

The TERRITORY: International NGO's

the SITUATION: Non-governmental Organizations, or NGO's are a growing employer for college graduates. They are exempt from certain governmental obligations and affiliations, and carry out work that is largely overseas from a national U.S. base. The term has been used inconsistently and the boundary between what is and isn't considered an NGO is blurred. Generally, they are considered to be "all kinds of private organizations that are independent from government control, non-criminal and non-profit" by the U.N. The scale of operations is generally small and might include environmental, development, or advocacy work.¹

the PLAYERS: NGO and its employees, (volunteers?), the funders, host country's government, communities, origin country government, (competitors?), opposition

the DEFINITION: Many NGOs start of very small, and don't have their own actual space. They can sprout up anywhere, basements, coffee shops, and then grow based on the expansion of their operations and scope. The space of diplomacy is the careful sharing of relevant information depending on the players involved. What remains internal, what is important for volunteers to know when placed in a new country, what is emphasized in grant proposals. The state of exception of the NGO is also a space for diplomacy as it makes its own rules to an extent. What are the relationships that it creates with the players involved? What is involved in the public relations for promoting its cause?

the SCALE: The scale is that of a single International NGO. It's operations, it's building headquarters and satellites, hierarchy, funders, etc. How does the spaces occupied by NGO's successfully navigate balancing public and private interests? In a world shifting from nationalism to economics as the source of power as suggested in Saskia Sassens "Losing control" what distinguishes NGO's from other private companies that control the government and not vice versa? What are the spatial implications of these attitudes, and the tendency to define something by what it is not?

possible PRECEDENT STUDIES:

Kresge Foundation- converted from a pastoral barn and farmhouse to a philanthropic institution headquarters. Valerio Dewalt and Train of Chicago, IL

Ginsberg Institute, Ann Arbor, MI

Democracy and Conflict Resolution Institute by Libeskind

Greenpeace

(tbd)

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-governmental_organization

