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## NGOs, Global Affairs and Cosmopolitanism: The Case of Children's International Summer Villages

### Introduction

In the past global affairs have been dominantly shaped by nation states however as technology advances and interconnectivity across the globe increases information is more readily available which has allowed non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to become increasingly more important on the global stage. This rise has especially been evident in the decades following the end of World War II to the present day. This paper will examine the reasons behind the increased presence of international NGOs and their potential impact on global affairs by means of norm-entrepreneurship by analyzing the international non-governmental organization (INGO) Children's International Summer Villages (CISV) as a case study.

This paper will provide an in-depth critical analysis of CISV much like the findings of author Volker Heinz who states: "... critical means that while I am convinced many NGOs are forces for good an international society, I also believe it is important not to take their self-image at face value and to remain skeptical about their claims of being morally superior to governments, corporations and ordinary citizens" (Heinz 1). Risse-Kappen (year, 4) addresses the need for further exploration of NGOs by highlighting that "despite more than twenty years of controversy about the subject, we still have a poor understanding of their impact on state policies and international relations" (Risse-Kappen). Both authors underline the uncertainty surrounding the legitimacy of international NGOs as well as questions regarding their actual impact on global affairs.

This paper will examine the rise of NGOs at the international level by providing a synopsis of the reasons articulated in the NGO-related literature for their growing importance at the global level. Furthermore, this paper will provide an in-depth look at the INGO CISV in a detailed case study which will include the founder's motivation for establishing the organization, its history as well as the organization's core values represented by two specific programs, Village and Interchange, which respectively promote global citizenship and cosmopolitan ideals among young people. CISV therefore is an illustrative example for one of NGOs' most foundational role in global affairs, namely that of "norm entrepreneurs." This is relevant in the international realm as this organization aims at fostering global citizenship and cosmopolitan ideals in children who will eventually take those ideals and create a more cosmopolitan society in the future. I will not only be using political theories and findings but sociological ideals as well. Methodologically, the paper will be based on primary data of my own experiences, secondary literature.

### The Rise of (I)NGOs in Historical Perspective

The recent rise of NGOs cannot be attributed to one single event, however, a few factors such as norm-shifting events such as World War II, or the incremental professionalization of existing NGOs. During the twentieth century, the rise and fall of NGOs was informed by increasing activism after World War I, such as the women's suffrage movement, the pan-Europe movement, or the International Committee of the Red Cross, which was formed by Henry Dunant and Gustave Moynier in 1863. It is worth noting that the second World War placed significant value on conflicts that were morally driven.

In the wake of the armed conflict casualties, the atomic bombings of Japan, the countless fire bombings of Europe, and the Holocaust the need for a strengthening of humanitarian efforts was sought at an international level. As a result, the number of NGOs began to grow constantly.

Another commonly cited reason for the growing number of NGOs is the changing geopolitical climate especially after the end of the Cold War. For example, with the fall of the Berlin wall on November 9, 1989 came the emergence of NGOs from the underground of a communist east Berlin. Discussing the reasons behind the surge in NGOs, Potter states: "There must not only be a state but a liberal state illiberal states know all kinds of hybrid and mutant NGOs but no legally operating independent organizations. Instead, independent groups go underground. Groups from abroad are banned from entering the country" (23). Put otherwise, illiberal governing bodies falling out of power provide a fertile environment for nongovernmental organizations to flourish as they are able to openly conduct business without state retribution.

Finally, and according to Heinz (2008), there has been a noticeable increase in the professionalization of international NGOs:

Professionalization is an ambiguous term. For one, it is used to indicate a transition away from improvised, amateurish styles of engagement. It is also used as a synonym for process that is perhaps better characterized as "managerialization" drawing on Emile Durkheim's concepts of the sacred and profane we may say that professions have two aspects the sacred act of modern professions can be picked up and enlarged by practitioners in order to create strong value-oriented identities with no regard for the "impure" world of politics and markets. It is, in fact striking to see how many of today's prominent post traditional associations were started by lawyers, doctors, toxicologists,

forensic scientists or biologists who focused on the sacred aspects of their professional ethos. From this perspective professionalization can mean the partial displacement and “pollution” of purely valued oriented modality of professional existence by other, more goal-oriented and pragmatic modalities. (59)

The history of NGOs illustrates both these trends: amateurs have turned into professionals, and groups stressing the sacred aspects of their profession started to hire managers in order to keep their growing organizations going (Heinz 58). This sudden appearance of professionalization in NGOs has come with hopes to show legitimacy to state actors who in turn create monetary grants for the continued work of the NGOs.

One other important factor that has aided NGOs is the evolution of International communication technologies such as the internet mobile communication and social media. The internet has allowed for an expedited form of communication between entities large and small from the ability to send a message instantly in the form of an email in a macro sense to one person being able to view and experience aspects of another person’s life despite the geographic distance between them. The emergence of social media is especially important for the organization CISV because it allows the participants to keep in touch and always be able to contact the other youth in the camp from all across the globe.

### Defining Norm Entrepreneurship and Cosmopolitanism

Two key concepts are essential for this analysis, namely cosmopolitanism and norm entrepreneurship. I will define both and examine the role they play on the international stage. Finally I will explain why and how the ideal of cosmopolitan and the function of norm-

entrepreneurship are employed by the organization CISV. Cosmopolitanism is defined by the Merriam Webster dictionary as “Having worldwide rather than limited or provincial scope or bearing” (“Cosmopolitanism”). A cosmopolitan mindset is one that is essential to all INGOs because without a cosmopolitan worldview there would be no desire for people to explore the world, and contribute to its improvement by addressing the manifold challenges in it.

The second term in need of definition is norm entrepreneurship, a term first coined by Sunstein who defines norm entrepreneurs as: “people interested in changing social norms” (Sunstein 909). Sunstein continues to provide an illustrative example of norm change driven by norm entrepreneurship:

“Changes in norms and meanings can promote human well-being.

Often all or most people would, on reflection, like to see a change in a particular norm; and yet they cannot bring about the change on their own, because in his individual capacity, each person has limited power to alter meanings, norms, or roles. The case of mandatory helmets for hockey players is a familiar example. Hockey players may prefer not to wear helmets if the meaning of helmet-wearing is cowardice; but their preferred solution, available only through a league mandate, is a system in which all are required to wear helmets, and hence players wear helmets without signaling cowardice” (Sunstein 984).

Furthermore, the following case study explores CISV’s efforts to instill cosmopolitan ideals in young people, via norm entrepreneurship. When norm entrepreneurship and cosmopolitan ideals combine they create the groundwork for INGOs such as CISV which I will be examining in

depth as an individual case study in the sections proceeding. The following empirical section will examine the INGO CISV, retrace the history of the organization, the reasons why it was started, and how it is funded. Most importantly, it will examine two of its seven offered programs: Village, the organization's flagship program and Interchange, a program unique in the organization due to its emphasis on cultural exchange and family values. The analysis will rely heavily on personal experiences as the author has participated in both programs and has moreover been a member of the organization for over ten years.

### CISV: Its Evolution

CISV was founded by child psychologist Dr. Doris Allen in 1950. Dr. Allen was a very accredited researcher and was a recipient of many prestigious awards as cisv.com reports:

She received four honorary doctorates for her international peace work in CISV and as a child psychologist. Her work in international relations through CISV was recognized by the International Council of Psychologists (1962) and by the Government of Guatemala, which awarded her the Orden del Quetzal in 1976. In 1999 Doris Allen was one of five USA citizens recognized by the Coca-Cola Company in its 'People At Their Best Awards' for selfless community contribution 'fostering understanding and friendship among children of different countries.

She was nominated by a former CISV Village delegate, who said: "Dr. Allen is an

International Research Journal, Vol 6 (2019), Art. 4  
("About"). These awards speak to the complete devotion to creating a better world Dr. Allen wished to see realized.

After it was registered in the state of Ohio as a non-profit organization under the name Children's International Summer Villages, the organization grew it offered programs besides the Village program and its name was then shortened to simply CISV. Dr. Allen had a vision of a world much different than the one she lived in. She saw a world ravaged by the second World War but according to the CISV international website: "Doris Allen believed that by creating opportunities for children of different cultures to come together to learn and make friends, they would grow up to become ambassadors for a more just and peaceful world."

Dr. Allen believed that if children were brought together and experienced ease making friends with each other that prejudicial stereotypes would be softened if not all together expelled. CISV provides the background on the first program held: "The first Village program was held in Cincinnati in 1951, bringing together young people from Austria, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Mexico, Norway, Sweden and USA." This was the first of thousands of villages put together by the organization over the years. As the organization continued its growth path it introduced more programs that build on the same fundamental ideas enshrined in the notion of the "village".

CISV is funded primarily by the Erasmus+ program of the European Union. According to the EU, "Erasmus+ is the EU's program to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. Its budget of €14.7 billion will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain experience, and volunteer abroad." (ec. 7uropa.eu). This program

is state sponsored and shows that CISV as an organization has undergone professionalization in order to prove legitimacy of the organization.

The Village program is the traditional entry point into the organization. Village is a twenty-eight-day long summer camp where twelve countries come together in one hosting country. Each country is represented by a group of two eleven-year-old male participants and two female participants. The four children are accompanied by one adult leader and together they make up a delegation. Additionally, there are six seventeen-year-old junior counselors referred to as JC's who serve as the liaisons between to the eleven-year-old delegates and adult leaders. There are also five "Staff" who are in charge of planning the introductory days to camp and making sure the camp run as smoothly as possible from a logistical standpoint. All of these people live, eat, sleep, and participate in educational activities for the duration of the camp. CISV has four educational content areas: diversity, sustainable development, conflict and resolution, and human rights. Every year one is highlighted as the theme of the year, this causes every program put on that year by CISV to have a theme relating to the focused content area. Activities during the programs will also have an emphasis on the educational content area. For example, in 2016 I fulfilled the role of staff for my local chapter in the Village titled "The Goldfish Village." 2016 was the year of sustainable development so emphasis for the theme of the camp was put on nature and the environment. Villages provide the eleven-year-old participants with a hands-on experience teaching complex ideas in a way that can be understood by their developing minds. For example, one educational activity that I have personally participated in during every one of the four camps I attended is called The Stereotype Activity. The stereotype activity is a game that aims to soften stereotypes of other unknown cultures while also providing insight into participants' own country from an outsider perspective. The activity runs as follows: all the participants and leaders separate

themselves into their countries' delegations. As separate delegations they arrange into a large circle far enough away from each other to not hear each other, then each delegation is handed a large empty sheet of paper and writing utensils. Next the delegations are instructed to write the name of their country down. After all the delegations are ready the papers are passed by the facilitating adults and the delegations are instructed to write whatever they know about the country written on the paper. This continues until the countries receive their corresponding paper back and review what has been written by the rest of the camp. In my experiences with this activity the United States paper is almost always filled with negative stereotypes such as: "arrogant", "obese people", "McDonalds", "Hollywood", the current President at the time etc. The delegations are given time to review their own papers and one by one they stand up as a delegation and choose four or five stereotypes on their paper to explain if true, or educate the rest of the camp by dismantling the stereotype and explaining why it is false.

This activity is then followed by a structured debriefing session where the participants are asked introspective questions by the facilitating leaders in order to reflect on content presented in the activity. Examples of typical debriefing question are: "How did this activity make you feel"? "Why"? This allows the children to think more deeply about the activity. The activities in Village are mostly game based and begin to address serious topics in hopes the participants will continue in CISV and expand further on the ideas learned. This is achieved by attending an Interchange which is the second program in the spectrum of programs offered by CISV, which will be explained in the next section of this paper.

The second program offered by CISV is called Interchange and it is an outlier in the programs offered for the following reasons. Interchange is the longest program offered because it

requires commitment for two consecutive summers as it is a two-part program. Interchange is also unique because it is only between two countries and is based in a family-oriented setting rather than a camp. Interchange provides the participants with an intimate look at the day to day life of another cultural group by living with a family as they begin to assimilate into the new culture.

The delegation makeup of an Interchange is quite different from that of a Village. The Interchange program is offered to twelve-to-fifteen-year-olds. Interchange delegations are much larger than in the Village program and are comprised of at least six participants being chaperoned by one adult leader, or eight to ten participants accompanied by one adult leader and one Jr. leader who is at least 19 years old. The ratio of male to female participants is arbitrary, however, the delegation's participants must mirror the other participating country's delegates.

Another key defining aspect of an Interchange is the inclusion of the family in the experience. In most CISV programs the child departs from the family to an often far away country to attend camp. However, with the Interchange program the family, as a whole, hosts a foreign delegate and welcomes them into their home. This gives the delegate staying in a foreign country the opportunity to experience fully a foreign culture and offers them the chance to introduce their culture to the family as a whole. This program also provides the delegates the unique position of experiencing a culture not as a tourist but by essentially expediting the assimilation phase of being in a new environment as they experience the culture from the inside out by accompanying the family in their day to day lives.

Both programs, Village and Interchange, promote cosmopolitan ideals and norm entrepreneurship in many ways. One way that Village promotes cosmopolitan ideals is by putting emphasis on the friendships that are established between participants from around the world.

This allows participants to think globally as they take the friendships made at camp into consideration in every decision they make post camp. One way that Village promotes norm entrepreneurship is by exposing the delegates to an imagined utopian global society for the duration of the camp, hoping that they are inspired to try and work towards making this ideal experienced in the camp-setting become a reality in the real.

This emphasis on the impact one singular person can have on the norms of society is emphasized by Rosenau: “As economic, social, and political changes accelerate at ever-greater rates, as time and space continue to shrink with the relentless innovation of new technologies for moving people and ideas around the world, people—as people—have become increasingly important” (Rosenau 2). Rosenau highlights the impact norm entrepreneurship can have at the micro level. This is especially crucial due to the lack of research with emphasis on individual people as opposed to macro entities such as states, governments, international governmental organizations or corporations.

Thereby, Interchange promotes cosmopolitan ideals by giving the delegates a deeper appreciation of the culture they are entering and allows them to experience other cultures in greater depth than would be possible through simple tourism. Interchange does so by providing the delegates with a prolonged stay in a new cultural environment and by integrating a family to compare to their own. Delegates are inspired to discover how other families in different cultures operate. Interchange promotes norm entrepreneurship by normalizing the mixing of cultures as they see positive impact of their culture on the hosting family and vice versa. Those are just a few examples of many ways CISV promotes not only cosmopolitan ideals but norm entrepreneurship through two of their programs Village and Interchange.

## Conclusion

Over the preceding sections the paper combined political, psychological and sociological disciplinary concepts along with the author's personal experiences and observations to strengthen the claim that NGOs like CISV are playing a more important role on the global scale. The paper also examined some of the contextual reasons behind the recent largely unnoticed rise of NGOs on the global scale such as the shift in governing bodies the advancements of international communication technologies, and the professionalization of the organizations in their efforts to be recognized as legitimate actors at the international level. I feel that the organization CISV is acting as a norm entrepreneur by fostering cosmopolitan ideals in children in hopes to inspire them to act on the values learned at CISV programs such as diversity, sustainable development, conflict and resolution, and human rights.

NGOs have been gaining popularity and influence on the international level this is illustrated by the INGO: CISV. Due to such factors as changing political ideologies, adoption of a more liberal international society which is a result of the work of INGO's and the professionalization and managerialization of NGOs they are gaining popularity and influence on the international scene. The NGO CISV provides an example of an organization that partakes in efforts to promote global citizenship by ways of norm entrepreneurship. Its goal is to cultivate and inspire children to think from a cosmopolitan perspective for the rest of their lives as they grow with the ideals of cosmopolitanism in mind. CISV illustrates the argument that NGOs are playing a more important role in the global scene as CISV shapes the future by focusing on the children in the present. With that in mind I believe that international decisions are not just for states anymore' INGOs such as CISV are playing a more important role on the global scale.

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## Abstract

International Non-Governmental Organizations are an important player at the international level. This is shown by Organizations like CISV which employs ideals of cosmopolitanism and norm-entrepreneurship within children with aims of working towards a cosmopolitan society.

