**The Union of International Associations and**

**the Development of International Relations Theory**

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**Introduction**

There is a widespread misperception in English language literature on International Relations (IR) that ‘it was the carnage of the First World War, and the desire to avoid its horrors again, that gave birth to the discipline of International Relations in 1919 at Aberystwyth, United Kingdom’.[[1]](#footnote-1) Although there is a growing body of English language scholarship on the development of IR theorizing in the years immediately prior to the First World War, it has focused primarily on authors based in Great Britain and the United States.[[2]](#footnote-2) The contribution of continental European thinkers in this period, especially the founders of the Union of International Associations (UIA), is an area deserving much greater attention.[[3]](#footnote-3)

The influence of the UIA in the study of IR has generally be considered in terms of its role as a source of data on international governmental and non-governmental organizations.[[4]](#footnote-4) Such a viewpoint was shared by UIA President F. A. Casadio when he wrote in 1970 that ‘the UIA has played a twofold part in the study of international relations’: (i) provision of ‘basic information about the international community’ and (ii) delineating ‘definitions or descriptions, … classifications, … and tendencies’.[[5]](#footnote-5) This chapter, on the other hand, in addition to considering the UIA’s role as a source of data and definitions, will elaborate on the wider contribution of the UIA and its staff to the broader theorization of the international sphere. This encompasses a vast array of topics, including, inter alia, global civil society, globalization, international integration, international organization, peace studies, supranational democracy, and transnational relations.

This chapter commences with a discussion of the intellectual contribution to IR debates of UIA founders Otlet and La Fontaine, before proceeding to the influence in the interwar era of their ideas, and the role of the UIA in post-war theories, including the transnationalism debates of the 1970s, and the global civil society debate of the post-Cold War era.

**Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine – A Panoply of Prescience?**

UIA co-founder Paul Otlet has sometimes been considered to be the person who introduced to the French language its word for ‘globalization’, which long precedes this English term popularized in the 1980s. ‘Mondialisation’, which Otlet used in a 1916 peace plan as well as earlier in the UIA’s journal *La Vie Internationale,* actually has a longer provenance.[[6]](#footnote-6) Nevertheless, Otlet and La Fontaine’s writings appear to have foreshadowed many aspects of today’s globalization debates.

Preferring to use the term ‘globalism’ (‘mondialisme’) Otlet and La Fontaine outlined in their many publications preceding the First World War an array of factors by which they believed the world was becoming increasingly integrated.[[7]](#footnote-7) Anticipating the disaggregation of technological, economic, political and ideational drivers elaborated in post-Cold War discussions of globalization[[8]](#footnote-8), Otlet and La Fontaine remarked in 1912 upon the integrative effects of progress in transport and communications such as the railway and electrical telegraphy, economic developments such as global exchange of goods and globalized division of labour, international political cooperation on diverse issues, and the emergence of ‘global thought’, among many other factors.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Otlet and La Fontaine were most influential in respect of their contribution to the study of international organizations in world politics. Although building on the work of earlier authors who were also involved in the establishment of the UIA, such as Cyrille Van Overbergh and Alfred Fried, Otlet and La Fontaine helped to establish many of the core typological distinctions among international organizations taken forward to the present day in the study of international relations.[[10]](#footnote-10) This includes distinguishing international organizations on the basis of possessing five characteristics: members in multiple countries, openness to members from additional countries, objectives that reach beyond the boundaries of a single country, non-profit goals, and a permanent institutional structure.[[11]](#footnote-11) They further pioneered the distinctions between intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and hybrid international organizations by disaggregating ‘official’ organizations consisting of government members from ‘free’ organizations consisting of voluntary memberships and ‘mixed’ organizations with both government and private members.[[12]](#footnote-12)

A particular strength of Otlet and La Fontaine’s analysis was their consideration of the role of non-governmental organizations in processes now known as ‘global governance’.[[13]](#footnote-13) Among the features they highlighted was the way in which the roles of non-governmental organizations included proposing international standards that governments would later adopt – a process now known as ‘norm entrepreneurship’[[14]](#footnote-14) – citing examples such as the campaign against human trafficking.[[15]](#footnote-15) They further elaborated on processes now known as ‘global private governance’[[16]](#footnote-16) by which certain non-governmental organizations – such as sport federations – set and enforce their own sets of international standards.[[17]](#footnote-17) Otlet further developed an interesting distinction between the contrasting bases of legitimacy of states and private organizations in international governance – representation of ‘territorial interests’ in the case of the former, and of ‘professional economic and scientific specialism’ in the case of the latter.[[18]](#footnote-18)

At the time Otlet and La Fontaine made their most significant intellectual contributions to the study of international relations – the years immediately preceding and during the First World War – further themes such as national self-determination were prominent features of intellectual discourse.[[19]](#footnote-19) The ‘inalienable and imprescriptible right’ of nations to ‘dispos[e] freely of themselves’ was a theme Otlet took up in his 1914 peace plan, which shared with other peace plans in this period also the demand for creation of a ‘confederation of states’.[[20]](#footnote-20) This plan is significant as an early example of a call for international guarantee of ‘the natural and imprescriptible rights of human beings, namely, individual liberty and security, liberty of conscience, religious freedom, and the right of its public exercise, religious toleration, and inviolability of domicile and of property’.[[21]](#footnote-21) He stressed that these should apply to ‘all races’ and that ‘no-one may be disturbed on account of his language or origin, nor from these causes be subject to intolerant, discourteous, or disrespectful treatment’.[[22]](#footnote-22) He also called for international recognition of ‘the rights of indigenous sovereigns and the authority of indigenous chiefs’.[[23]](#footnote-23) In his respect for the rights of non-Europeans, Otlet’s work contrasted with the racial prejudices that characterised much US-based work on international relations in this period.[[24]](#footnote-24) Another contrast with many of his contemporaries was Otlet’s call for international recognition of the rights of international associations and of their ‘civil personality’, a call being reiterated in the twenty-first century.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Otlet and La Fontaine’s plans for international associations were among the most ambitious ever to have been put forward. Throughout the years immediately preceding the First World War, their writings on international associations envisaged their ever greater integration and harmonization. Their self-interest, and that of the Belgian state, was intimately entwined with these plans, since they envisaged the UIA and its Brussels base as a ‘world center … harmonizing the … program and … work … of all the international associations in a federated body’.[[26]](#footnote-26) Daniel Laqua has observed that for Belgium serving as a centre ‘managing internationalism offered a solution to the country’s perceived shortcomings, namely its short history of independent statehood, its limited military power and apparent lack of international prestige’.[[27]](#footnote-27)

As the pioneering chronicler of internationalism Francis Lyons argued, Otlet and La Fontaine’s vision of a world integrated through a federation of international associations, put forward in the years immediately preceding the First World War, belies an extraordinary remoteness from the realities of the context in which they wrote.[[28]](#footnote-28) In subsequent years a recurrent trend among many liberal international relations theorists has been to concentrate their focus on apparently integrative dimensions of world politics, while under-estimating the accompanying fragmentary processes.[[29]](#footnote-29) Regrettably, it seems unlikely that this pattern will be broken: reflecting in 2007 on the previous half-millennium of liberalism, Michael Howard observed that ‘Sadly little seems to have changed, either in the aspirations of the liberal conscience, or in their unintended results’.[[30]](#footnote-30)

**The UIA and the Infrastructure of IR Studies**

Although the most remarkable dimension of Otlet and La Fontaine’s work in the study of international relations consists of their intellectual contribution, they can also be considered pioneering in the development of some of the infrastructure through which international relations has been studied. This includes their role in assembling journals, congresses, research and educational institutions, and – best known of all – their data.

Accounts of the development of international relations journals have generally commenced with discussions of the *Journal of Race Development*, which was launched in the United States in 1910 and was transformed into the *Journal of International Relations* following the First World War: for some, this constituted ‘the first IR journal’.[[31]](#footnote-31) The problem with such an account is that at the outset the *Journal of Race Development* was not concerned with international relations as currently understood, but instead with ‘the problems which relate to the progress of races and states generally considered backward in their standards of civilization’.[[32]](#footnote-32) By contrast the first journal of the UIA, *La Vie Internationale,* was launched in 1912 with goals far more closely resembling those of the later study of international relations: it aimed from the outset to be the first journal to consider ‘the ideas, facts and organizations that constitute international life’ as a distinct field of study from ‘international law, the pacifist movement, … science and technology, commerce and industry, statistics and sociology’, each of which had pre-existing journals considering international problems within their particular domains.[[33]](#footnote-33) *La Vie Internationale* was a significant outlet for articles on a wide array of international problems, including, inter alia, international organizations, interstate relations, diplomacy, transnational relations, anarchy, international law, international statistics, international economics, international history, and general theories of world politics.[[34]](#footnote-34) Its contributors included a diverse spectrum of scholars from multiple fields including Irving Fisher, Denys P. Myers, David Starr Jordan, and Wilhelm Ostwald, among many others.[[35]](#footnote-35) Although a number of these authors included eugenicists, the contents of this journal were far less oriented around the racist debates of comparable endeavours in the United States at the time, or the imperialist debates of the Round Table movement in the United Kingdom.[[36]](#footnote-36) The journal’s lasting influence, however, was limited by the its failure to continue for long after the First World War, with the final issue being published in 1921.

Prior to the First World War, the UIA was also significant for its convening of congresses at which problems of international relations were discussed. Although the global congresses of international associations convened by the UIA in 1910 and 1913 served many wider political and social objectives, among them was dissemination and exchange of research and ideas concerning international life, with an especial but not exclusive focus on international associations, both public and private. Numerous papers considering the various aspects of international life were assembled for these congresses and published by the UIA in extensive congress volumes, now held in a handful of research libraries around the world.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Subsequent world congresses of international associations were held by the UIA until 1927, but those which followed the First World War were of far lesser significance than those that preceded the conflict. In the early 1920s, a more notable educational endeavour of the UIA was its effort to develop to what it claimed to be the world’s first ‘international university’.[[38]](#footnote-38) Alongside much bolder ambitions such as ‘uniting, in a movement of higher education and universal culture, the universities and international associations’, it aimed also to ‘enable a proportion of students to complete their education by initiating them into the international and comparative aspects of all great problems’.[[39]](#footnote-39) Efforts towards international education were far from unprecedented, and had been central to the pre-war work of organizations such as the International Association of Academies, the Universal Scientific Alliance, and the Society of International Studies and Correspondence, to name just a few.[[40]](#footnote-40) However, the UIA was among the first organizations following the First World War to organize summer schools on international relations topics, bringing together academics and students from many countries at a series of ‘*Université Internationale*’events from 1920 to 1927. As Laqua claims, ‘the *Université Internationale* never attained the significance and permanency that its founders had hoped for’.[[41]](#footnote-41) More enduring were to be the summer schools organized by rivals such as the International Federation of League of Nations Societies, which launched its internationalist ‘cours Ruyssen’ in 1925;[[42]](#footnote-42) and the British League of Nations Union, whose Geneva summer school transformed into the Geneva Institute of International Relations in 1924.[[43]](#footnote-43)

It was as a research establishment that the UIA was to make its most profound contribution, however, building on the reputation that had previously been achieved by the remarkable work of the International Institute of Bibliography in the development of information science.[[44]](#footnote-44) As Saunier has described in his chapter in this volume, the work undertaken by the UIA in the collection of data on international associations commenced in the pre-war *Annuaires de la Vie Internationale* has become the most widely (and often uncritically) utilised resource for those endeavouring to undertake statistical analyses of international organizations in world politics.

The *Annuaires* produced by Otlet and La Fontaine were widely referenced in some of the most influential works on international organization of the early twentieth century. In his 1915 study of *The Rise of Internationalism*, John Culbert Faries described the *Annuaires* and *La Vie Internationale* as ‘invaluable compendiums’ which formed the basis of a very significant proportion of the material cited throughout his volume.[[45]](#footnote-45) More influentially, Leonard Woolf took forward Otlet and La Fontaine’s analyses of international associations in his 1916 treatise on *International Government*.[[46]](#footnote-46) He adopted their definition of the distinguishing characteristics of international organizations, and he – like so many later authors – adopted without criticism UIA data on international organization numbers in support of his claims with respect to their scale and reach.[[47]](#footnote-47)

The work undertaken in the *Annuaires* and *La Vie Internationale* continued to be influential in writings on international organization after the First World War. Pitman Potter in his well-known *Introduction to the Study of International Organization* made extensive reference to the statistical data and categories established by Otlet and La Fontaine in his discussion of ‘private international associations’.[[48]](#footnote-48) Similarly, the pioneer student of international non-governmental organizations Lyman Cromwell White built on Otlet and La Fontaine’s work in disaggregating the organizational, financial, and structural dimensions of private international associations.[[49]](#footnote-49) However, for White the principal source of data on international organizations was the *Handbook of International Organizations* produced by the League of Nations which by the 1930s had succeeded the *Annuaires de la Vie Internationale* as the principal reference point for students of international organizations, whether public or private.[[50]](#footnote-50)

As White argued, although interesting as an example of an effort to create a ‘super-inter-national organization’ itself comprised of international organizations, by 1933 the UIA was considered ‘of little importance’ and had ‘practically ceased to exist as an organization grouping international organizations together’.[[51]](#footnote-51) Moreover, its role as an international research and educational institution had also been superseded by the work of the League of Nations Secretariat, which produced the *Handbook*, and of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation and International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, which undertook greatly more extensive work to bring together ‘intellectuals’ from around the world than the UIA could ever have hoped to achieve.[[52]](#footnote-52) The UIA’s role in the development of the study of international relations was further superseded following the First World War by the establishment of new University Departments such as those at Aberystwyth University and the London School of Economics and Political Science, new institutions of higher education in international relations such as the Graduate Institute in Geneva, and new international relations think tanks such as the Council on Foreign Relations and Chatham House.[[53]](#footnote-53) Whereas the pre-war study of international relations had been dominated by amateurs such as Otlet and La Fontaine, following the First World War it was increasingly professionalized and dominated instead by endowed professorships in the field such as those occupied by Alfred Zimmern, the first Chair of International Politics at Aberystwyth in 1919-21 and subsequently at Oxford from 1930-44.[[54]](#footnote-54)

During the Second World War, the intellectual work of the UIA was to be further constrained by its incorporation into the German Central Congress Office in 1940, following the Nazi occupation of Belgium. According to Herren, the UIA under German control was ‘intimately … involved in enquiries into, and repression of, international organizations’, making extensive efforts to secure information on international associations and their members around the world for dissemination to the authorities.[[55]](#footnote-55) In the later years of the Second World War, the UIA published a journal entitled *Bulletin des Associations Internationales* containing articles in French and German. This publication is indicative of the limited scope for intellectual enquiry on international relations in the context in which it was published. Although the journal had a number of superficial commonalities with its precursor, *La Vie Internationale*, such as being dedicated to publishing ‘original articles’ that ‘contribute to the development of discussions about the international associations’, its scope was now circumscribed only to consider ‘international problems excluding any political or religious activity’.[[56]](#footnote-56) The contents of the three issues published in 1943-4 were therefore restricted to an extraordinarily anodyne collection of papers on a limited range of topics in the arts and sciences, many of which were of little relevance to the study of world politics.

**The UIA and Cold War IR**

Following the Second World War the refounded UIA established in 1949 a new journal – simply entitled the *Monthly Review –* with a focus closer to the original purposes of the institution, but now appealing especially for communications from other international associations ‘which they think might be of interest to other associations’.[[57]](#footnote-57) Although at first carrying fewer articles on the study of international relations than *La Vie Internationale*, the pages of this journal and its successors (the *NGO Bulletin* from 1951 to 1953, *International Associations* from 1954 to 1976, and *Transnational Associations* from 1977) were to offer during the first decades of the Cold War a significant outlet for academic research into transnational relations at a time when the now North American-dominated study of world politics was preoccupied with state-centric so-called ‘realist’ approaches.[[58]](#footnote-58)

The *Monthly Review* helped to relaunch the UIA’s reputation as a centre for exchange of ideas and research on international non-governmental organizations, publishing for instance the work of Lyman Cromwell White on the contribution of these organizations to ‘peace by pieces’ by enabling cross-border co-operation in a wide array of issue areas.[[59]](#footnote-59) White’s article aimed to provide a counterpart to the earlier studies by David Mitrany of the ‘functional approach’ by which international organizations are understood to help to bring about peace through facilitating co-operation in specialist issue areas.[[60]](#footnote-60)

In subsequent years, the UIA’s journals became an important outlet for the dissemination of functionalist research. One of Mitrany’s most influential papers – ‘An Advance in Democratic Representation’ - was first published in *International Associations* in 1954,[[61]](#footnote-61) while Charles Merrifield published in the same journal his ‘fresh look at the theory of functional development’ in the same journal a dozen years later.[[62]](#footnote-62) Mitrany’s study – and another by White the preceding year[[63]](#footnote-63) – provided early analyses of what would half a century later become known as the study of democracy in global governance – the problems and prospects for democratic representation in decision-making beyond the national level.[[64]](#footnote-64) For White and Mitrany – like Zimmern before and many others following the end of the Cold War[[65]](#footnote-65) – non-governmental organizations offered a potential mechanism to compensate for the democratic deficit at the international level.[[66]](#footnote-66)

Beyond its journal’s role as a significant outlet for transnational research at a time when the field was marginalized in the first decades of the Cold War, the revived UIA also had some influence on international thought through the writings on the topic of its officers, most notably G. P. Speeckaert who continued Otlet and La Fontaine’s work on the classification and quantification of international associations and congresses.[[67]](#footnote-67) The successor volumes to the *Annuaires de la Vie Internationale* – the *Yearbooks of International Organizations* ­– were also a core source for studies of transnational organizations such as Jean Meynaud’s 1960 volume on international pressure groups.[[68]](#footnote-68) Prior to the publication of this volume Meynaud worked with the UIA and UNESCO in a study group concerning NGOs, and in the subsequent decade the UIA aimed towards ‘reforming university teaching on the subject of international relations’.[[69]](#footnote-69)

Accompanying the détente of the late 1960s and early 1970s North American political science regained interest in non-state actors in world politics, with pre-eminent IR journal *International Organization* publishing in 1971 an influential volume on transnational relations edited by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye.[[70]](#footnote-70) Like the work of Woolf and Potter half a century earlier, the principal source of quantitative data and classifications of transnational actors, especially for non-governmental organizations, in this volume was the UIA’s *Yearbook of International Organizations*.[[71]](#footnote-71) Subsequently the work of a number of students of transnational relations such as Louis Kriesberg and Elise Boulding was to appear in the pages of *International Associations,* alongside that of scholars of intergovernmental organizations such as Chadwick Alger.[[72]](#footnote-72) More than two decades before Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink were to espouse the concept of ‘transnational advocacy network’, Anthony Judge and Kjell Skjelsbeck used the pages of this journal to put forward in 1972 an agenda for research into ‘transnational association networks’.[[73]](#footnote-73)

From the late 1960s onwards, a growing array of datasets based on the UIA *Yearbook* were produced.[[74]](#footnote-74) Johan Galtung, the principal founder of the Peace Research Institute Oslo, appointed Skjellsbaek in 1967 to work on an IGO-NGO dataset partly derived from the *Yearbook* as a component of his early work in the development of peace studies.[[75]](#footnote-75) Galtung saw participation in the intellectual work of the UIA as an integral component of his efforts to advance peace studies; similarly David Horton Smith, the principal founder of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), collaborated with the UIA in seeking to pursue the development of the study of voluntary associations, which he now terms ‘voluntaristics’.[[76]](#footnote-76) Both Galtung and Smith, alongside other leading scholars such as Alger and Executive Secretary of the Society for International Development Andrew Rice, participated in the UIA’s 1972 Milan congress on ‘the philosophy of non-governmental organization’.[[77]](#footnote-77)

Over the subsequent two decades, the UIA and its journal served as a centre for discussion not only of transnational relations and voluntary associations, but also wider fields including peace studies, development studies and the re-emerging study of globalization.[[78]](#footnote-78) While the data contained in the *Yearbook* (and to a lesser extent the *International Congress Calendar* that had been launched in 1960) continued to be viewed as an invaluable resource for researchers into international governmental and non-governmental organizations, other initiatives of the UIA in this period, such as the project launched in 1972 to develop an *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential* and the extensive efforts towards furthering network analysis by Anthony Judge, were not to achieve as warm a reception as had been hoped for. The American Library Association, for instance, described the *Encyclopedia* in 1987 as ‘a problematic monument to idiosyncrasy, confusion and obfuscation’: ‘the context, arrangement, and absolute anarchy of the inclusiveness make this volume useless as a reference tool’.[[79]](#footnote-79) In the closing years of the Cold War, therefore, the UIA was primarily of significance to the academic community as a data repository on international associations and secondarily as an outlet for scholarship from a range of backgrounds, but it was not as influential as it had previously been in setting new trends.

**The UIA and Global Civil Society**

Following the end of the Cold War, the removal of the bipolar superstructure and the apparent achievements of ‘civil society’ in the revolutions of 1989-91 encouraged students of IR to consider the potential for the development of ‘global civil society’.[[80]](#footnote-80) For one of the first to discuss the topic, Elise Boulding, speaking in 1989, ‘the 18,000 globe-spanning, boundary-crossing peoples' associations technically known as international nongovernmental organizations but usually referred to as NGOs, represent the global civil society’.[[81]](#footnote-81) Her source, not surprisingly, was the *Yearbook of International Organizations*, the data and categories of which were adopted without critique in her study on ‘building a global civic culture’, which viewed INGOs as playing a central set of roles in the process.[[82]](#footnote-82)

The notion of ‘global civil society’ was a significant opportunity for the UIA, which added a subtitle to the *Yearbook* –‘guide to global civil society networks’ – at the turn of the millennium.[[83]](#footnote-83) At the same time, this volume became one of the principal bases for the measurement of global civil society by the Centre for the Study of Global Governance at the London School of Economics and Political Science, which put together a series of annuals of Global Civil Society from 2001 to 2012.[[84]](#footnote-84) The objective of these volumes – to document the emergence of ‘global civil society’ – echoed the goals of Otlet and La Fontaine in developing the *Annuaires* a century before. Both were developed in periods of great optimism regarding international progress, and both were to be cut short by the shattering of these illusions over the subsequent years.[[85]](#footnote-85)

The pages of *Transnational Associations* were through the 1990s and early 2000s an outlet for research into global civil society. As with the transnational relations debate of the 1970s, the global civil society conversations of the 1990s and 2000s were in part disseminated through this journal, which carried contributions by Ronnie Lipschutz, Jan Aart Scholte, Lester Salamon, Helmut Anheier, Peter Waterman, Francis Fukuyama, and Steve Charnovitz, among other prominent authors.[[86]](#footnote-86) The editor of *Transnational Associations*, Paul Ghils, made contributions to this debate, especially to definitional aspects,[[87]](#footnote-87) as did Anthony Judge whose reflections often involved much greater critique of the limitations of data and the uncivility of many transnational actors than many academic IR authors on global civil society at the time were prepared to acknowledge.[[88]](#footnote-88)

The resurgence of academic interest in what was now labelled global civil society brought renewed interest in the UIA’s publications and data.[[89]](#footnote-89) However, it also resulted in the development of competitor journals to *Transnational Associations,* which ceased publication in 2005. Academic journals such as *Global Governance* (established in 1995), *Globalizations* (published from 2004), and especially *Global Networks* (published from 2001) provided new outlets for academic research into transnational associations, international organizations, globalization, and global civil society, but in more traditional academic formats.[[90]](#footnote-90)

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, global civil society is characterised by two significant developments that are problematic for the UIA. The first is the wave of digitally-mediated transnational social movements lacking formally institutionalized structures of mobilization, ranging from the Arab uprisings through to the Occupy movements, which Castells has labelled ‘networks of outrage and hope’.[[91]](#footnote-91) While some have tried to study transnational social movements using UIA data,[[92]](#footnote-92) this data fails to capture the numerous non-hierarchical and non-institutionalized dimensions that are paramount in today’s transnational social mobilizations. This is a long-standing problem with UIA data, but while a focus on formal organizations and congresses spoke comparatively effectively to broader perceptions of the components of what Otlet and LaFontaine termed ‘international life’ in the early twentieth century ‘age of internationalism’, as well as during the ‘NGO moment’ of the later twentieth century, the weaknesses of such an approach are more apparent in the present day as perceptions of transnational social mobilization have changed.[[93]](#footnote-93)

The second pre-eminent development in global civil society in recent years has been the growing significance, variety, and scale of transnational civil society activities beyond the Western European and North American contexts.[[94]](#footnote-94) UIA data, however, has tended to be far richer in relation to its coverage of European and North American developments than it has been in respect of those in other regions, a problem which was recognized by Johan Galtung as far back as the UIA’s 1972 Milan congress on the ‘philosophy’ of NGOs.[[95]](#footnote-95)

**Conclusion**

Although most commonly recognized in the IR literature as a source of data on international governmental and non-governmental organizations, the UIA is equally notable for its role in the development of theory in IR. Otlet and La Fontaine are especially noteworthy for their role in delineating definitional and structural characteristics of international non-governmental organizations as well as in elaborating the interactions between these organizations and intergovernmental bodies that remain influential in discussions of global governance in the present day. As we have seen, their successors were also to play a part in the development of understandings of transnational relations and global civil society. The UIA has further served as a congress convenor, publisher, and research partner for IR scholars for much of its existence, in addition to its better known role as a data source.

Although some of its staff, such as Anthony Judge, have cast a critical eye on what is now known as global civil society, all too commonly UIA data has been used by IR scholars to justify excessively optimistic assertions concerning the prospects for global civil society which have been repeatedly shattered by subsequent events. In the present day, the organization is also at risk of obsolescence if it is unable to address the twin issues of the rise of non-institutionalized transnational social mobilization, and the expansion of transnational civil society beyond the Western European and North American contexts with which it is most familiar.

1. Alan Collins, ‘Introduction: What is Security Studies?’, in Alan Collins, ed., *Contemporary Security Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See, for example, David Long and Brian C. Schmidt, eds., *Imperialism and Internationalism in the Discipline of International Relations* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005), and Duncan Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Jan Stöckmann, in ‘Nationalism and Internationalism in International Relations, 1900-1939’, *History Compass* 15:2 (2017): 1-13, highlights the importance of research beyond the British and US contexts in this period but does not refer to the work of the UIA. The role of the UIA in the study of non-governmental organizations in IR before the First World War is investigated in Thomas Davies, ‘Understanding non-governmental organizations in world politics: The promise and pitfalls of the early “science of internationalism”’, *European Journal of International Relations* 23:4 (2017): 884-905. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For a discussion of this, please see the chapter by Pierre-Yves Saunier in this volume. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. F. A. Casidio, ‘The Place of the Union of International Associations in the Study of International Relations’, in Union of International Associations, *Sixtieth Anniversary, Union of International Associations (1910-1970): Past, Present, Future* (Brussels: Union of International Associations, 1970), pp. 12-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. On Otlet and the origins of the term ‘mondialisation’, see Vincent Capdepuy, ‘1904, la mondialisation selon Pierre de Coubertin’, 2014, online at: http://blogs.histoireglobale.com/1904-la-mondialisation-selon-pierre-de-coubertin\_3828, accessed 13 September 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See, for example, Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine, ‘La vie internationale et l’effort pour son organisation’, *La Vie Internationale* 1:1 (1912), pp. 9-34. On Otlet’s globalism, see also Wouter Van Acker, ‘Sociology in Brussels: Organicism and the idea of a world society in the period before the First World War’, in W. Boyd Rayward (ed.), *Information Beyond Borders: International Cultural and Intellectual Exchange in the Belle Époque*, Farnham: Ashgate, p. 158. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. These are put forward for instance in Jan Aart Scholte ‘Global civil society’, in Roland Robertson and Kathleen E. White (eds), *Globalization:* *Critical Concepts in Sociology. Volume 3: Global Membership and Participation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003), p. 287. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Otlet and La Fontaine, ‘La vie internationale et l’effort pour son organisation’, pp. 9-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. On Van Overbergh, see Wouter Van Acker, ‘Sociology in Brussels: Organicism and the idea of a world society in the period before the First World War’, in W. Boyd Rayward (ed.), *Information Beyond Borders: International Cultural and Intellectual Exchange in the Belle Époque* (Farnham: Ashgate 2014), pp. 143-168’; on Fried, see Daniel Laqua, ‘Alfred H. Fried and the challenges for “scientific pacifism” in the belle époque’, in Rayward, *Information Beyond Borders*, pp. 181-200. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
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