

# 1 Introduction

The precious common heritage of our Western Hemisphere is the conviction that human beings are the subjects, not the objects, of public policy; that citizens must not become mere instruments of the state.<sup>1</sup>

How do we define "foreign policy" today, in a world characterized by "globalization" and "interdependence" in economics, culture and politics? Who articulates and promotes foreign policy? Who is allowed to speak for a country and articulate its foreign policy concerns? Nation states still dominate the international political arena, but international politics have changed substantially in recent decades. The growth of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and their self-understanding of speaking on behalf of the public have been especially notable. For some, they represent training grounds in democracy;<sup>2</sup> for others, illegitimate voices of the public.<sup>3</sup> While recognizing the emergence of NGOs and their attempts to influence international and national politics, few have construed their foreign policy goals. In the light of new global developments, international relations specialist Ernst-Otto Czempiel notices the dawn of a new era in any country's foreign policy: one shaped by societies, not by "states."<sup>4</sup> In his eyes, growing citizens' participation in international affairs carries far-reaching implications for the culture of foreign policy.

Throughout U.S. history private individuals, companies, and cultural, political, and religious organizations have gone abroad and maintained relations with foreign societies. The foreign policy of the U.S. government has been, whether willingly or unwillingly, influenced by societal and economic interests. Accordingly, U.S. foreign policy<sup>5</sup> is inexplicable without understanding a special characteristic: the role of civic foreign policy. The concept of civic foreign policy is especially relevant to nongovernmental organizations and social movements. The involvement of NGOs in the creation of U.S. foreign policy is not new. Their number and interaction, however, has increased significantly since the late 1960s. Many of them have

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Kissinger, Speech at the meeting of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), 8 June 1976, in Santiago de Chile, Chile.

<sup>2</sup> Ernst-Otto Czempiel, *Kluge Macht: Außenpolitik für das 21. Jahrhundert* (München: Beck, 1999), 151.

<sup>3</sup> *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, 17/18 July 1999, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Czempiel, *Kluge Macht*, 12, 152.

<sup>5</sup> Whenever this study refers to the term "U.S. foreign policy," it means the foreign policy of the U.S. government, especially the policy of the U.S. administration.

become important actors in the field of foreign policy and international relations. U.S. foreign policy and the relations of the United States with other countries cannot be understood without taking a look at the activities and the behavior of these societal actors. In the following chapters I will introduce the concept of civic foreign policy by illustrating a concrete historical example: the role of civic foreign policy in U.S. - Central American relations in the 1970s and 1980s.

### **The Civic Feature of the United States**

Why do I use and need this concept of civic foreign policy? Both, international relations theory and the historical study of U.S. foreign relations, helped me to outline the features of civic foreign policy. As a historian, it was not my intention to begin with a particular theory and then verify the approach with a specific case study. While examining primary sources and talking to members of the religious NGO community I realized that I was not dealing with "a history" but rather "histories." The theoretical frame helps to connect episodes and perspectives with each other.<sup>6</sup>

The term "civic" describes a central feature of the U.S. political system that extends to the field of foreign policy as much as to domestic issues: the participation of citizens or groups of citizens, i.e. interest groups, in the political process and the promotion of their own political agenda.<sup>7</sup> Beyond the structural dimension civic foreign policy is also supposed to imply a

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas Mergel and Thomas Welskopp hint at the value of theoretical approaches to link "histories": "Die Isolation von 'Geschichten' aus einer vergangenen Vergangenheit und ihre Verknüpfung zu 'Geschichte' ist ein komplexer Vorgang, der eine genuin theoretische Natur besitzt." Thomas Mergel and Thomas Welskopp, "Geschichtswissenschaft und Gesellschaftstheorie" in *ibid* (eds.), *Geschichte zwischen Kultur und Gesellschaft: Beiträge zur Theoriedebatte* (München: Beck, 1997), 29. It is, therefore, not the idea of this project to outline a theory and apply it to a case study in order to demonstrate the validity of such theory. Empirical, historical and qualitative research rather generated the theoretical approach as outlined in this paper.

<sup>7</sup> Interest groups, also referred to as pressure groups, factions, or special interests, are common phenomena in democracies. Interest group analysis goes back to 18th century America. James Madison could be called the founding father of the pluralist vision of America. In *The Federalist No.10* Madison defines a so-called faction: "By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community." David Truman, an interest group scholar of the 20th century, views interest groups as "any group that, on the basis of one or more shared attitudes, makes certain claims upon other groups in the society for the establishment, maintenance or enhancement of forms of behavior that are implied by the shared attitudes." *The Governmental Process* (New York: Knopf, 1971). The pluralist interpretation places groups at the center of its democratic theory. These analyses see policy outcomes as products of group competition, which correspond to public desires and, therefore, achieve a democratic consensus. Discrepancies between theory and practice play a major role in critiques of the pluralist vision of democracy. Responding to undeniable realities of American politics and society, critics have questioned

public-spirited position and interest. Descriptions such as private, societal or religious foreign policy are either too narrow or misleading for understanding this particular interest and branch of policymaking. The commitments of the organizations described in this study center on the common good, not the direct benefit of the interest group and its members. Civic foreign policy thus goes beyond the concept of "private foreign policy" as transnational relations theorists sometimes refer to the politics of NGOs.<sup>8</sup>

"Civic" could most directly be translated into "belonging to citizens" or "of, pertaining, or proper to citizens." According to a dictionary of American government and politics, a civic organization is defined as a "formal association of local citizens that works to further its concept of the public interest."<sup>9</sup> Another encyclopedia defines civic organizations similarly as non-partisan groups of citizens "who have associated themselves for the furtherance of some public cause or enterprise."<sup>10</sup> The latter also describes such organizations as pressure groups but stresses the difference to the narrow self-interest of other interest groups: "[T]he aims of many civic organizations are related to the ideals and not to the self-interest of their members."<sup>11</sup> These ideals comprise small-scale as well as large-scale public causes such as the struggle for the democratic election of school administrators on the municipal level, the end of private financing of election campaigns, or new environmental laws for purification plants in order to secure the public's health. Ideally, democracy also means, "that in some way governmental elites must respond to the desires and demands of its citizens."<sup>12</sup> Civic foreign policy, therefore, does not only mean policies made by citizens but includes advocacy and action within the public sphere, more broadly defined at the level of community or nation.

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the existence of equality and balance among interest groups. Pointing at factors such as resources (e.g. money, access, or information), they argue that interests are still represented unevenly. The literature on interest group activism and pluralism in the United States is extensive. Allan Cigler's and Burdett Loomis' *Interest Group Politics* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1995) serves as a good introduction into the subject matter. On interest group analysis, see Truman's book and various critical interpretations: William Kelso, *American Democratic Theory: Pluralism and Its Critics* (Westport, CO: Greenwood, 1978), Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), and Robert Salisbury, "An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 13 (February 1969): 1-32.

<sup>8</sup> Nye and Keohane, for instance, talk about "autonomous actors with private foreign policies." See Robert Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Jr. (eds.), *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), xvii.

<sup>9</sup> *The Dorsey Dictionary of American Government and Politics* (Chicago: Dorsey, 1988).

<sup>10</sup> *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 3 (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 498.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Gabriel Almond, "The Civic Culture: Prehistory, Retrospect, and Prospect" (1996), in: <http://hypatio.ss.uci.edu/democ/papers/almond.htm> (April 2000).

The U.S. political system contributes to a favorable environment for interest group emergence and politics. Representative democracy and the system of checks and balances on the one hand, and factionalism (or pluralism), on the other hand, constitute two basic elements of the U.S. republican system. In comparison to parliamentary democracies, the legislative and executive powers are more independent from each other. The executive power is not built on a majority within the legislation, but elected separately. On the other hand, power is dispersed between the two branches. In questions of foreign affairs, neither Congress nor the administration has sole authority. While the Constitution makes the U.S. President Commander in Chief, Congress can influence foreign policies through its so-called "power of the purse" (control over the budget), its right to declare war, and the Senate's right to confirm secretaries and ambassadors. Because of the separation of powers, civic and other interest groups have multiple points of access.<sup>13</sup> The legislature with its dependency on constituencies, has served as the most important governmental branch for group influence. In addition, the professional structure of the two branches is different. Apart from two elected leaders, the administrative agencies, such as the State Department or the Immigration and Naturalization Service, consists of professional staff. In the area of immigration, advocacy groups also turn toward the judiciary to promote the rights of immigrants and refugees. In addition, the constitutional guarantees of free speech, association, and the right to petition promote the involvement of citizens.

As an immigrant country, the United States embodies many ethnic or cultural interests. The involvement of religion is a very substantial part of this pluralistic feature of the American polity.<sup>14</sup> Interest groups and social movements are as much part of the U.S. political culture as popular decision-making through elections or federalism. In the early 19th century, Alexis de Tocqueville already observed the tendency of U.S. citizens to constantly form "associations of a thousand...kinds,"<sup>15</sup> a tendency as visible today as in Tocqueville's times.<sup>16</sup> Traditional U.S. values such as individualism and the "pursuit of happiness" and of self-realization also account

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<sup>13</sup> Cigler and Loomis, *Interest*, 6.

<sup>14</sup> Robert B. Fowler et al., *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2<sup>nd</sup> 1999); Allen D. Hertzke, *Representing God in Washington: The Role of Religious Lobbies in the American Polity* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1988); Daniel J. Hofrenning, *In Washington But Not Of It: The Prophetic Politics of Religious Lobbyists* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> Alexander de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835; New York: Penguin, 1984), 198.

<sup>16</sup> Even today, more U.S. citizens are members of various associations and organizations than, for example, Europeans. 70 percent of all Americans belong to one association. 25 percent of all U.S. citizens are members of four or more associations. See *Encyclopedia of Associations* Vol. 1 (Detroit: Gale, 3<sup>rd</sup> 1998), vii.

for this fact. The French philosopher illustrates the individuals' distrust of authority and government:

The citizen of the United States is taught from infancy to rely upon his own exertions, in order to resist the evils and the difficulties of life; he looks upon the social authority with an eye of mistrust and anxiety, and he claims its assistance only when he is unable to do without it...In America, the citizens who form the minority associate, in order, first, to show their numerical strength, and so to diminish the moral power of the majority; and, secondly, to stimulate competition...<sup>17</sup>

### **Religion and Civil Society**

Religious interest groups are the focal point of this study. But are religious groups interest groups that promote democracy and the public good?<sup>18</sup> Are they not a good example for narrow self-interest, i.e. the protection and enhancement of their religion? Religion and the public sphere enjoy a distinct bond in U.S. history. The separation of church and state is a fundamental element of the U.S. political system. The separation of church and state, however, does not imply a separation of religion and politics. To the contrary, religion and politics have been intertwined since the foundation of the United States. Robert Bellah's famous essay on civil religion in the United States outlines the (symbolic) role of religion for American politics.<sup>19</sup> Bellah argues, "the separation of church and state has not denied the political realm a religious dimension."<sup>20</sup>

Aside from the symbolic role of religion, religious institutions, churches and their adjunct organizations have been important contributors to the civic sphere. Again, Tocqueville helps to understand the broad civic life of the United States. According to the French philosopher, religion is one of the main participants of democratic life in the United States.<sup>21</sup> Religious groups, clergy, nuns, and congregations are key participants of and contributors to U.S. civil

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<sup>17</sup> Tocqueville, *Democracy*, 95ff.

<sup>18</sup> For a debate regarding the influence and contribution of civil society to the success of democracy, see e.g. Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1995): 65-78. Putnam argues that membership in groups creates "social capital," or "networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit." (67)

<sup>19</sup> Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* 96:1 (1967): 1-21.

<sup>20</sup> Bellah, "Civil Religion," 3. He ascribes a "civil religion" to the United States comprising a specific U.S. "set of beliefs, symbols, and rituals" accepted by all U.S. citizens. According to this interpretation, Americans adhere to a code of values that refer to the historical experience of the United States and its national, almost sacred, purpose.

<sup>21</sup> Tocqueville, *Democracy*, chapter 17.

society. The issues affecting and being generated by civil society concern the common good.<sup>22</sup> They touch questions involving everybody within the society. Structurally, "religion" plays a prominent role in civil society because every religion consists of congregations, local communities, and more formal NGOs that participate in public affairs. Robert Fowler and Allen Hertzke come to the conclusion that "[o]n the social and civic level, religious people are more likely to give charity, vote, and be involved in community activities than the nonreligious."<sup>23</sup> Political scientist Brian Smith highlights the institutional and faith-based spectrum of activities that "provide a network of mechanisms unparalleled even by the state."<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the range of religious groups' activities includes many aspects that touch civic life: "worship, education, health, politics, community organization, collective bargaining, culture, recreation..."<sup>25</sup> Religion shapes values that relate to the public sphere. Religious beliefs touch questions of the common good and they enable citizens to make public moral choices.<sup>26</sup>

Religious organizations have acted as "public interest groups" in U.S. history.<sup>27</sup> While structurally and tactically similar to secular interest groups, religious organizations are distinct and unique in one way. Their existence is justified by their religion, which in itself is "a primary source of moral and ethical teaching."<sup>28</sup> While elements of the history of Christianity, such as missionary endeavors, wars and invasions in the name of the religion, demonstrate the abuses and contradictory tendencies of Christian care taking, Christian principles still function as a source for humanitarian activities and solidarity beyond the nation.

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<sup>22</sup> Civil society can be defined as the larger public context in which politics exist. According to political theorists, it is "the sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of... the sphere of associations, social movements, and forms of public communication." This context includes the activities of voluntary agencies and individual citizens, as well as the public aspects of family and community relations. It goes beyond governmental matters and is at the same time separate from administrative state and institutionalized official public policy, party politics, and from economic production. See Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), ix.

<sup>23</sup> Robert B. Fowler and Allen D. Hertzke, *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 32.

<sup>24</sup> Brian Smith, "Religion and Social Change: Classical Theories and New Formulations in the Context of Recent Developments in Latin America" in *Latin American Research Review* 10 (1975): 3-34, 26.

<sup>25</sup> Smith, "Religion," 26.

<sup>26</sup> For further theoretical analysis of the contribution of religion to civil society, see Corwin Smidt, "Religion and Civic Engagement: A Comparative Analysis," *Annals of American Academy of Political Science* 565 (September 1999): 176-192; Robert Wuthnow, "Mobilizing Civic Engagement: The Changing Impact of Religious Involvement," in Theda Skocpol and Morris P. Fiorina (eds.), *Civic Engagement in American Democracy* (New York: Brookings, 1999), 331-363.

<sup>27</sup> Scholars define religious groups especially then as public interest groups when examining their work for human rights. Lowell W. Livezey, "US Religious Organizations and the International Human Rights Movement," *Human Rights Quarterly* 11 (1989): 14-81, 17; David Forsythe, *The Internationalization of Human Rights* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1991), 143.

The term "religion" can mean a socio-cultural group, a set of institutions, or a doctrine.<sup>29</sup> All three dimensions encourage political activism or an interest in the public sphere, albeit in different ways. Most religious organizations, although there are some that question engagement in daily politics, formulate demands within the political system.

Through their belief system and through their international activity, religious groups and communities shape perceptions and expectations of international politics. This study explores the activities, motivations, and arguments of a specific set of groups that touched the content and conduct of U.S. foreign policy toward Central America. The study focuses on those religious groups that have been the most active on behalf of issues relating to Central America and human rights. Regarding the study of religious groups, it is important to distinguish between structurally different organizations. The most common distinction is made between religious denominations and independent faith-based groups that foster an interest based on a certain set of values.<sup>30</sup>

The "religious groups" of interest in this study comprise traditional church agencies, denominations, advocacy groups, as well as grassroots groups. Due to the diversity and quantity, the analysis focuses on a few groups but will point out the work and thoughts of others where necessary for further enlightenment of civic foreign policy toward Central America. Groups and individual activists from the Roman Catholic Church, the mainline Protestant, and the Protestant peace churches<sup>31</sup> were the main participants that shaped and characterized the development and character of active civic foreign policy toward Central America in the 1970s and 1980s.

Despite its unified structure, the Catholic Church is the home of diverse groups and interests. The analysis will shed light on the various voices within the U.S. Catholic Church. The Catholic Maryknoll order will serve as one special example for the significance of individual Catholic missionaries, sisters, and priests in Central America-related issues. U.S. Protestantism houses 300-odd denominations. In order to capture the voice of mainline Protestants, the study concentrates on their umbrella organization, the National Council of Churches (NCC) and its

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<sup>28</sup> Hofrenning, In *Washington But Not of It*, 5.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>30</sup> Paul J. Weber and W. Landis Jones, *U.S. Religious Interest Groups: Institutional Profiles* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994); Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since World War II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 106.

<sup>31</sup> The peace churches comprise the Quaker, Mennonite, and Brethren churches, which are pacifist by tradition.

agencies. While mainline Protestant churches shared most of the NCC's positions, individual Protestant denominations also appeared as vocal actors independent from the NCC's work. Other significant participants belonged to the so-called Protestant peace churches or their associated service agencies, such as the Society of Friends (Quakers), the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), the Friends' Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), the Church of the Brethren, the Mennonite Church, and the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).<sup>32</sup> The Universal Unitarians were among the most liberal advocates. Other Christian and non-Christian groups occasionally joined specific Central America-related campaigns. While most evangelical Protestants sympathized with conservative foreign policy concepts based on security and anti-communism, a community of liberal evangelical Protestants became very active on behalf of Central American civil war refugees and U.S. non-intervention in El Salvador or Nicaragua. Various Jewish congregations and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC)<sup>33</sup> joined the Sanctuary movement or were members of advocacy groups.<sup>34</sup>

One major aspect of faith-based civic foreign policy of the 1970s and 1980s was the emergence of religious advocacy groups, grassroots groups, and grassroots movements that focused on Central American issues. While examining the ideas and goals of this conglomerat of religious groups, the study will also explore the history of these new groups and their significance for civic foreign policy.

Concerning moral and political issues, the three main religions in the United States - i.e. Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism - can be classified into three groups: Liberals, moderates, and conservatives.<sup>35</sup> A liberal Lutheran for example, is likely to share more of the political opinions of a liberal Jew than that of a conservative Lutheran. Coalitions between denominations, however, shift with the issues. Regarding questions of foreign or security policy,

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<sup>32</sup> Allen D. Hertzke, "The Role of Religious Lobbies," in Charles W. Dunn (ed.), *Religion in American Politics* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1989), 123-136, 127, 133, 129.

<sup>33</sup> In Judaism, culture, ethnicity, and religion are interwoven. It is therefore difficult to define a "religious" Jewish group. But an umbrella organization of various congregations or a congregation is more so than an organization such as the American Jewish Committee (AJC), which could be better described as a "cultural" or "ethnic" interest group.

<sup>34</sup> The AJC or the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith also assisted individual Jews and lobbied on behalf of Jewish human rights victims in Latin America, especially the Southern Cone countries. The most prominent case was the release of Jacobo Timerman, a well-known Argentine newspaper editor, after three years of prison during Argentina's military dictatorship (1976-1983) in 1978.

<sup>35</sup> Conservatives include orthodox and fundamentalist believers.

Catholics and Presbyterians for instance share a common set of values. In questions regarding abortion, they generally take opposing positions.

In this analysis, the distinction between "radical," "progressive," "liberal," "moderate," and "conservative" positions within the religious community refers to their position on foreign policy and international affairs (touching international socio-economic issues). It does not define theological orientations and it does not intend to point out correlations between religious orientations and political attitudes. Here, those groups and churches that give issues such as social justice, peace, and human rights a priority in their foreign policy agenda are defined as "liberal."<sup>36</sup> Some groups and individuals like the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), the Maryknoll society, and various advocacy and grassroots groups tended to be more progressive<sup>37</sup> in their outlook. While grouping them with the liberal wing, the study will point out the differences within.

### **Foreign Policy and Civic Action**

Traditionally, explanations of interest group politics and civic action were the domain of scholars exploring domestic politics. The involvement of U.S. citizens in international affairs, however, can be attributed to such multi-functional and multi-issue groups as religious, ethnic, or environmentalist organizations.<sup>38</sup> Whether on a large or small scale, interest groups pursue autonomous policies at home or abroad. Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, two of the early scholars of transnational relations theory, argue, "[a] good deal of intersocietal intercourse, with significant political importance, takes place without governmental control."<sup>39</sup> Another proponent of this model, the German political scientist Walter Bühl, asserts that the traditional suggestion that foreign policy activities need to be organized within the domain and framework of the state no longer holds true:

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<sup>36</sup> The term "liberal" is used according to the political context of the United States.

<sup>37</sup> "Progressive" indicates positions to the left of the liberal outlook. These groups emphasized economic issues of social justice and criticized the "wrong" distribution of U.S. economic aid in addition to a call upon the protection of most basic and civil human rights. Some of them also understood the use of violent means as the last option at the hand of the suppressed and poor. Few justified the use of violence. Those groups that did not only sympathize but supported violent means will be identified as radical.

<sup>38</sup> Some voices claim that interest groups have only little access to the foreign-policy decision-making process and have, therefore, rarely been successful in putting pressure on decision-makers. See e.g. Lester W. Milbrath, "Interest Groups and Foreign Policy," in James Rosenau (ed.), *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1967), 231-251.

<sup>39</sup> Keohane and Nye, *Transnational Relations*, x. See also Karl Kaiser, "Transnationale Politik: Zu einer Theorie der multinationalen Politik," *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 1969 (Special Issue 1): 80-109.

Die Annahmen der klassischen Nationalstaatspolitik, daß die gesamte außenpolitische Aktivität nur im Rahmen von Staaten zu organisieren sei und unter der Autorität der Regierung stehen müsse bzw. daß die Nation eine geographisch abgrenzbare Interessensphäre darstelle, sind eben für alle Staaten hinfällig geworden.<sup>40</sup>

The theory of transnational relations does not ignore the importance of the state, as some critics hold, but suggests the integration of other actors outside of governmental politics and state polity (governmental institutions or the state) into the study of international relations and foreign policy.<sup>41</sup> Various studies in the recent past have demonstrated the importance of single transnational or international social movements, the work of NGOs, or the impact of multi-national corporations on national or international policies.<sup>42</sup> Especially the study of nongovernmental actors and relations has grown and matured during the last decade. While transnational relations theory has recognized and valued the emergence and "the presence of transnational organizations as autonomous or quasi-autonomous actors in world politics...that maintain private foreign policies,"<sup>43</sup> the history of foreign relations has also opened up in recent decades incorporating issues not formerly seen as a part of "diplomatic history." There are various, albeit still few, studies or histories of interest groups, their actions, goals and attempts of influencing the decision-making process.<sup>44</sup> Historical analyses do not generally talk about the history of foreign policy of such autonomous societal actors.

Since the foundation of the United States, corporations and U.S. citizens such as missionaries, entrepreneurs, pacifists or natural conservationists have been international actors.

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<sup>40</sup> Walter Bühl, *Transnationale Politik: Internationale Beziehungen zwischen Hegemonie und Interdependenz* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1978), 11.

<sup>41</sup> The transnational relations theory is widely criticized for its equal treatment of state and non-state actors. The critics hint at the "greater importance" of state policies and decisions due to their binding force.

<sup>42</sup> See e.g. Thomas Risse-Kappen (ed.), *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-State Actors, Domestic Structures, and International Institutions* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Jackie Smith et al. (eds.), *Transnational Social Movements and World Politics: Solidarity Beyond the State* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997); Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

<sup>43</sup> Nye and Keohane, *Transnational Relations*, xxi.

<sup>44</sup> The following are some of the historical studies on the influence of ethnic, religious, and other groups: Alexander DeConde, *Ethnicity, Race and American Foreign Policy: A History* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992); Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad: A History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1963); Guenter Lewy, *Peace and Revolution: The Moral Crisis of American Pacifism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988); Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, *All You Need is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn of the Century China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984). Some scholars integrate an analysis of interest groups politics in their foreign policy investigation: e.g. Lars Schoultz, *Human Rights and United States Policy toward Latin America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), chapter 2; Friedberg Pflüger, *Die Menschenrechtspolitik*

Some historians even advocate that U.S. foreign policy was an instrument of interest groups during most of its history.<sup>45</sup> Without engaging in a discussion about power and interests within the U.S. polity, the historian Akira Iriye argues that the activities of traders, investors, missionaries, scientists, teachers and the like "defined the nature of American relations with the rest of the world" at least until the beginning of the 20th century.<sup>46</sup> His colleague, Emily Rosenberg, discovered the same phenomenon "that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries private Americans, more than governments policymakers, tended to shape America's role in the world."<sup>47</sup> The historians Morrell Heald and Lawrence Kaplan add that these private commercial, religious or humanitarian interests "exercised an influence frequently disproportionate to their numbers."<sup>48</sup>

This study argues from the assumption that certain groups or "subcultures" with a genuine interest in international matters exist and still attempt to influence U.S. policy at home and engage in activities abroad. While examining the history of such activities toward Central America, the study frequently hints at the scale of influence of faith-based initiatives on official policy.

Missionary and religious endeavors as well as the human rights activities of U.S. religious groups in Latin America since World War II have received scarce attention by historians.<sup>49</sup> Societal, and especially the religious relationship between the United States and Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s, however, was profound, complex, and increasingly important for the political interaction between the two regions. Due to the high number of U.S. Catholic missionaries, historical religious ties, and U.S. political interests and involvement, the interaction was particularly strong regarding the U.S.-Central American context. The main thrust of engagement concerned the three Central American countries locked in civil wars during the late 1970s and 1980s, i.e. El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. While the three

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*der USA: Amerikanische Außenpolitik zwischen Idealismus und Realismus 1972-1982* (München: Oldenbourg, 1983), chapter 3.

<sup>45</sup> Morrell Heald and Lawrence S. Kaplan, *Culture and Diplomacy: The American Experience* (Westport, CN: Greenwood, 1977).

<sup>46</sup> Akira Iriye, "Culture and International History," in Michael Hogan and Thomas Patterson (eds.), *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 220.

<sup>47</sup> Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 12. Rosenberg hints at the "peripheral status" of private foreign policy within diplomatic history. She writes that "a study of America's foreign affairs must, to a large degree, focus upon these nongovernmental forces." (12)

<sup>48</sup> Heald and Kaplan, *Culture*, 4.

<sup>49</sup> The majority of articles and studies was written by activists, insiders, or political scientists.

conflicts and subsequent responses emanated on country-specific grounds, all three share a common history and common features. In order to pinpoint specific actions by religious groups and their implications, the study mainly focuses on the U.S.-Salvadoran context. By illustrating one case in detail, the subject matter was not only more manageable. It permitted an in-depth study rather than an overview of activities. Due to the transnational linkage of groups, politics, and themes, it still allows to draw conclusions regarding civic foreign policy toward Central America as a whole.

### **The Chapters**

The dissertation examines the history of civic foreign policy toward Central America by concentrating on the most active nongovernmental actors in the United States. Chronologically, the study captures the external, societal conditions and internal, church-related developments that brought about faith-based nongovernmental activism in the 1970s and 1980s. U.S. faith-based groups and individual activists attempted to exert influence on the political discourse and on the policymaking process regarding social justice, human rights, and refugee issues. This study shows in how far nongovernmental actors also generated autonomous<sup>50</sup> policies and actions apart from their interest in influencing decisions by the government. Civic foreign policy, therefore, refers to the involvement and participation of U.S. citizens in the federal foreign policy process, but it also encompasses actions of U.S. citizens in Central America and regarding Central America beyond attempts to influence the "official" decision-making process.

Faith-based activities in the 1970s and 1980s were preceded by U.S. Christian missionary activity in Latin America during the 19th and early 20th century. Some observers hold that the "missionary effort laid the groundwork for American government and nonprofit

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<sup>50</sup> According to Ursula Lehmkuhl, transnational theorists define autonomy as "das Vermögen der für eine gesellschaftlicher Einheit handelnden Entscheidungsträger, die grundlegenden Daseinszwecke, Strukturmuster und Entscheidungsmechanismen der Einheit selbst festzulegen, unter Berücksichtigung dieser Vorgaben bestimmte Werte, Handlungsinhalte, Ziele und Mittel zu definieren und endlich die Erfüllung der Werte und Normen wie die praktische Umsetzung der Handlungsinhalte und Ziele zu überprüfen." Ursula Lehmkuhl, *Theorien Internationaler Politik: Einführung und Texte* (München: Oldenbourg, 1996), 225. Critics are skeptical about the concept of autonomy as applied by transnational relations theorists. Because NGOs are neither national nor international norm setters but have rather relative autonomy, critics argue, one cannot talk about absolute autonomous policy-making. Criticism by state-centric advocates is also directed towards the futility of studying so-called powerless groups. Many political scientists and historians of foreign relations have tended to ignore these groups and actors arguing from the hypothesis of their powerlessness.

international assistance programs.<sup>51</sup> Missionaries were the first and prime promoters of U.S. private foreign aid in the 19th century. Due to its importance for framing and understanding later development of faith-based foreign policy activities toward Latin America, the second chapter sketches the ascendance of missionary work of U.S. Protestant and Catholic churches in Latin America. The chapter illustrates the shifts of U.S. missionary work from the 19th century until the early 1970s and the influence of these transnational experiences on the U.S. religious community's Latin America program.

The third chapter discusses developments in the 1970s. The missionary activity of mainly Catholic priests, nuns and lay workers in Latin America had a lasting impact on the connection between North American churches and their Latin American partners. Growing class conflict in Latin America and its roots in the increasing poverty of the masses, the rise of military dictatorships (or civilian-military regimes) and their excessive human rights violations against their own populace, the alignment of the United States with these regimes or the silence of the United States about the human rights violations influenced and changed the thinking of many U.S. missionaries and their institutions. The chapter examines the precise history of missionary and other forms of religious activity in El Salvador in the late 1970s against the background of the Latin American and U.S. political context of the 1970s. Without the missionary background of specific Catholic orders, lobbying activities on behalf of human rights in the 1970s are inexplicable. The chapter reveals the institutional and political impact of faith-based human rights on U.S. politics.

The fourth and fifth chapters illuminate the broadening of faith-based El Salvador activism in the United States. Both chapters explain the political context and official policies before exploring religious groups' reactions. The fourth chapter reviews responses to the intensification of the Salvadoran conflict and the increased involvement of the United States. It will take a specific look at the year 1980, which marked a series of events and developments that eventually led to even greater involvement of the religious sector. Trying to grasp civic foreign policy of the 1980s, we need to understand the engagement of church institutions and faith-based groups as well as citizens at the grassroots level who did not have any kind of connection to the big church institutions in New York or Washington, D.C.

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<sup>51</sup> Michael O'Neill, *The Third America: The Emergence of the Nonprofit Sector in the United States* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1989), 128.

The broadening of citizens' involvement in Central American issues was especially notable in questions touching civil war refugees from El Salvador. Their arrival at the U.S.-Mexican border directly linked the war abroad with U.S. society. Thus, the fifth chapter continues with an analysis of the U.S.-Salvadoran context by paying special attention to refugee issues. Questions regarding refugees and migrants from Central America were interdependent with aspects of the civil wars and, hence, U.S. foreign policy. The chapter concentrates on the U.S. Sanctuary movement as the main example of faith-inspired and grassroots refugee rights' assistance. In both chapters, I will illustrate the activities of religious groups, explore the development of their foreign and refugee policy perceptions and expectations, and how they tried to communicate them in their own society.

The impact of religious activities is discussed at various points throughout the analysis but the sixth chapter draws an overall conclusion of the findings. The conclusion assesses civic foreign policy toward Central America in its historical and political dimension. It determines the impact of faith-based Central America activism on the nongovernmental and governmental level and tries to seize its meaning for U.S. foreign policy.

### **Research and Sources**

The dissertation is based on primary sources. Due to the diversity of the religious groups that are subject of the analysis, I limited research to a manageable size of groups and sources. I tried to do justice to the pluralist face of faith-based Central American activism by using material from as diverse sources as possible. Material was basically collected and reviewed in historical archives and, due to the time frame of the topic, at some of the organizations themselves. Journals, newspapers, and interviews serve as additional sources of primary material. Some religious denominations and orders run their own archives, others have transferred their papers to historical societies specializing in archival work. The documentation, manuscripts, and office files reflect the network and cooperation among church groups and their partners. While working in one archive or in a file storage room of a particular office, information and newsletters from other groups appeared in the documentation.

The Maryknoll archive was one of the most accessible and valuable sources for U.S. Catholic activities related to Latin America. Archival material is open to researchers until the mid-1980s. For an analysis of the Catholic episcopate and their respective agencies, I relied on

the Church's own documentation series, newsletters, periodicals, and testimonies in congressional hearings. The papers of the umbrella organization of the mainline Protestants, the National Council of Churches, are at the Presbyterian Historical Society archives in Philadelphia. Regarding material for the time after 1975/77, the offices of the Church World Service and the NCC's human rights office offered me complete access to office papers and material until the early 1990s.

Various former activists and staff workers provided me with material from their personal archives. Newsletters, monthly updates, and other forms of publication from the 1970s and 1980s by advocacy groups are difficult to find. Yet, advocacy groups themselves, as in the case of the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), or the Sterling Library of Yale University and the Library of Congress were rich and valuable sources. The integration of sources from the grassroots level is a fundamental aspect of my dissertation. Archives that hold material from grassroots groups are scarce, especially when it comes to more recent material. Documents of denominations, advocacy and grassroots groups were mainly acquired through congressional hearings, newsletters, interviews, religious magazines, and by courtesy of individual activists. Apart from those sources, which were only quoted or referred to once, the reader will find an extensive list of the published primary material in the bibliography.

The bibliographical section of primary sources first lists the archives that provided manuscripts and other records, as well as interviews conducted by the author. Published primary literature is divided into three sections, beginning with a list of the main magazines, newsletters, and periodicals by churches, religious organizations, and grassroots groups as well as general daily newspapers used for documentation. Then, a collection of very diverse material, including church statements, readers, conference brochures, speeches, published interviews, and primary source collections follows. The congressional hearings and publications build the third part.