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## Cooperation and civil society

Conference paper by Hajer Gueldich

Civil society actors are frequently involved in the processes of global politics and are becoming more influential than ever. As such, those actors are not only more visible in the political and legal matters of the developed world, but they are also growing up and strengthen their action in the Arab Spring countries and the MENA region, where they become a significant part of political landscape.

Civil society actors have proven to be very successful not only on the issues that are thought to be of secondary importance like human rights and environmental degradation, but also on issues relevant to security. Furthermore, they have been influential in non-democratic and repressive countries, a fact demonstrating that civil activism is not peculiar to Western political regulations.

In fact, the increasing role played by NGOs in international politics draws attention to the fact that they are able to change states' behaviours even in situations sensitive to national interests. That was true during the past four years. But their role has been significant all over the years, since the 19th century.

The fact that NGOs and other civil society actors are given important roles within legal arrangements specified in details under some significant regional and international organizations does not necessarily mean that they are international legal entities recognized under international law. And despite the significant influence of NGOs in the conduct of world politics, their status under international law is not clearly defined.

The Syrian humanitarian crisis is nowadays the most recent demonstration that a fruitful cooperation between states, non-state actors, municipalities and city councils is the best response to the needs of this population. Some other similar actions all over Europe demonstrate how important such cooperation can be in the next coming decades for a better world and a better future.

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