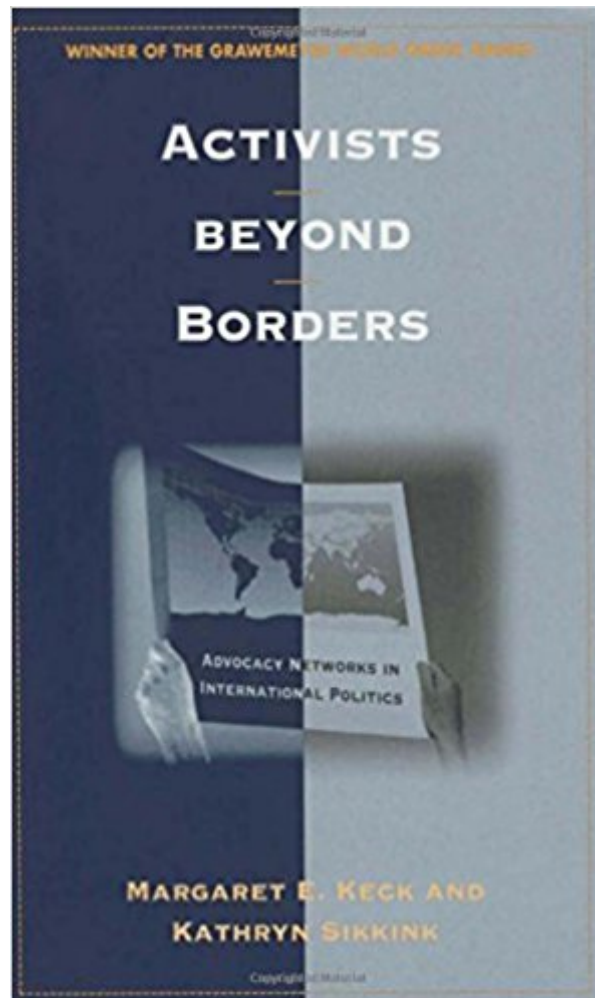




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# Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks In International Politics



## Synopsis

In *Activists beyond Borders*, Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink examine a type of pressure group that has been largely ignored by political analysts: networks of activists that coalesce and operate across national frontiers. Their targets may be international organizations or the policies of particular states. Historical examples of such transborder alliances include anti-slavery and woman suffrage campaigns. In the past two decades, transnational activism has had a significant impact in human rights, especially in Latin America, and advocacy networks have strongly influenced environmental politics as well. The authors also examine the emergence of an international campaign around violence against women.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink's *Activists beyond Borders* has been extremely influential in studies of transnational collective action. Building on firsthand experiences, fieldwork, and a vast secondary literature on social movement activity, they highlight the rising prevalence and influence of transnational actors in domestic political exchange and international relations. To demonstrate this phenomenon they introduce a database, constructed by Jackie Smith, on international nongovernmental social change organizations. They also present three qualitative case studies of networks working for human rights, the environment, and women's freedom from violence. The case studies are particularly noteworthy insofar as 'approximately half of all international nongovernmental social change organizations work on these three issues.' Their conceptual

innovations, grounded theory, and illustrative case studies have broken new ground and have become a touchstone for studies on transnational collective action."â

•Comparative Politics"Activists beyond Borders is one of the finest books on global social activism to come out in recent years. It breaks new ground by offering a theory of grassroots international activism. . . . The book is chalked full of lessons for labor and other social activists. . . . The book is inspiring."â

•Dollars and Sense"Activists beyond Borders makes a compelling case for the conditions under which international collaboration among activists across nations can achieve change that would have been impossible otherwise. The authors take care to develop a clear model of the factors necessary for such change, they are restrained in their willingness to generalize beyond the cases they have examined, and they supplement the contemporary campaigns analyzed in the book with historical examples."â

•Signs"For Keck and Sikkink, the webs of connections human rights groups have formed constitute the heart of their story. In showing why these networks succeed, they have advanced theoretical analysis. . . . An essential addition to the libraries of all interested in human rights."â

•Human Rights Quarterly"Keck and Sikkink are masters at blurring disciplinary boundaries, melding theory on international relations with a broad range of theories on the formation of domestic social movements. They also do an impressive job of tracing the origins of these networks historically, including case studies of the mid-nineteenth-century antislavery movement and the movement for female suffrage."â

•Latin American Research Review"Offers valuable descriptive accounts of the role played by nonstate actors in the global issues arena, mostly in areas relating to human rights and the environment."â

•The American Journal of International Law"Valuable reading for anyone concerned with contemporary dynamics of social change."â

•International Affairs"An important new contribution. . . . The challenge the authors set for themselves is a valuable one, and this book helps navigate these largely uncharted practical and theoretical waters."â

•Canadian Journal of Political Science"Activists beyond Borders is a searching exploration of advocacy networks, providing compelling accounts in areas such as human rights and environmental protection and an intriguing glimpse into the transnational politics of the twenty-first century."â

•Robert O. Keohane, Duke University"A masterful combination of emerging theory and empirical comparison of one of the most intriguing areas of transnational politics. Keck and Sikkink access a broad range of theory from social movements, international relations, and comparative politics research to glean from a wealth of their own research findings solid and thought-provoking conclusions about the most interesting and least well-understood area of contentious politics in the world today."â

•Sidney Tarrow, Cornell University

Margaret E. Keck is Professor of Political Science at the Johns Hopkins University. She is the author of *The Workers' Party and Democratization in Brazil* and the coauthor of *Greening Brazil: Environmental Activism in State and Society*. Kathryn Sikkink is McKnight Presidential Chair in Political Science and Regents Professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota, and is an affiliated faculty member at the University of Minnesota Law School. Her other books include, as coeditor, *Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms*.

This is a must-read for social movement scholars.

Meh.

school book

Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink's *"Activists Beyond Borders"* is almost certainly the most significant book yet to have appeared on the role of activist networks in shaping global politics. It's a joy to read, theoretically rich but never overly dense, and it's also inspiring -- probably why it received the prestigious Grawemeyer World Order Award. The introduction, on "Transnational Advocacy Networks in International Politics," would make an excellent reading for a graduate course on International Relations theory. But the same could be said for almost every chapter in the book. The case-studies build upon the prior research of both authors to present fascinating overviews of the evolution of activist networks in the fields of human rights, the environment, and violence against women. In each instance, the authors are careful to include examples of networks that did *\*not\** crystallize in certain issue-areas, and to explain why some endeavours succeeded while others failed (or were less successful). While the book will be of considerable interest to I.R. scholars, it should also be read by activists, who will learn a great deal about how to maximize their reach and influence.

This book provides an excellent introduction to the world of international politics. It has several very detailed chapters exploring such issues as timber logging, for example, and then goes into detail describing how various groups influence the industry. The focus of their book is how "advocacy networks", as opposed to the traditional government agencies, effect change. These advocacy networks work alongside and often against governments in often non-traditional methods to achieve a desired result. In the case of timber harvesting, for example, advocacy networks were

unsuccessful in persuading governments to alter their policies so the organizations within that network focused on the consumers of timber. They successfully exposed the objectionable timber harvesting practices of various companies and enabled consumers to exert pressure on timber harvesting companies to change their practices.

Who are the most relevant actors in international relations? The answer is states for both neorealists and neoliberals though the latter also consider some non-governmental organizations and multinational corporations (MNC) as remarkable units in international politics. Constructivists, on the other hand, pay considerable attention to non-state actors while they also keep states as central actors. Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink present us a well-designed discussion about the significance of non-state actors of world politics in *Activist Beyond Borders*. First of all, they classify transnational actors into three groups; MNC and international banks that have instrumental goals, epistemic communities that insist on causal ideas and transnational advocacy networks (TAN) that carry principled ideas. Then, they analyze the significance of TAN in international politics by searching for how do TAN work and how do they change conceptions of national interest and principles of policies organizations? Keck and Sikkink mention four fundamental strategies of TAN; information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, and accountability politics. They generate information, use symbolic elements, put pressure on states and international organizations, and follow their accountability to international norms. Their effectiveness, however, depend on the issue and actor characteristics that they are targeting. What they do? They cause to reformulation of national interests and they eventually change behavior of states. The principled ideas are the key for TAN and they also lead ideas to transformation of states interests and policies. *Activist Beyond Borders* has three case studies in the area of TAN; human rights, environment, and violence against women. In these cases, transnational human rights advocacy networks changed authoritarian Latin American governments' notions and policies of human rights. TAN in environment shifted the World Bank's funding policies in corresponding to the protection of environment. TAN in women's rights lead to change state policies in two areas. One of the most significant arguments for IR theory that Keck and Sikkink state is that TAN lead to changes in state understandings of sovereignty. Then states begin to accommodate to re-conceptualized sovereignty at the expense of realist notion of absolute sovereignty. In this sense, they question the realist premises of state interests. They also emphasizes that TAN are important source of new ideas, norms and identities that make repercussions over behavior of states and international organizations. They carry transformative and mobilizing ideas into international system and finally shape fundamentally policies of both state

and non-state actors in world politics. In addition, the authors stress upon the importance of domestic actors for TAN to be successful. Overall, *Activists Beyond Borders* asserts that TAN endeavor to transform the terms and nature of the debate on fundamentals of international politics.

Exemplifies activist networks in a historical vs current, global vs local context brilliantly.

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