

# **PART II**

## **CONFIGURATIONS**

# 5

## NGO–NGO Interactions through Individuals

### Patterns and Effects for Social Rights Advocacy

*Nina Reiners*

#### Introduction

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) advocating for the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)—the international normative framework for social rights—are a rather diverse set of actors with different foci. Their work is often spatially bound, specialized in one of the treaty's rights, for example, on education or labour conditions and in many cases away from the United Nations (UN) headquarters. Their configurations are more determined by individual advocacy aims than by a universal strategy. Holding governments accountable under the obligations of the treaty is difficult for NGOs considering the imprecise and vague norms and the fact that ICESCR is the only human rights treaty with a progressive realization clause (Chapman 1996; Young 2019). ICESCR leaves interpretative room for governments to 'progressively realize' their obligations using their 'maximum available resources' (UN 1966). This has consequences for the protection of these rights, and resulted in 'an emphasis among both human rights activists and researchers on making economic, social, and cultural (ESC) rights more justiciable, usually by creating a legal right' (Baer 2015, 355). For social rights NGOs, successful advocacy depends on clear obligations and a consensus regarding who needs to do what (Hertel 2006; Jurkovich 2020).

This article asks how interactions between individuals advocating on behalf of NGOs in an international institution shape the institution's decision-making. In particular, the chapter focuses on advocacy for social rights, directed at the monitoring committee of the above-mentioned ICESCR. I analyse how different positional configurations evolved in a similar setting, and to what extent these configurations influenced the outcome. This question is relevant for two reasons. First, while NGOs and international human rights institutions have always had a close relationship (Schmitz and Sikkink 2013; McGaughey 2018), advocacy for economic, social, and

cultural rights has experienced less attention in research on international human rights advocacy compared to NGOs, civil, and political rights (Nelson and Dorsey 2008). Advocacy for economic, social, and cultural rights also counts as more ‘creative’ (Hertel 2017, 238) because NGOs are less prominent than political and civil rights NGOs, and have fewer resources to achieve their aims. Second, the research programme set forth in this volume invites closer examination and theorization of how different types of social ties among NGOs produce different effects. Such ties are often formed at the individual level of NGO representatives, but are so far neglected in our analyses of NGOs.

I will analyse such different types of NGO–NGO interactions for the progressive development of the ICESCR. In the early 2000s, the expert body monitoring the ICESCR sought to overcome the interpretative room left by the treaty and adopted several outcome documents reflecting the body’s interpretations of what the rights entail and what states would need to do to implement them. This makes treaty interpretations an attractive target for NGO advocacy, who can submit statements and participate in public discussions of these interpretations in front of the UN expert body in Geneva (Reiners 2022). Between 1999 and 2002, the expert body adopted general comments<sup>1</sup> on the right to food, to health, and to water. We know from similar expert-based deliberation in the context of private law-making and standard setting (Schmidt and Werle 1998; Block-Lieb and Halliday 2017; Yates and Murphy 2019) that this is a world in which the engagement, expertise, and social skills of the individuals that represent organizations in these contexts matter a lot. We also know that these representatives often wear several hats in the expert committees, which means they have overlapping relationships to the different organizations and institutions for whom they speak. The drafting of treaty interpretations is a complex matter and the fact that these closely related rights were pinned down next to each other in such a short time deserves a closer look and promises insights on social rights advocacy. The expert body setting is rather distinct from the settings in which NGOs join forces to build advocacy coalitions or influence international treaty texts at the moment of their making—typically both very politicized and public moments. The expert-committee’s work, in contrast, is much more mundane and less in the focus of public attention.

I use a mixed-method approach to understand NGO–NGO interactions for social rights advocacy: first, I map the actors involved in the drafting and adoption of the three treaty interpretations on food, health, and water through a network analysis. This analysis gives an overview of NGOs involved in one or more general comments, and to which other actors they refer to in public discussions. I analyse patterns and effects of their interactions in three cases drawing mainly on content analysis of primary documents and on interviews conducted with NGO members, treaty body experts, and staff of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

The chapter finds that in the absence of an established broader advocacy network and a coherent strategy, human rights-based advocacy in the expert committee

evolved in a rather personalized manner. Overall, patterns of NGO–NGO interactions for social rights advocacy were found to be more on the conflictive than on the cooperative spectrum of social ties, ranging from indifference (health) to co-optation (water) to open conflict (food). The analysis demonstrates the value of a relational approach by identifying configurations of NGO–NGO interactions often overlooked in the prevailing literature on advocacy networks. A goal- or outcome-oriented approach would consider the adoption of the three general comments a successful outcome of NGO advocacy; however, in taking a relational approach, this chapter reveals the politics behind these outcomes and shows three different social ties in the cases—conflicting, disregarding, and co-opting—which produced varying effects. It also highlights the role of interactions between individuals in their roles as NGO representatives, particularly in settings where they cannot rely on, or network with, vibrant advocacy networks operating outside of human rights bodies.

## **Configurations of NGO Interactions through Individual Ties**

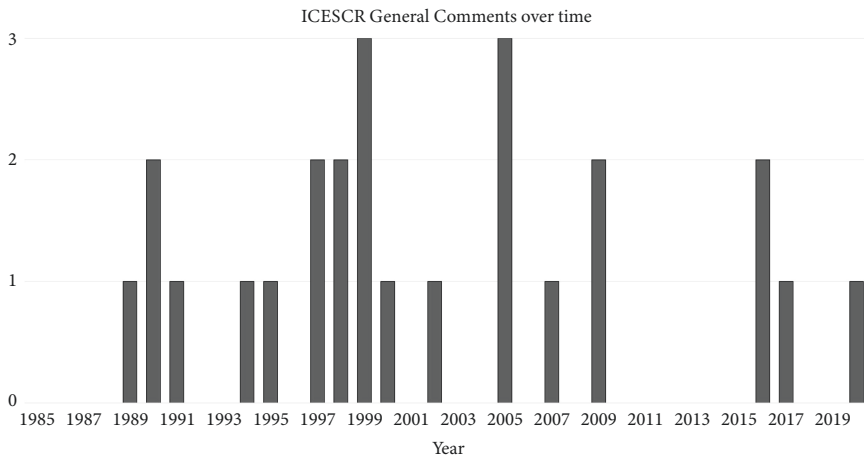
As outlined by Deloffre and Quack in the framework chapter of this volume, NGO interactions reflect different types of social ties (Deloffre and Quack, Chapter 1, this volume). Applying their typology among NGOs reveals social ties which can range from NGOs disregarding or actively divorcing each other, showing patterns of conflict, to more cooperative interactions, as well as social ties between two NGOs that are issue- or time-specific. Of course, not all actors have the same means to enter such interactions. Social rights NGOs are on average smaller than international NGOs and depend more on the actions of their individual members than on their organization's authority (Stroup and Wong 2017). The organizational structure of NGOs requires a closer look at interpersonal interactions, facilitated through the fact that often only one representative of the NGO appears in front of the treaty monitoring body. I study NGO–NGO interactions vis-à-vis the ICESCR monitoring bodies which allows me to draw from the literature on NGO relationships with international organizations (Steffek 2013; Johnson 2016) but in a specialized setting, namely an entity consisting of independent experts. As discussed above, this is a setting in which the engagement, expertise, and social skills of the individuals who represent organizations in these settings matter a lot. So far, interpersonal networks and overlapping biographies have not received much attention when it comes to understanding why and how NGOs relate. I will focus my analysis on the ties between individuals that form different types of interactions on behalf of their organizations. My analysis applies a process-focused framework to investigate NGO interactions and the patterns through which the different effects of interactions are produced. In this approach, roles are not givens or a priori attributes that constrain interactions, but something that actors develop through interactions.

## **Social Rights Advocacy: NGOs and the Interpretation of the Rights to Food, Health, and Water (2000–2002)**

Cooperation of civil society at the inter- and transnational, as well as the domestic level, for example as conceptualized in the norm spiral model (Risse et al. 1999, 2013) or in transnational advocacy networks (Keck and Sikkink 1998), is said to have a favourable effect on state commitment to, and compliance with, human rights. With the majority of literature on NGOs located in the field of human rights, there is a wealth of knowledge about success factors and strategies and, albeit to a lesser degree, their failure to achieve their goals. While most of this knowledge concentrates on NGOs working for civil and political rights, Nelson and Dorsey shifted attention to the ‘new rights advocacy’ (Nelson and Dorsey 2008) and gave a detailed picture of how and why NGOs in development work on human rights across all institutional scales. As many of these ‘new rights’ organizations are less prominent than NGOs and networks advocating for civil and political rights<sup>2</sup> and need to get along with fewer sources, we lack knowledge of their strategies. How do social rights NGOs interact with other NGOs to reach their goals in advancing social and economic rights standards? Are they joining forces, or do they compete vis-à-vis the international level?

Over the last decade, economic, social, and cultural rights have undergone rapid normative development, accompanied by strong global mobilization (Ratjen and Satija 2014; Hertel 2017). The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the monitoring body consisting of eighteen independent experts, may issue interpretations of the treaty’s norms. These are non-binding in legal terms, but through these so-called ‘general comments’ the committee can clarify meaning and scope of a norm and, at their best, bring changes in law and in politics that are beneficial in the lives of many (Reiners 2022). As noted, the CESCR is an expert body of eighteen independent experts that monitors the implementation of the ICESCR by the state parties. The CESCR is also mandated to adopt general comments, which have evolved into authoritative treaty interpretations of the Covenant (Bodig 2016; McCall-Smith 2016).

In contrast to the treaty bodies’ other instruments, like concluding observations to state reports or views on individual complaints, general comments do not form part of a reporting cycle, and they do not react to one specific report or individual complaint. Instead, they address all state parties to assist them in fulfilling their obligations under the respective covenants. These instruments are a powerful tool for the progressive development of human rights (Reiners 2022). Yet, no formal rules exist as to when, how, and by whom such a general comment should be elaborated. Their drafting is not a recurring part of the meeting agenda of the treaty bodies. Furthermore, treaty body members are not compensated for their work beyond the sessions, so the drafting depends on individual commitment. Treaty body members frequently cite a lack of time and lack of support from the UN secretariat as the main reasons for the rare use of these instruments (Reiners 2024). Individual agency for the drafting



**Figure 5.1** ICESCR general comments over time

*Source:* Author's own composition.

of a treaty interpretation then depends then on who has an interest and time. This practice is reflected in Figure 5.1.

Between 1999 and 2002, the CESCR adopted five such General Comments. One was clarifying reporting obligations under article 14, and four dealt substantively with the normative content of rights enshrined in the Covenant. Among the four substantive interpretations, one was adopted on the right to education as articulated in article 13 of the Covenant in 1999. The other three were related interpretations of article 11 (the right to food), article 12 (the right to health), and both articles in the case of the right to water. The relatedness of the three interpretations is assumed to also attract the same NGOs to their drafting processes. The normative and legal impact of each interpretation has been subject to research (e.g., Söllner 2007), highlighting their relevance for the works of NGOs.

NGO interactions usually become visible in cooperation or coalition form, namely when several NGOs join forces and submit a joint report to the treaty bodies creating a state report. To highlight opposing views, one strategy could be to weigh the quantity of statements submitted in favour of a draft interpretation against the number of NGOs opposing it (e.g., the right to life discussion in the Human Rights Committee in 2018 showed that a majority of NGOs was against a right to safe abortion under the article 8 on the right to life, see Zilli 2019). However, less is known about how differences and similarities in NGO goals play out in the open, in front of the international institutional setting they are seeking to influence, and with what effect.

The analytical framework applied in this chapter combines positional and process analysis<sup>3</sup> and is twofold: for one, I will conduct a network analysis of three actor networks connected to the discussion of draft interpretations in front of the expert body monitoring the ICESCR. (Re-)interpretation of economic and social rights has been framed as a 'risk' for advocates compared to civil and political rights because

of 'the progressively realized character of economic rights and their often debated baselines' (Hertel 2017, 241) which limited advocacy to a monitoring of violations approach (Chapman 1996). Yet, through treaty interpretations by CESCR, NGOs also have the opportunity to take part in the development of social and economic rights to facilitate their monitoring work at the domestic level.

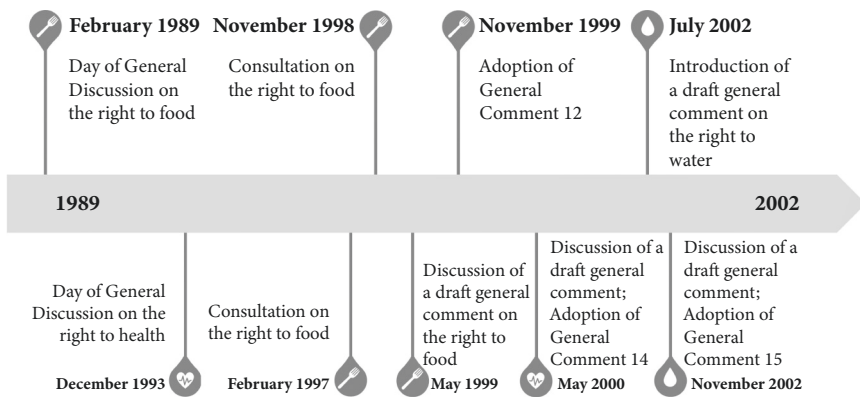
In terms of data, I focus my analysis mainly on summary records of the meetings to see how an NGO is positioned in this interactive discourse. Through their interactions at the front stage (Goffman 1959), NGOs enable an understanding of their usually invisible conflicts and politics behind the scenes. Comparing three cases of NGO interaction in front of expert committees will be carried out in the second step. My analysis draws mainly from official documents of the sessions at which the drafts were discussed and adopted. For each general comment, one of the experts on the committee acted as the rapporteur for the drafting process. Rapporteurs for drafts can be elected by the expert committee but usually, as in the present three cases, they volunteer for this role. Being a rapporteur for a general comment is an additional task without further compensation and requires developing a first draft and discussing it with the committee and relevant actors. The draft is then revised until its adoption by expert consensus. General Comment No. 12 (GC12) was adopted by CESCR at the twentieth session on 12 May 1999 and is contained in the document E/C.12/1999/5. GC12 refers to article 11 of the ICESCR. The rapporteur was Mr Philippe Texier. General Comment No. 14 (GC14) was adopted by CESCR at the twenty-second session on 11 August 2000 and is contained in Document E/C.12/2000/4. GC14 refers to article 12 of the ICESCR. The rapporteur was Mr Eibe Riedel (CESCR 2001, para. 639). Finally, General Comment No. 15 (GC15) was adopted in November 2002, referring to both articles 11 and 12. Eibe Riedel was also the rapporteur for this document, which innovatively established a normative framework for the right to water under the Covenant.

As Figure 5.2 shows, public discussions and consultations on the drafts respecting General Comments 12 and 14 date back ten years before the adoption of the first general comment in this series, whereas GC15 was discussed only months prior to its adoption.

## Mapping Social Rights Advocacy

More than 235 actors attended one or more of the events officially documented by OHCHR and referred to in the outcome documents of the three general comments. Among them are the CESCR treaty body members, individuals representing international organizations, state delegates, professionals, and civil society representatives. In order to make key actors within this ecology visible and detect direct relations among NGOs, I first conducted a static network analysis. The analysis is based on data gathered from all public summary records of the days of general discussion, summary records of meetings in which the CESCR reported on the progress, and

## CESCR General Comments Nr. 12, 14, 15



**Figure 5.2** Timeline of drafting processes

Source: Author's own composition.

the general comments themselves.<sup>4</sup> I made visible all individuals mentioned in the summary records (expert body members, NGO representative and other individual speakers) as a node. I labelled them by name and included further attributes, like type of organization and main location/headquarters at the organizational level as well as gender, profession, nationality, and regional group on the individual level. To make their ties, or lack thereof, visible (which in social network analysis is referred to as the edges), I went through these documents and included all connections in the following way: individual to organizations, and individual/organization to general comments. Then, I established an interaction between individuals who were mentioned as participants in the same meeting. Each individual speaking publicly to the committee and the other individuals present thus interacts with CESCR; when NGOs were referencing each other in their reports or statements I also included this connection in the edge table. Further, when central actors referred to background documents like drafts or codes of conduct, I went through the author's list of the document and included these connections too.<sup>5</sup>

The findings suggest that the three general comments evolved through relatively separate networks. Not all included NGO representatives as central actors, pointing towards a rather small number of people connecting all three general comments. The identification of these brokers (Cheng et al. 2021) helps to pre-structure the case studies. With these findings from the network analysis in mind, I will now investigate in greater detail patterns of NGO interactions in each of the drafting processes.

## General Comment No. 12 (Right to Food): NGO–NGO Conflict

The right to food is of concern to a broad range of NGOs. Yet the network analysis showed that only a few appeared in front of CESCR to discuss the direction



of the draft general comment. We find a positional pattern of two NGOs in conflict over the interpretation of the right to food. Nevertheless, this configuration produces legitimacy and ordering effects.

The broker in this process was the Food First Information and Action Network (FIAN), an NGO dedicated thematically to the right to food that was set up in parallel to the CESCR, which became operative a year later. FIAN exists because of a conflict within another NGO. It was founded by members of Amnesty International in Germany, who were realizing the need for an organization working to make economic and social rights justiciable and not just as some tool for 'being kind to poor people' (Klum 2016, para. 3). Then-president of FIAN, Anita Klum, remembers in 2016:

So they asked themselves: Why not build an organization like Amnesty International—but devoted to food as a human right? Its focus is not aid, but the human rights of hundreds of millions and the eradication of those structures and circumstances that produce hunger and malnutrition over and over again. (Klum 2016, paras 4–10)

In 1983, a loose pilot network of church and Amnesty International groups was created, and all individuals participated in their personal capacity, without a mandate from their organizations. FIAN's formal setup then resembled much of the organizational structure of Amnesty International and included strategies like urgent actions, case work, and advocacy campaigns. Although FIAN was meant to be more partisan than Amnesty, it used the advice of lawyers and researchers for its founding phase and the creation of the first national sections. The work of CESCR was from the beginning a reference point and target of FIAN's advocacy work.<sup>6</sup> Although the headquarters in Heidelberg is only a four-hour train ride away from Geneva, an office of FIAN International was set up in walking proximity to the UN treaty bodies in Palais Wilson.

It thus comes as no surprise that FIAN sought to influence the development of the right to food through a new interpretation of article 11 (the right to an adequate standard of living). The discussions on such an update to the meaning of what this right entails regarding food started in 1989 with a Day of General Discussion devoted to the right during CESCR's third session.<sup>7</sup> A decade of advocacy and multilateral meetings followed, with the 1996 World Food Summit as the main event to collect civil society voices on the issues of food security. As a result of this summit, the NGO Forum called for a Code of Conduct and a Convention on Food Security. Three international NGOs took the lead in the drafting of the code: the International Jacques Maritain Institute, FIAN International, and the World Alliance for Nutrition and Human Rights (WANAHR) (Rae et al. 2007). The final draft code, presented in late 1997, was supported by over 800 NGOs.

This collaboration between the three NGOs for the Code of Conduct shifted into a more conflictive relationship for the draft general comment. FIAN's key role in the

drafting of GC12 was highlighted in 1997 by Philip Alston, then-chairman of CESCR, during the day of general discussion on the normative content of the right to food. He opened the session by explicitly thanking FIAN for the role in developing the Code of Conduct, but leaving out the NGO WANAHR, which was also present: ‘He commended, in particular, the Foodfirst Information and Action Network (FIAN), had [*sic!*] undertaken a major NGO initiative in drafting a code of conduct on world food security which, in his opinion, laid the foundation upon which the work of the international community could move forward’ (CESCR 1997b, para. 2).

Two years later, when the first discussion of a draft of the General Comment was publicly discussed in Geneva, the then chairwoman invited FIAN’s representative to introduce the draft: ‘The CHAIRPERSON said that the Foodfirst Information and Action Network (FIAN) had made a significant contribution to the draft text and invited its representative to introduce the draft general comment’ (CESCR 1999b, para. 47).

This was an outstanding gesture by CESCR and to the best of my knowledge unprecedented. When another draft, submitted by an academic and expert from the former FIAN collaborator, NGO WANAHR, was suggested as the draft for adoption by several actors, CESCR member Eibe Riedel instead argued to work with the NGO draft, giving FIAN a seat at the table for final revisions—and leaving out WANAHR and its representative: ‘Mr. RIEDEL said that although there were many points of similarity between the two drafts, they had different accents and different approaches. He therefore suggested forming a small working group with the representatives of FIAN and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and two or three Committee members, to prepare a composite draft’ (CESCR 199c, fn 33).

To prioritize one NGO is a remarkable decision from a member of the expert committee. WANAHR was a small NGO promoting a human rights approach to food and nutrition problems, mainly focusing on advocacy and outreach work. It was founded in 1992 by Asbjørn and Wensche Barth Eide in Oslo under the umbrella of the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights at the University of Oslo, and last records of its activities were seen in 2002 (Union of International Associations 2002). Part of the explanation for this decision to prioritize FIAN over WANAHR is probably the rapporteur Eibe Riedel’s closer relationship to FIAN and to Michael Windfuhr, one of the founders of FIAN. Riedel held a chair for international law at the University of Mannheim, which is only a couple of kilometres away from FIAN International’s office in Heidelberg. They are both central figures for German economic and social rights advocacy, and FIAN and Riedel’s chair collaborated in joint projects (De Schutter 2014, 569). The privileged role of FIAN vis-à-vis CESCR and CESCR member Eibe Riedel did not result in NGO coalition-building. FIAN was pushing for a draft and WANAHR for another one. Other NGOs were only present for single meetings to make a statement. FIAN and WANAHR are the only NGOs for the right to food interpretation contributing with substantial claims to the outcome document.

In the summary records of the sessions for 1999, CESCR acknowledged several individuals for their support:

The Committee wishes to express its particular gratitude to Mr. Gerald Moore (FAO), Mr. Asbjørn Eide (member of the Sub-Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights), Mr. Michael Windfuhr (FIAN—Foodfirst Information and Action Network) and Mr. Philippe Texier (Committee member) for their work on the draft, as well as to all those who submitted written comments on it. (CESCR 2000, para. 419)

Michael Windfuhr and Asbjørn Eide were the representants for FIAN and WANAHR. Asbjørn Eide appeared in numerous functions in front of CESCR: next to the representative of WANAHR, he spoke as a human rights scholar specializing in law and social sciences, in front of CESCR. He did this as representative of the Norwegian Institute of Human Rights at the University of Oslo, and thus in his role as academic. He was at the time of the final discussions also a member of the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights, a then-think tank of the UN Commission on Human Rights. Mr Eide's contribution to the general comment was significant to the extent that CESCR members referred to one draft for discussion in the public meeting as the 'Eide draft' (CESCR 1999c, fn 26–29).

Michael Windfuhr, the representative of FIAN, was introduced as the *de facto* drafter of the general comment on the right to food. He was asked by the CESCR chairperson to introduce the draft, a step rarely taken by treaty bodies. Even rarer is it to give this honour to a member of civil society. While Asbjørn Eide's draft was referred to as the 'Eide draft', Windfuhr's draft was referred to as the 'Committee's draft' (CESCR 1999c, fn 28–30). During the public discussion, Windfuhr defended his draft as follows: 'The Committee's draft also spoke of the access of every individual to an income and dignity enabling him to feed himself, whereas the Eide draft spoke only of adequate food' (CESCR 1999c, fn 30).

This partisan and sociocritical position on the right to food was what inspired him and others to found FIAN in the first place. The directional network analysis shows that Windfuhr and Eide did not directly refer to each other's drafts in the statements. Yet, both presented arguments which can be seen as a reaction to the other draft. Mr Windfuhr also pointed out several times that many concerns were already addressed in documents he submitted earlier to CESCR. He later explained the absence of cooperation between NGOs in economic and social rights in a manual on NGOs and the right to food in which he states:

To get an overview of the variety of approaches to implementation of the right to food in concrete situations, it is important to differentiate those national and international NGOs and movements that explicitly use a rights approach in their daily work from those that, while working with issues strongly related to the right to food, use more developmental, or 'implicit', approaches. So far, only a few

NGOs are using an explicit rights approach to food and nutrition issues at the international level. (Windfuhr 1998, 7)

He continues to include a list of NGOs who do use this approach and mentions FIAN, WANAHR, and the Global Forum on Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security, as they attend the regular sessions of CESCR to report on violations of the right to adequate food. He highlights the special role of his NGO, FIAN, claiming that ‘the most regular user is FIAN. FIAN applies a strict violations approach, which means that it intervenes in situations where states are breaching their obligations to respect, protect or fulfil the right to adequate food’ (Windfuhr 1998, 7). This strict violations approach, which he identifies as unique for FIAN, was distinct from WANAHR’s approach. Additionally, FIAN emerged from a non-compromise situation on fighting for the right to food for everyone. With the CESCR privilege on top, there was no need for FIAN to collaborate with other NGOs.

## General Comment No. 14 (Right to Health): NGO–NGO Indifference

Only a couple of months after the adoption of the GC12, CESCR adopted GC14 on the right to health.<sup>8</sup> The rapporteur was Eibe Riedel (CESCR 2001, para. 639). We find a configuration of indifference, a key attribute of the disregarding relational type (Deloffre and Quack, Chapter 1, this volume), in NGO interactions for the treaty interpretation of a right to health, and can ultimately observe no effects. The case highlights an increased level of difficulty for NGOs to influence human rights interpretations when an international organization, here the World Health Organization (WHO), is actively involved.

Efforts to adopt an interpretation of the right to health were already made in the early 1990s, with former CESCR member Philip Alston being a driving force behind it (CESCR 1993a, para. 29). On 6 December 1993, CESCR held a Day of General Discussion on the right to health (CESCR 1999d, para. 46), targeting ‘minimum core content and non-discrimination dimensions’ as a protection floor (CESCR 1993b, para. 1).<sup>9</sup> CESCR chairperson Philip Alston invited the committee to address the right to health in the light of ‘the trend towards free market economics and the pressures to trim social budgets and to permit economic factors to become dominant’ as well as ‘to respond to critics who maintained that the right to health was valid only in so far as it contributed to economic progress’ (CESCR 1993b, para. 2). This day was well attended by civil society organizations and medical professionals, together with many representatives from church organizations. WHO suggested to convene in a second workshop on the right to health as a human right (one had already been held in 1978) (CESCR 1993b, para. 68) and to cooperate with CESCR to exchange information on the right to health (CESCR 1994, para. 10). CESCR, however, hesitated to follow up on the discussion. Several members expressed their uneasiness with the inactions: there was criticism by Mr Philip Alston in 1994 that the discussion of the

right to basic healthcare (during the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development) was not sufficiently discussed in the context of human rights. Furthermore, Philippe Texier, in 1997, summarized that CESCR failed to make progress on the right to health (CESCR 1997a, para. 11). Later that year the WHO held a two-day informal consultation on health and human rights, the first one at the WHO to be convened specifically to address health and human rights (Hunt 2016). One representative from the non-profit organization Rights and Humanity, Julia Häusermann, presented at this occasion a framework on health and human rights (Häusermann 1997), which participants described as the key document for the two days (Hunt 2016). While CESCR named Rights and Humanity in their acknowledgement of organizations and individuals providing input to the drafting process (CESCR 2001, para. 640), no further reference can be found that this framework played a role in the discussions. Ms Häusermann also did not appear in front of CESCR to make a statement on that topic. While she was neglected in CESCR's acknowledgements, legal scholar Brigit Toebe was mentioned. Toebe published a book in early 1999 on the international right to health which included a draft general comment on the right to health (Toebe 1999).

At CESCR's session in April 1999, chairperson Virginia Bonoan-Dandan invited her committee to consider a draft general comment on the right to health and to name a rapporteur for the process (CESCR 1999a, para. 16). This invitation was taken up by Eibe Riedel, who also pointed out 'that he was currently working on a draft study on the right to health that would contain preliminary points for a discussion' (CESCR 1999d, para. 11). There was also a call to submit written proposals to him, as well as an announcement to seek cooperation with the WHO (CESCR 1999d, para. 17). A year later in May 2000 a draft was ready to be discussed among representatives of specialized agencies, NGOs, and individual experts (CESCR 2001, para. 640).

While GC14 had the highest number of NGO participants during the discussions, NGOs were less central for the drafting of GC14 than for the other two general comments analysed in this chapter. The network analysis highlights the central role of the WHO in the process and the summary records, in contrast to the other general comments, confirms that CESCR expressed its gratitude foremost to the WHO. This is in line with research on global health which sees the field as less influenced by civil society organizations but highlights the central role of formal international organizations (Holzscheiter 2017). Many experts speaking during the discussions were also from the WHO's ecology, like medical research institutes, professional associations, or legal scholarships.

The NGOs participating in the process, which eventually led to the adoption of GC14, introduced health-related aspects of their work during the discussions, yet without mobilizing a broader NGO network, or even mentioning the position of other NGOs as similar during their statements. Additionally, the rapporteur for the draft, Eibe Riedel, was himself an expert on health who worked on the topic, which generally reduces the need for external input to a drafting process (Reiners 2022). In sum, the discussions were dominated by the WHO who organized informal

meetings together with CESCER and legal experts. The NGOs neither competed nor collaborated, they simply could not be observed to interact with each other.

## General Comment No. 15 (Right to Water): NGO–NGO Co-optation

Unlike the right to food or the right to health, a human right to water was not included in the core human rights treaties. NGOs had advocated for decades on this lack of formal acknowledgement in human rights law (Reiners 2021). We find co-optation in NGO interactions for the treaty interpretation, with legitimacy effects for the co-opting and identity effects for the co-opted NGO.

In 2002, CESCER adopted GC15 on the right to water to close this gap in international human rights law. The intent to draft such a general comment was announced a year before its adoption and a discussion on a first draft took place with selected experts. No day of general discussion preceded the adoption, nor was an open call for statements and submission issued beforehand. It can thus be argued that the NGOs connected to GC15 have been pre-selected by CESCER, and as such can be regarded as highly relevant in the drafting process.

The first draft was prepared by the rapporteur for the general comment, Eibe Riedel, in close collaboration with two NGOs,<sup>10</sup> both of which were specialized in economic and social rights. One of these was FIAN, which had already worked together with CESCER on the GC12 respecting the right to food, and was thus known to the committee and present in Geneva. The other one, the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), was a rather small NGO, which specialized in housing rights and was based in Geneva.

In the beginning, COHRE was presented by its director Scott Leckie. While he was involved in GC14 as a representative of the Habitat International Coalition, he moved on to founding his own NGO, COHRE. The COHRE director handed the draft over to his colleague, as he was already involved in other projects, while the FIAN representative, Michael Windfuhr, was similarly busy with other projects and thus unable to assume coordination responsibility for the drafting process. Both engaged only with the core group from time to time. While COHRE played a central role because the NGO found a replacement, no representative secured FIAN a central role in the process.

To facilitate this drafting, Scott Leckie sought out a secondary, outside NGO collaborator, Virginia Roaf, an expert on water and land issues. Roaf was recently employed at a development aid organization specializing in water issues (WaterAid), and notably had no prior experience in human rights work.<sup>11</sup> She was approached by Mr Leckie while discussing another project of her NGO.<sup>12</sup> Leckie took this opportunity to invite her to contribute to GC15's drafting process—an instance of NGO–NGO representative interaction and, revealingly, an initiative with which its members could engage at the behest of the official decision-makers, namely the treaty

body. The main work of drafting and discussing the general comment was then taken over by Scott Leckie's colleague and senior legal officer at COHRE, Malcolm Langford. Eibe Riedel and Malcolm Langford jointly discussed several draft versions which they prepared based on topical discussions regarding the scope of the right to water. The rapporteur, as the group's operating member of the treaty body, considered the committee's experience with states and their point of view as expressed in reports and during the dialogues. The COHRE officer took an advocacy perspective and included wide-ranging standards in his draft versions. As a legal expert, he knew about domestic court decisions on water issues and their interrelatedness with fundamental human rights. CESCR's GC15 is a good example in the way individual actions are often overlooked when analysing NGOs. Interviews with treaty body members, representatives from other international organizations, and civil society actors who were affiliated with the right to water all identified Malcolm Langford as chiefly responsible for the draft, but emphasized the key role of the outside collaborator who worked alongside the main drafter—Virginia Roaf, the expert on water and land issues from WaterAid. At that time WaterAid had no history of working with the UN human rights system.

In the final report, marking the meeting before the GC15 was adopted, CESCR thanked Malcolm Langford for his 'untiring assistance', without also acknowledging COHRE (CESCR 2003, para. 659). Next to a long list of individuals and organizations who CESCR also acknowledged for their input and support, it is striking that Virginia Roaf and WaterAid are missing from this list, despite her role in the core drafting group.<sup>13</sup> While her interaction with Langford and Riedel might be beneficial for her and the NGO WaterAid at a later point, for the drafting process on this GC15 her expertise was incorporated into the drafting without giving her due credit, or even recognition for it, publicly. Co-opting in NGO–NGO interactions manifested at the individual level might therefore help us see gendered biases in NGO–NGO interactions (AbouAssi et al. 2019).

## Discussion: Patterns of NGO–NGO Configurations

My analysis points to three different configurations of NGO–NGO representative interactions vis-à-vis expert bodies for human rights interpretation. I will briefly discuss what the cases of social rights advocacy tell us about patterns and effects of these configurations (see Table 5.1). The food case shows a conflictive relationship between NGO representatives. Yet the conflictive relationship ruptured social ties (FIAN breaking off from Amnesty) and generated conflicting discourses and interpretations of the right to food that led to fragmentation. It ultimately produced (1) legitimacy effects (the recognition of FIAN by the CESCR) and (2) innovative ordering effects (the incorporation of FIAN's comment into the draft). For the NGO in competition, however, the effects were rather exclusive for shaping the content of the general comment. The health case was dominated in its discourse and the process by the WHO and their interaction with the CESCR. No NGO–NGO interactions were observable, and therefore neither were effects. The water case shows us how informal settings

**Table 5.1** Patterns of NGO–NGO configurations across cases

	GC 12 Food	GC 14 Health	GC 15 Water
Nature of social ties	Conflict	Indifference	Co-optation
Empirical manifestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FIAN ‘the committee draft’</li> <li>• WANAHR ‘the Eide draft’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highest number of NGOs participating but WHO central</li> <li>• No mobilization among NGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COHRE requesting technical expertise from WaterAid</li> <li>• No recognition of WaterAid</li> </ul>
Pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs have conflicting discourses and interpretations</li> <li>• One NGO has privileged access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A formal international organization dominates the discourse</li> <li>• NGOs do not interact with each other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs only interact in informal settings</li> <li>• NGOs have similar interpretations</li> <li>• One NGO has privileged access</li> </ul>
Effects	Primary: Legitimacy effect Ordering effect Secondary: Innovative effect Exclusionary effect	No observable effects	Primary: Legitimacy effect Identity effect Secondary: Exclusionary effect Innovation effect

Source: Author’s own compilation.

facilitated co-optation. Without having a public meeting opportunity to present input on the record, one NGO provided input without acknowledgement. This had innovative identity effects on the co-opted NGO and legitimacy effect on the co-opter who was exclusively awarded recognition.

## Conclusion

This paper analysed how NGO–NGO interactions for social advocacy produced different effects through distinct patterns of interactions. Several findings stand out and give opportunities for further research, but also require more discussion of the context conditions.

First, NGO–NGO interactions for social advocacy are more on the conflictive than on the cooperative spectrum of social ties. This can be explained through the landscape at the time of the analysis. Only a few NGOs were working on economic and social issues with a human rights focus directed towards the international level at that time. They lacked network opportunities outside the human rights bodies. Second, NGO–NGO interactions for social advocacy take place at the individual



level and reproduce structural biases. This seemed an empirical finding with regard to gender. Future research could also explore how other factors play into producing different effects. Third and relatedly, NGO–NGO interactions for social rights advocacy take place via their position towards the decisionmaker representing the international level. The independent experts on human rights monitoring bodies provide space for personal interactions to channel advocacy. Indeed, the analysis of the summary records provided many details on the personification of the social rights dynamics.

A focus on NGO–NGO interactions through individuals further helps us understand broader implications for human rights advocacy. In a sense, this chapter provides evidence for arguments that the social rights NGOs ‘failed’ to bring a coherent strategy to tackle global inequalities through a human rights-based approach. The processes leading to CESCR’s adoption of its interpretations of a right to food, health, and water between 1999 and 2002 were neither accompanied by a civil society network dedicated to social rights advocacy nor by individual NGOs seeking collaborations with each other to add more weight to their statements. Instead, the configurations of their interactions ranged from indifference (health) to co-optation (water) to open conflict (food). My analysis also showed that in advocacy for economic, social, and cultural rights, which is considered a domain of ‘creativity’ (Hertel 2017), ruptured social ties and conflicting discourses and interpretations of the right to food led to fragmentation (FIAN breaking off from Amnesty International), but ultimately resulted in recognition of FIAN by the CESCR and incorporation of their comment into the draft.

As such, the article allows for several contributions: first, it departs from advocacy perspectives that see a networking structure as necessary for their effectiveness. Second, it offers descriptive data on social rights NGOs using the UN for norm progress. Finally, the article also contributes to broader debates about the role of NGOs in the making of international human rights law. In terms of limitations, my analysis took place in a time and a setting when NGOs were much less organized—or professionalized—than they are today. The sector is constantly evolving and demanding change from NGOs in order to stay relevant (Mitchell et al. 2020). The findings of my analysis should thus be seen in their temporal context, while future research might follow up on how more professionalized NGOs, organized in networks, interact in order to see their desired interpretation of social rights reflected upon.

## Notes

1. This is the term for the interpretations adopted by the treaty body overseeing CESCR which shall clarify obligations under ICESCR for the states parties, but often have legal and political influence beyond that (Bodig 2016; Desierto 2017).
2. Shareen Hertel compared the two human rights advocacy movements by invoking the picture of a museum in which there are halls full of artworks by old masters, which are easily recognizable by the observers. New rights advocacy movements, to follow this metaphor, do not fit the frames—and need reframing (Hertel 2017).

3. The analysis originally appears in 'The Power of Interpersonal Relationships: A Socio-Legal Approach to International Institutions and Human Rights Advocacy' (Reiners 2024).
4. The documents used have the symbols E/C.12/1997/SR.46; E/C.12/1997/SR.47; E/C.12/1999/SR.21.
5. For example, in a discussion on the right to food in 1997, CESCR chairperson Philip Alston highlighted the report on the 1996 World Food Summit, and the Programme of Action as drivers for the work of the committee.
6. ICESCR has become the core of the objective in the FIAN statute: 'FIAN International advocates for the human right to adequate food and nutrition on the basis of the International Bill of Human Rights, in particular the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights (Article 11), its Optional Protocol, and General Comment No. 12 as adopted by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and other relevant human rights documents' (FIAN International 2017).
7. No records are available for this meeting regarding who participated and what was discussed.
8. General Comment No. 13 on the right to education was adopted in December 1999.
9. Several discussion papers were prepared but are not accessible in the treaty body database. (E/C.12/1993/WP.17–25).
10. The author's notes of a background talk with the rapporteur.
11. '[H]e just said: "But don't you want to write a General Comment with us on the right to water?" And I said: "What is that?"—"You know I'm not from a human rights background, I've had no experience of human rights at all in development work". Interview in September 2015.
12. 'I was working at WaterAid in London. ... My experience was land, land as a particular problem for access to water in formal settlements. ... I contacted Scott Leckie of COHRE because I met him previously and I thought he would be up to help me think through some of the issues.' Interview in September 2015.
13. On this role, see chapter 4 in Reiners 2022.

## References

- AbouAssi, Khaldoun, Zachary Bauer, and Jocelyn M. Johnston. 2019. 'Collaboration, Venus, and Mars: The Gender Factor in Intersectoral Relations.' *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 29 (1): pp. 18–31.
- Baer, Madeline. 2015. 'From Water Wars to Water Rights: Implementing the Human Right to Water in Bolivia.' *Journal of Human Rights* 14 (3): pp. 353–376.
- Block-Lieb, Susan, and Terence C. Halliday. 2017. *Global Lawmakers: International Organizations in the Crafting of World Markets*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bodig, Matyas. 2016. 'Soft Law, Doctrinal Development, and the General Comments of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.' In *Tracing the Roles of Soft Law in Human Rights*, ed. Stéphanie Lagoutte, Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen, and John Cerone, pp. 69–88. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- CESCR. 1993a. 'Summary Record of the 1st Meeting'. United Nations Economic and Social Council. E/C.12/1993/SR.1. 30 August. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/182706?ln=en&v=pdf>.
- CESCR. 1993b. 'Summary Record of the 41st Meeting'. United Nations Economic and Social Council. E/C.12/1993/SR.41. 9 December. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/187858?ln=en&v=pdf>.
- CESCR. 1994. 'Summary Record of the 42nd Meeting'. United Nations Economic and Social Council. E/C.12/1993/SR.42. 23 November. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/181616?ln=en>.
- CESCR. 1997a. 'Summary Record of the 18th Meeting'. United Nations Economic and Social Council. E/C.12/1997/SR.18. 27 August. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/244124?ln=en&v=pdf>.
- CESCR. 1997b. 'Summary Record of the 46th Meeting'. United Nations Economic and Social Council. E/C.12/1997/SR.46. 3 December. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/249056?ln=en&v=pdf>.
- CESCR. 1999a. 'Summary Record (Partial) of the 1st Meeting'. United Nations Economic and Social Council. E/C.12/1999/SR.1. 26 May. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1493057?ln=en&v=pdf>.
- CESCR. 1999b. 'Summary Record of the 21st Meeting'. United Nations Economic and Social Council. E/C.12/1999/SR.21. 13 July. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/419855?ln=en&v=pdf>.
- CESCR. 1999c. 'Summary Record of the 22nd Meeting'. United Nations Economic and Social Council. E/C.12/1999/SR.22. 14 May. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1490229?ln=en&v=pdf>.
- CESCR. 1999d. 'Summary Record (Partial) of the 28th Meeting'. United Nations Economic and Social Council. E/C.12/1999/SR.28. 19 November. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/405536?ln=en&v=pdf>.
- CESCR. 2000. 'Report on the Twentieth and Twenty-First Sessions: Supplement No. 2'. United Nations Economic and Social Council. E/2000/22. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/415629?ln=en&v=pdf>.
- CESCR. 2001. 'Report on the Twenty-Second, Twenty-Third and Twenty-Fourth Sessions: Supplement No. 2'. United Nations Economic and Social Council. E/C.12/2000/21. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/444553?ln=en&v=pdf>.
- CESCR. 2003. 'Report on the 28th and 29th Sessions'. United Nations Economic and Social Council. E/C.12/2002/13. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/496534?ln=en&v=pdf>.
- Chapman, Audrey R. 1996. 'A Violations Approach for Monitoring the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights'. *Human Rights Quarterly* 18 (1): pp. 23–66.
- Cheng, Huimin, Ye Wang, Ping Ma, and Amanda Murdie. 2021. 'Communities and Brokers: How the Transnational Advocacy Network Simultaneously Provides Social

- Power and Exacerbates Global Inequalities'. *International Studies Quarterly* 65 (3): pp. 724–738.
- De Schutter, Olivier. 2014. *International Human Rights Law: Cases, Materials, Commentary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Desierto, Diane. 2017. 'The ICESCR as a Legal Constraint on State Regulation of Business, Trade, and Investment: Notes from CESCR General Comment No. 24 (August 2017)'. *EJIL: Talk! European Journal of International Law*. 13 September. [www.ejiltalk.org/the-icescr-as-a-legal-constraint-on-state-regulation-of-business-trade-and-investment-notes-from-cescr-general-comment-no-24-august-2017/](http://www.ejiltalk.org/the-icescr-as-a-legal-constraint-on-state-regulation-of-business-trade-and-investment-notes-from-cescr-general-comment-no-24-august-2017/).
- FIAN International. 2017. 'FIAN International Statutes: Reformed as of International Council Meeting 2014'. 17 January. [www.fian.org/files/files/Statutes\\_reformed\\_2016\\_en.pdf](http://www.fian.org/files/files/Statutes_reformed_2016_en.pdf).
- Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York, NY: Anchor.
- Häusermann, Julia. 1997. *The Right to Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health: Conceptual Framework*. Working paper for WHO Informal Consultation on Health and Human Rights, Geneva.
- Hertel, Shareen. 2006. *Unexpected Power: Conflict and Change among Transnational Activists*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Hertel, Shareen. 2017. 'Re-framing Human Rights Advocacy: The Rise of Economic Rights'. In *Human Rights Futures*, ed. Stephen Hopgood, Richard C. Snyder, and Leslie Vinjamuri, pp. 237–260. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Holzschleiter, Anna. 2017. 'Coping with Institutional Fragmentation? Competition and Convergence between Boundary Organizations in the Global Response to Polio'. *Review of Policy Research* 34 (6): pp. 767–789.
- Hunt, Paul. 2016. 'Interpreting the International Right to Health in a Human Rights-Based Approach to Health'. *Health and Human Rights* 18 (2): pp. 109–130.
- Johnson, Tana. 2016. 'Cooperation, Co-optation, Competition, Conflict: International Bureaucracies and Non-governmental Organizations in an Interdependent World'. *Review of International Political Economy* 23 (5): pp. 737–767.
- Jurkovich, Michelle. 2020. *Feeding the Hungry: Advocacy and Blame in the Global Fight against Hunger*. Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press.
- Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca, NY/London: Cornell University Press.
- Klum, Anita. 2016. 'The Roots of the First-Ever Right to Food Organization'. *FIAN International*. 10 December. [www.fian.org/en/publication/article/the-roots-of-the-first-ever-right-to-food-organization-1923](http://www.fian.org/en/publication/article/the-roots-of-the-first-ever-right-to-food-organization-1923).
- McCall-Smith, Kasey L. 2016. 'Interpreting International Human Rights Standards: Treaty Body General Comments as a Chisel or a Hammer'. In *Tracing the Roles of Soft Law in Human Rights*, ed. Stéphanie Lagoutte, Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen, and John Cerone, pp. 27–46. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- McGaughey, Fiona. 2018. 'From Gatekeepers to Gongos: A Taxonomy of Non-governmental Organisations Engaging with United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms'. *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights* 36 (2): pp. 111–132.
- Mitchell, George E., Hans Peter Schmitz, and Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken. 2020. *Between Power and Irrelevance: The Future of Transnational NGOs*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Nelson, Paul J., and Ellen Dorsey. 2008. *New Rights Advocacy: Changing Strategies of Development and Human Rights NGOs*. Washington, DC/Bristol: Georgetown University Press.
- Rae, Isabella, Julian Thomas, and Margret Vidar. 2007. 'The Right to Food as a Fundamental Human Right: Fao's Experience'. In *Food Insecurity, Vulnerability and Human Rights Failure*, ed. Basudeb Guha-Khasnobis, Shabd S. Acharya, and Benjamin Davis, pp. 266–285. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ratjen, Sandra, and Manav Satija. 2014. 'Realizing Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights for All'. In *Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights in International Law: Contemporary Issues and Challenges*, ed. Eibe Riedel, Gilles Giacca, and Christophe Golay, pp. 111–133. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Reiners, Nina. 2021. 'Despite or Because of Contestation? How Water Became a Human Right'. *Human Rights Quarterly* 43 (2): pp. 329–343.
- Reiners, Nina. 2022. *Transnational Lawmaking Coalitions for Human Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reiners, Nina. 2024. 'The Power of Interpersonal Relationships: A Socio-legal Approach to International Institutions and Human Rights Advocacy'. *Review of International Studies* 50 (2): pp. 252–270.
- Risse, Thomas, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds. 1999. *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Risse, Thomas, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds. 2013. *The Persistent Power of Human Rights: From Commitment to Compliance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schmidt, Susanne K, and Raymund Werle. 1998. *Coordinating Technology: Studies in the International Standardization of Telecommunications*. Cambridge, MA/London: MIT.
- Schmitz, Hans Peter, and Kathryn Sikkink. 2013. 'International Human Rights'. In *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, pp. 827–852. London: SAGE.
- Söllner, Sven. 2007. 'The "Breakthrough" of the Right to Food: The Meaning of General Comment No. 12 and the Voluntary Guidelines for the Interpretation of the Human Right to Food'. *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law Online* 11 (1): pp. 391–415. [https://brill.com/view/journals/mpyo/11/1/article-p391\\_15.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/mpyo/11/1/article-p391_15.xml)
- Steffek, Jens. 2013. 'Explaining Cooperation between IGOs and NGOs: Push Factors, Pull Factors, and the Policy Cycle'. *Review of International Studies* 39 (4): pp. 993–1013.

- Stroup, Sarah S., and Wendy H. Wong. 2017. *The Authority Trap: Strategic Choices of International NGOs*. Ithaca, NY/London: Cornell University Press.
- Toebe, Brigit. 1999. *The Right to Health as a Human Right in International Law*. Antwerpen: Intersentia.
- UN. 1966. 'International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI)'. *OHCHR*. 16 December. [www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights](http://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights).
- Union of International Associations. 2002. 'Global Civil Society Database: World Alliance for Nutrition and Human Rights (WANAHR)'. Accessed 21 March 2024. <https://uia.org/s/or/en/1100004570>.
- Windfuhr, Michael. 1998. 'NGOs and the Right to Adequate Food'. *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*. Accessed 21 March 2024. [www.fao.org/3/w9990e/w9990e04.htm](http://www.fao.org/3/w9990e/w9990e04.htm).
- Yates, JoAnne, and Craig N Murphy. 2019. *Engineering Rules: Global Standard Setting Since 1880*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Young, Katharine G., ed. 2019. *The Future of Economic and Social Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zilli, Livio. 2019. 'The UN Human Rights Committee's General Comment 36 on the Right to Life and the Right to Abortion'. *Opinio Juris*. 6 March. <http://opiniojuris.org/2019/03/06/the-un-human-rights-committees-general-comment-36-on-the-right-to-life-and-the-right-to-abortion/>.