nonstate actors impact decisions made by the state as well as its form. By contrast, Fogarty recasts the international system as one where states operate alongside and compete with movement organisations, transnational corporations, and international organisations to secure acceptance of their preferences. The focus on the constitution and behaviour of actors in both books supports a clearer consideration of the nature of global politics and how the actions of those involved are governed.

The changing nature of the international system and the role of the state are determined to a large extent by historical developments. Patterns of power within the system were determined and have become frozen over time as entrenched interests have sought to maintain order and control. Addressing the significance of nonstate actors in the origins of these relations, West (2013: 27) argues that "contemporary institutional forms of politics... have in fact been formed by, or as a result of, the activities of earlier extra-institutional agents." The result is that while state interests appear to be set they should rather be seen as fluid and subject to change depending on the strength of interests at work. It also reinforces the notion that the state is just one actor that happens to be dominant at a particular point in time. The significance of history in this regard is demonstrated by the changing nature of interests articulated by extra-institutional actors and their ability to get these preferences onto the agenda. West identifies the breakdown of the post-war consensus and the emergence of new social movements in the 1960s as presenting a significant moment in this regard. Identifying the emergence of issues around identity, peace, and the environment West argues that recognition of these concerns recast relations and provided an opportunity to uncover concerns within society that were not being adequately addressed by institutional politics. Issues of identity and survival represent one end of the spectrum of a shift away from traditional economic concerns to consider the importance of recognition and environmental protection where "legal, economic and physical constraints do not exist or have been removed." (West, 2013: 81) Extra-institutional politics seek to drive the agenda forward in

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this regard by attempting to recast priorities within social and political structures.

Fragmentation in the social structures and relations within the state has also had impacts at the global level and perceptions of actors operating there. Fogarty identifies such a change in relation to the perception of large international organisations that emerged in the post-war period and their influence on differentially positioned states. The traditional position of strength exercised by organisations such as the IMF and World Bank over developing states was challenged in the 1970s and 1980s, as their policy prescriptions appeared to be failing. Advocating austerity policies from the late 1970s led to widespread protests across the developing world, presenting a direct challenge to formalised institutional practices embedded in the state and threatening the legitimacy of the international organisations concerned (see Walton and Seddon, 1994). The effects of these events have been carried through to the present day with nonstate actors in developed and developing countries calling on international organisations and advanced industrialised states to find new ways to reduce the debt burden on developing states. Together these developments represented a shift in the traditionally dominant position of the state within the international system that is still being felt today. Although the position of the international organisations has been challenged their role in pushing policies has illustrated the limitations of state sovereignty in a globally connected world. This challenge to the established order was crucial in providing space for new nonstate actors to emerge and present their claims against the established order. This tension between 'old' and 'new' actors rests at the core of both books. While interaction between social movements and the state has long been a key element of the political system, gaining increased recognition with the emergence of new social movements (Johnston, 2011; Tilly and Wood, 2009) the transnational nature of contemporary issues has broadened the scope of this interaction. The major change has been in the certification of such nonstate actors as credible, thereby providing space and resources necessary for them to participate, as state and international organisations face questions about their own legitimacy. The actual impacts of this participation continue to be constrained by patterns of path dependence and the entrenched character of relations, with the state remaining the central actor.

Pressures on the relationship between state and nonstate actors are apparent at the international level. Social movement actors have increasingly begun to operate at this level, responding to the character of contemporary issues and their transnational form. Alongside state and social movements, international organisations have come to play an important role

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conditioning behaviour and establishing accepted practices (see Vibert, 2007). The challenge presented by these agencies is that they have "largely been fashioned according to neoliberal principles and global *Realpolitik* rather than democratic norms" (West, 2013: 137). In such an environment the ability of nonstate actors to operate and shape practices requires different strategies, as economic concerns and power politics continue to condition international relations. Illustrating this point, West (2013: 129) points to the alter-globalization movement's focus on "production, employment, trade, investment and distribution", issues that are dealt with by more institutionalised actors in the domestic environment. The absence of enforceable overarching standards and clear guidelines for participation means that nonstate actors must find more creative ways of affecting change (Murdie and Urpelainen, 2014). In the case of transnational corporations pressure to conform to best practice (particularly in developing states) has been pressed by non-governmental organisations and adopted by the corporations themselves to maintain reputational integrity. However, without more stringent enforcement and concern from host countries the ability to monitor and maintain these efforts is undermined, thereby reinforcing the continued centrality of the state (Locke, 2013).

These patterns of behaviour reinforce the point that state and nonstate actors exist in an increasingly interconnected global system. In examining this interaction Fogarty challenges the dominant two-level model that argues states are able to separate domestic and international agendas, focusing at the international level on the greater good. Rather he argues that "state and nonstate actors have material and normative interests in projecting their internal rules onto multilateral regimes, and possess varying capacities to do so." (Fogarty, 2013: 31) In the absence of formalised institutions to structure and organise their relative positions, actors at this level must find ways of generating coalitions of support among other actors, with the constant threat these carefully constructed agreements may change suddenly as interests shift. The example of the austerity riots that took place in the developing world in the 1970s and 1980s show the importance of the state in both legitimating and challenging the policies of international organisations (Walton and Seddon, 1994). These protests led to a questioning of dominant policies of structural adjustment as the international organisations and states involved sought to maintain their position of authority in the face of growing opposition. The cases examined by Fogarty (debt relief, multilateral trade and investment regimes) demonstrate how the ability of nonstate actors to influence outcomes continue to be determined by the direction and strength of state preferences.

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The growth in the scale and scope of multilateral regimes and international organisations means that they must attempt to balance the interests of states, transnational corporations, and non-governmental organisations. Fogarty (2013: 5) argues that in this context it is necessary to address "what factors determine how multilateral regimes adapt to the twin challenges of governing globalization and coping with interorganizational diversity." In addition to managing these competing demands international organisations and their regime secretariats themselves have preferences that they pursue through negotiations (see Vibert, 2007). These patterns present both threats and opportunities for social movement actors operating at the international level. As West (2013: 144) argues "it is by no means inevitable that globalization will replace the parochial consciousness of traditional societies with a benignly cosmopolitan identity and consciousness." The transfer of preferences from the domestic level suggests that nonstate actors may also be able to transfer their approaches to the global level, noting that change at this level is unlikely to be successful without the support of the states that continue to dominate the system.

The proliferation of governance structures at the international level has increasingly revealed that the state is one actor amongst a number seeking to press their own agenda and preferences. The absence or weakness of international laws able to effectively govern and restrain practices at this level in the face of a continued emphasis on state sovereignty has opened opportunities for nonstate actors to influence developments. States are challenged by nonstate actors at the international level as the complexity of international relations and connections grows. Addressing the role of actors at the global level Fogarty suggests that the ability of nonstate actors to influence change continues to be determined by the willingness (or otherwise) of states to permit and support change, depending on their preferences and how these change over time. West also identifies the difficulties facing the same actors in challenging international bodies that are not directly accountable to any particular constituency (see also Vibert, 2007). At the national level social movements have institutionalised and pressed their demands more forcefully on the state with varying degrees of success. Their ability to do this at the international level would appear to rest on their ability to encourage states to support these preferences as they are transferred and adopted at the global level.

Fogarty and West present valuable contributions to debates on the role and influence of

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nonstate actors in the sphere of international politics. Although West's book suggests a focus on global politics, the presentation is grounded much more in domestic politics and social movement activities. This allows the work to point to broad trends and developments in extra-institutional politics that in turn have implications for the wider, global scale. Fogarty picks up some of these threads, suggesting how domestic concerns are translated and pushed on to the international stage. His engagement with the full range of nonstate actors and their interaction with the state also reinforce the complex and interconnected character of relations at this level, even if such interactions do not necessarily lead to new shared transnational visions. Together these books suggest a need to consider the link between the domestic and the global that are growing in strength and significance.

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Thomas O'Brien is a Lecturer in the Centre for International Security and Resilience at Cranfield University. His research examines leadership, democratisation, environmental politics and social movements. Previous work has appeared in *Journal of Sociology*, *Democratization* and *Political Studies*.

Correspondence Address: Centre for International Security and Resilience, Cranfield University, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, Shrivenham, Swindon, SN6 8LA, United Kingdom. Email: t.obrien@cranfield.ac.uk.