

Evaluate the power of non-state actors in global politics

In the past, states have been the central actor in global politics as they have recognised sovereignty; enabling them to exercise effective control over their territory and to prevent states from violating their power. However, due to globalisation and dramatic changes in technology and communication, the power of states have been increasingly challenged by the rise of non-state actors. Non-state actors are individuals who seek to see change, often without the approval of states. Examples of non-state actors include Amnesty International the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) both of whom have significant power in influencing citizens through their constant ... and ..., giving them leverage in the global arena. Nonetheless, the power of non-state actors are limited....

The work of non-state actors have been largely facilitated by dramatic changes in communications technology and transport which has increased interconnectedness. As a result, the numbers of non-state actors have increased significantly from an estimated 176 in 1909 to around 60,000 in 2013. Better communications have allowed the power and influence of NGOs on the global political agenda; as seen in 2004 when the Nobel peace prize was awarded to Kenyan biologist Wangari Maathai who founded the Kenyan NGO Green Belt Movement that aimed to “mobilise community consciousness- by planting trees-for self-determination, equity, improved livelihoods and more. NGOs have become a permanent part of the global political landscape and as a result, changes in technology and communication and have been able to link peoples from all across the globe who share common concerns. in which by doing so raises global voice and thus helps generate a change in the global society. Non-state actors have had a significant impact on the world, and have done so by demonstrating their power through campaigns and have the ability to influence individuals, which in turn gives them power.

Power, by definition, is the ability or capacity to direct or influence the behaviour of others. Non-state actors have shown power by influencing the decisions of states. In the late 1980s the UN gave non-state actors legal standing, resulting in the representation of non-state actors in official capacity at world conferences and in deliberation about different UN activities. In order to achieve its aims, the WWF has organised several environmental activism events, most notably, Earth Hour. In 2016, Earth Hour was operational in over 178 states, with over 120, 000 landmarks switched off and millions of individuals taking part, thus showing the popularity of the event as well as the influence of the WWF. Earth Hour has shown the influence and power that the WWF has over the global community, whilst also generating environmental change. In addition, WWF worked with the government of Brazil and other partners to launch a 10-year initiative to preserve 12%, or 60 million ha, of the Brazilian Amazon. The world’s largest in situ conservation effort, ARPA (Amazon Region Protected Area) has already created more than 30 million ha of protected areas, improved management in 62 existing protected areas, and established a US\$29 million conservation fund. This and similar efforts in other Amazon countries, including extensive work prior to 2002, mean that over 80% of the Amazon’s original forest is still largely intact. Non-state Actors are instruments that facilitate the process of development, and if popular enough, have the power to persuade governments to follow through with their ideas, that have been tailored to achieve their aims. Furthermore, Amnesty International have also been very influential in their work regarding human rights, conducting over 3,000 missions and taking action in over 44,000 cases worldwide, and in the past have been an important actor in persuading governments to accept refugees. Most notably, their work regarding the death penalty has impacted the decisions of several states, as over 100 states have abolished their death penalty laws; as compared to the mere 16 states that had previously scrapped the law before they started their campaign. Hence, non-states actors are able to influence the decisions of states through campaigns that, in the past, have proven to be successful.

Non-state actors are limited due to resource allocation as well as by states. While non-state actors do not aim to generate profit, they do need to raise funds in order to execute their aims. Their primary source of income comes from members, governments, private corporations, foundations and foreign sources. However, in essence of the recent boom in the number of NGOs, they are facing competitive pressures; meaning that larger non-state actors take advantage of economies of scale in marketing, operations and services, whilst smaller non-state actors struggle to keep pace. Amnesty International has had notable power and influence throughout their ability to utilise public opinion and awareness to create incentives towards the resolution of human rights abuses. In the past, Amnesty has been the subject of selection bias as they focus more heavily on states than other groups. This is due in part to the responsibility states have to the citizens they claim to represent, as well as the easily obtainable information states provide. Also, the WWF has no binding power over states and can only attempt to influence their decision making

and IKEA, which in turn acts as a limitation of their power. Therefore, non-states actors face limitations that restrict their power and influence.

In closing, the power of non-state actors, such as Amnesty International and the WWF, have significantly grown in global politics. Their increase of power has been facilitated by globalisation as well as aid from the UN, which can be seen through the success of their campaigns and ongoing actions to fight global problems that have, at times, successfully influenced the decisions of states.