

“sites” of contestation. Analysts can concentrate on dynamics within each site or factors that drive transitions from one to another. Reaggregated, these two analytical tasks can provide leverage on how norms arise, evolve, or collapse over time. Wiener offers a typology, summarized in Table 3.1 (p. 62) that differentiates macro-level fundamental norms of wide-ranging moral scope, meso-level organizing principles, and micro-level procedures most prone to reactive challenges.

Not all stakeholders have equal voice within these sites, nor are norms necessarily ethical principles, as clearly illustrated in the three case studies. Therefore, Wiener argues, procedural validation does not suffice to dampen potential discontent; social and cultural validation also matter, especially at the micro level. Chapter 3 provides more details on this notion of validation and its implications for including ethics in the analysis of practices.

To guide implementation of this framework, Chapter 4 outlines three steps for research, which the author then employs in Chapters 5–7. First, analysis should identify the site of contestation on the grid, based on scale and phase. Second, analysis should identify the opportunity structure that enables or constrains who can contest norms and how. Third, analysis should assess the impact of contestation on both procedural and principled aspects of normative change. Wiener stresses the exploratory rather than explanatory nature of her analysis. Each case of contestation (individual rights, torture prohibition, and wartime rape, summarized in Table 8.1, p. 222) highlights tensions overlooked in studies that concentrate on formal institutions.

Attempting to situate this project within a broader agenda of “Global” IR, Wiener does better in mapping abstractly how diverse voices *might* participate than in actually demonstrating their influence. The examples remain firmly embedded in the Global North, with the Global South featuring mainly as the passive arena of norm violation. For instance, the protagonist of Chapter 7 on gender violence turns out to be the British foreign secretary. Certainly, white male allies play critical roles, as Wiener acknowledges, but that racial and gendered dynamic merits deeper analysis within the grid framework. Notably, given the emphasis on contributing to the Global IR agenda, why not explore the issue of indigenous rights? For example, Sheryl Lightfoot’s *Global Indigenous Politics: A Subtle Revolution* (2016) merits engagement, both theoretically and empirically, because the author makes strikingly similar arguments about how and why normative change happens.

While Wiener does not seek to illustrate all cells of the grid framework, nor transitions between them, greater attention to questions arising from explanatory aims would be helpful. For instance, the rationale for selecting these three cases, and not others, could be stronger. Also, prior studies on transnational social movements might

offer hypotheses about particular aspects of opportunity structure—a notoriously broad category—that might be salient for each cell in the grid. Similarly, given three types of norms, how should “change” be gauged across multiple dimensions?

Methodologically, Wiener may inadvertently create confusion by referring to “local sites” within “local–global” processes to mean micro-level dynamics. Her recurring encouragement to “zoom in” apparently means to pay close attention to what individual people do and to what meanings individual texts convey. Perhaps this terminology makes sense as a bridge between IR and international law scholars. However, field researchers may think of zooming in as paying attention to local-level dynamics in a geographical sense, which would entail the use of ethnographic methods.

No project is perfect, and these clarifications and omissions remind us that the most valuable interventions in any debate set out new questions. *Contestation and Constitution of Norms in Global International Relations* has the potential to frame the next generation of IR scholarship, precisely at a time when the field stares at a potential new world order in which many taken-for-granted liberal norms confront strident opposition.

**Tangled Governance: International Regime Complexity, the Troika, and the Euro Crisis.** By C. Randall Henning.

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— Ben Clift, *University of Warwick*

The principle merit of C. Randall Henning’s engaging new book is its treasure trove of detailed insight into the unfolding Eurozone crisis, understood in terms of complex interactions between—and indeed construction of new—international economic institutions and regimes. The dynamics of interactions among European institutions, the International Monetary Fund, and key member states are delineated in admirable depth and detail within seven Eurozone bailout case studies. The state-centric analytical framework, organized around the concept of international regime complexity, focuses on how powerful states (such as Germany) use and combine international institutions to address the problems they face. Scholars in the field owe the author a debt for his meticulous explanation of the sequence of events, dynamics within key meetings, and crucial disagreements behind the various twists and turns of the Eurozone crisis.

State strategy regarding the mix of institutions drives the explanation of the euro area’s evolving regime complex. Thus, member states’ dissatisfaction with the European Commission is identified as key to creating new institutions for European crisis response (p. 41). This dynamic also crucially explains Germany’s steadfast will to retain the IMF within all programs, despite stark and

widening disagreements on important substantive issues between Germany and the Fund.

Henning's important analytical contributions include specifying and delineating different manifestations of the "troika"—including narrow and broad interpretations, and charting the troika's attempt to incorporate the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) later in the crisis. The book also shines a light on underappreciated variation (e.g., in terms of IMF financial contribution) in troika programs.

Key moments like the "Deauville mistake," whereby Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy sought to require "private sector involvement" in any future ESM financial assistance and skittish bond markets plummeted, punishing weaker European sovereigns, are ably captured. The significance and implications of this for the ongoing elaboration of Eurozone crisis responses (and approaches to "haircuts," "bail-ins," "moral hazard") by the troika and other European actors is a theme throughout the book.

The difficult birth of the ESM—on intergovernmentalist principles—is very well documented, underlining how its governance is organized, and how this reflects and coheres with German preferences. The analysis incisively gets to the heart of key areas of dissonance and disagreement, not only within the troika but also between troika partners and national governments. These substantive differences include not just program design and program conditionality but also the shape, extent, and pace of fiscal consolidation: whether or not there would be private-sector involvement (haircuts) in financial rescues, but also the size of any financial safety net, euro-areawide policies, and Greek debt restructuring (p. 123).

The vast range of interviews conducted is impressive indeed, and the payoff comes through in the breadth and depth of empirical coverage, which casts fresh light on the already well-studied Eurozone crisis. I will certainly make *Tangled Governance* required reading for any students and doctoral researchers interested in the Eurozone crisis. What is less clear is how far the book succeeds as a contribution to wider regime complexity theorizing. The main body of the book is not really explicitly focused on the framework of "regime complexity." Its concepts do not play an important role within what the author terms their "structured narrative" of the program cases and analysis of the landscape of the various institutions. While the book contains many valuable insights for understanding the particularities of the Eurozone crisis, the idea that this analysis tells us something more generalizable about "complex clusters of international institutions generally" (p. 3) is less compelling. Given how particular the troika is, does it make sense to make "portable" claims on the back of analyzing it?

Theoretically, the book evinces a strong attachment to international relations realism, foregrounding state preferences. While notionally acknowledging the merits of

more and less state-centric accounts of international organizations (IOs) and interactions, it is very clear where the author's allegiances lie. Henning treats the IMF as primarily an agent of U.S. government interest, and argues of IOs that "member preferences provide the causal 'juice' that animates the institutions, [and] endows them with state and social purpose" (p. 20).

The author is interested in "state strategy," but primarily as it pertains to ways to approach institutional interactions within regime complexity. Less in focus is state strategy in a broader sense: What are the governments' wider national or European goals? Also, if such a state-centric view is to be taken—and the author makes a fair case for it—then could not more states (beyond the United States and Germany) come into sharper focus within the analysis? It seems that American and German "causal juice" crowds out most other national state preferences most of the time. Even in the case of program countries, we do not always come to know that much about the goals, priorities, and aspirations of embattled governments.

We get glimpses of differing views within the IMF (between the Research Department, Legal Department and MD/Senior Management over how hawkish a fiscal line to toe in the third Greek program, for example [p. 206]). Moving beyond a monolithic view of institutions like the IMF is clearly important, and generates a more nuanced understanding. It begs a question, though, whether a similar disaggregation of other key troika institutions, such as the European Central Bank, the European Commission and the ESM, would also be warranted. This happens rarely if at all in what is already admittedly a complex and rich commentary.

Henning decides to largely bracket out his views on, or indeed much discussion of, the underlying political economy issues at stake within troika disagreements. Perhaps the focus on whether to include the Fund, and the protocols that shape interaction between institutions, leads attention away from the political economy of the Eurozone crisis response and the politics of austerity. The analysis mentions in passing that the troika members "disagreed on program conditionality—the fiscal multiplier and glidepath for deficits, private bail-in in the banking sector and the payoff horizon for structural reforms, to name but a few elements" (p. 176). The author fleetingly notes disagreements on fiscal multipliers (pp. 107–8), and the evolution in IMF thinking regarding fiscal adjustment. The commentary also skates over the "historic" shift in the IMF's position to be staunchly in favor of completion of the Economic and Monetary Union's through-banking union, euro bonds, a fiscal backstop, and so on (pp. 164–65).

It would have been interesting to incorporate evaluation of the policy choices and program designs into the account of the interinstitutional dynamics of the

construction of Eurozone crisis responses more fully. There is a mention of “the ongoing revision of austerity doctrine in which the IMF Research Department had made important contributions” (p. 203), but then the focus moves on very quickly. These fascinating battles of economic ideas are, it seems, not the object of interest for *Tangled Governance*. This feels like a bit of an opportunity missed: All the ingredients are here to integrate the “did it make sense?” themes with the “why did it play out in the way that it did?” consideration that take center stage. Nevertheless, this is a superbly informative account of how the troika and related European actors addressed and responded to successive twists and turns in the Eurozone crisis, and should be required reading for European politics scholars.

**Outsourced Empire: How Militias, Mercenaries, and Contractors Support US Statecraft.** By Andrew Thomson.

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— Eugenio Cusumano, *Leiden University*

At a time when the United States is withdrawing troops from Syria, Afghanistan, and other theaters, political scientists should be especially interested in Washington’s attempts to conduct foreign policy by proxy through violent nonstate actors, such as militias, warlords, mercenaries, and private military and security companies (PMSCs). Andrew Thomson’s *Outsourced Empire* offers the first in-depth examination of the crucial role played by each of these organizations in buttressing U.S. grand strategy from the beginning of the Cold War to the present day.

The book simultaneously explores the U.S.’ resort to violent nonstate actors in different regions of the Global South, ranging from the CIA’s backing of paramilitary groups in Latin America to contractor support for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. By drawing on Marxist approaches to the study of foreign policy, Thomson broadly conceptualizes U.S. grand strategy as an attempt to advance and preserve capital interests by removing barriers to trade and financial transactions. This hegemonic project has been pursued by means of a number of “open door” strategies requiring the stabilization of states in the Global South by coercive means. Thomson’s key argument is that these open-door strategies have been mainly pursued indirectly. Instead of (or in addition to) deploying its military abroad, the United States has often resorted to local and international proxies. The stabilization of the Global South has been pursued primarily by means of para-institutional arrangements co-opting violent nonstate actors into U.S. foreign policy.

Although several scholars have recognized the role of proxies and the inextricable connection between private interests and U.S. national security, this book is unique in

providing a systematic analysis of the local and international organizations that have been involved and co-opted into U.S. foreign policy from the beginning of the Cold War to the present. The author deploys an impressive amount of evidence, drawing on both primary and secondary sources to show the centrality of nonstate actors in buttressing U.S. hegemony, doing so more systematically than all existing scholarship to date. The book’s sharp argument, its coverage of more than 50 years of U.S. foreign policy, and the simultaneous examination of different types of nonstate actors make this work both informative and original.

All of these choices, however, are also double-edged swords that sometimes hinder the accuracy and persuasiveness of Thomson’s claims, obscuring some important aspects of U.S. foreign policy and the role of nonstate actors therein. Rather than discussing the book’s obvious merits, I use the remainder of this review to examine each of these limitations, which could serve as an invitation to build upon the author’s work in order to further advance the scholarship on great powers’ use of nonstate actors.

Thomson’s choice to conceptualize U.S. grand strategy as an imperial project is compelling, effectively capturing important continuities in Washington’s foreign policy during and after the Cold War. However, although it may help explain the rationale of U.S. intervention in the Global South, his reliance on Marxist approaches to the study of U.S. foreign policy says little about the factors shaping the conduct of U.S. foreign and security policies, glossing over some important differences in the nature of U.S. military interventions in different regions of the Global South. Specifically, the book does not systematically explain why the United States decides to deploy its military forces directly in some theaters and intervene only by proxy in others. Although the book refers to logics such as plausible deniability and casualty aversion, examining these factors would require a more extensive engagement with existing theories of security privatization. Regrettably, Thomson does not systematically examine this scholarship, nor does he comprehensively outline the added value of his argument vis-à-vis existing and possibly competing explanations of the outsourcing of U.S. foreign policy. By refraining from the attempt to develop a theory of the resort by the United States to violent nonstate actors, his narrative ultimately remains more descriptive than analytical.

Relatedly, Thomson does not really distinguish between different types of proxies, conceptualizing militias, warlords, and private military and security companies as different facets of the same phenomenon. Simultaneously investigating different types of nonstate actors does indeed help to capture some of the key overarching rationales underlying U.S. foreign policy by proxy. Lumping together different types of nonstate actors, however, inevitably blurs and downplays key distinctions between and within each category.