The Evolution of Engagement and the Change
in International Relations Studies

Kazuya Yamamoto
Shigeru Fujimoto

〈要旨〉

　本稿では，国際関係論（国際政治学）が「国際およびグローバル・エンゲージメント」活動をどのように分析対象として扱ってきたかを明らかにする。分析では，国際およびグローバル・エンゲージメント活動の歴史を，19世紀から20世紀半ば，1970年代から1990年代初頭，1990年代後半から現在までの3時期に区分し，国際人道支援の確立（第1期），国際エンゲージメントの拡大（第2期），グローバル・エンゲージメントの隆盛（第3期）という各時期の特徴を指摘する。その上で，国際関係論は第1期と第2期にはエンゲージメント活動に対する研究をほとんど行ってこなかったのに対して，第3期には一転して研究を推進し始めたことを指摘する。本稿では，この変化の要因が，国際関係論の成り立ちとその後の学問の変化，および冷戦終結後の国際政治の変化にあることを明らかにする。最後に，国際関係論は今後，グローバル・エンゲージメント研究の性格を一層強めることが予想されることを述べる。

〈Abstract〉

　This article reveals how international relations studies have addressed international and global engagement activities. The history of international and global engagement is divided into three periods. International engagement first emerged as international humanitarian assistance in the nineteenth century, and humanitarian aid was recognized as a typical engagement activity in the mid-twentieth century. The second wave covers the period between the 1970s and the early 1990s. During this period, the scope of international engagement widened to include activities involving issues such as environmental conservation. The third period covers the present day, and problems that affect not only a particular community but also the broader region and agents are addressed by global engagement. Given the above development of international and global engagement, this article argues that studies on international relations were less interested in investigating engagement activities until the late 1990s. In the past, unresponsiveness to engagement resulted from the dominant perspective of realism embraced by mainstream international relations studies. The rise in enthusiasm in the current period is a consequence of changes in the mindset of scholars and practitioners of global politics following the end of the Cold War. The article concludes that the

scope of issues addressed by global engagement continues to expand, and that international relations studies will increasingly focus on global engagement.

Key words: International relations, International politics, International security, International humanitarian assistance, Global engagement, Politics of trade issues, Politics of environmental problems

Introduction

Engagement refers to activities in which an agent, or group of agents, supports another group and solves problems collaboratively. Engagement activism was formerly confined to interactions between local agents in a country. Currently, it is becoming increasingly prominent worldwide and has evolved to include global enterprises as well. As the discipline of international relations is one that investigates issues of international and global scope, it needs to address engagement activism that has this perspective. However, previous international relations studies have been less concerned about this analytical pursuit. This article explains the causes of the discipline's past unresponsiveness and its current enthusiasm for activism by simultaneously describing the history of engagement activities and international relations studies. We illustrate our argument using three types of international and global engagements: international humanitarian assistance, environmental conservation, and the strategic relationship between business actors. This approach allows a comprehensive depiction of international and global engagement.

In the next section, we begin by defining the meaning of engagement and its related terminology. The following three sections describe the development of engagement activities, along with the responses of international relations studies, by dividing its history into three periods. The third section explains the period from the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century; the fourth section examines the period from the 1970s to the early 1990s; and the fifth section discusses the present day. In the concluding section, we indicate which types of global engagement remain uninvestigated by international relations studies and present the relationship that will hereafter be formed between international relations studies and the practice of global engagement.

Definition of Relevant Terminology

Since global engagement is a new idea, common usage of this term does not exist. This section provides the terminology for the argument that follows. The word engagement is used to indicate activities in which non-state agents join other actors and address issues faced by the latter collabora-

tively. Supportive agents include individuals, citizen collectives, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and multinational corporations (MNCs). The recipients of support may be individuals, local communities, private organizations, or other groups.

Engagement is practiced domestically, internationally, and globally. The term domestic engagement is defined as efforts applied by supportive agents in a country to help recipients residing in the same country. In international engagement, supportive agents and recipients belong to different countries and collaboratively seek to resolve the problems that plague the recipients. In domestic and international engagement, the problems are local issues, and only recipients suffer from the harmful effects of these problems. The relationship between supportive agents and recipients is unidirectional. However, the quality of issues differs in global engagement. Problems addressed in global engagement affect people more extensively and impact not only recipients but also supportive agents. The primary purpose of supportive actors is to help local actors solve the latter's problems. However, the supportive actors also benefit from the joint activities because the effects of the problems go beyond national borders and similarly affect their lives. The relationship between the actors is mutual in global engagement. Global as well as international engagement needs to be covered by the scope of international relations studies.

The Origin of Global Engagement: International Engagement

International engagement preceded global engagement. The former appeared in the nineteenth century. International humanitarian assistance during wartime was the first form of international engagement in modern history (Ueno, 2012; Cahill, 2013). The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was established in 1863. The Committee urged countries to establish a Red Cross society in each country. The organized form of this worldwide movement allowed it to become a symbol of contemporary international engagement. As the development of technology caused devastating consequences in the war during the first half of the twentieth century, other organizations designed to address humanitarian crises were established. These organizations include well-known NGOs, such as Save the Children and Oxfam, and international organizations, such as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, which was later reorganized as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Children's Fund. International humanitarian assistance, which embodies the idea of international engagement, became a familiar activity in the mid-twentieth century.

During the same period, the calamity of the two world wars induced scholars to develop a new discipline that analyzed the mechanism of war to prevent it. The failure of idealistic approaches to international politics, typically represented by the idea of collective security and the League of

Nations, dictated the course of the new studies. Carr (1939) and Morgenthau (1948) presented an approach that was later called realism and contrasted it with idealism. Philosophical approaches used in idealism were also replaced by methodologies that were newly developed in the period. Schelling (1960) and Wright (1965[1942]) employed mathematical methods, such as game theory and statistics, to analyze international politics. Thus, studies of international relations that were realistic, strategic, and scientific were established in the early period of the new studies.

As international humanitarian assistance is a significant activity in the process of managing war, its investigation should have been one of the main topics that international relations studies addressed from the beginning of its establishment. However, two factors distracted scholars from this topic. First, since international humanitarian assistance is inherently idealistic, it conflicts with the idea of realism that dominated international relations studies at the time. Humanitarian aid lacked realistic perspectives that could prevent or end war, and such activism was useless to scholars at the time. Second, international politics after World War II did not allow this. Studies of international relations were led by scholars in the United States, and these scholars prioritized the victory of their country in the Cold War while avoiding escalation into armed conflict (e.g., Kennan, 1951).[1] Finding measures to achieve this goal was their primary challenge, and the analysis of international humanitarian aid was secondary at best. Despite the active practice of international humanitarian assistance in the first half of the twentieth century, its investigation through international relations studies remained underdeveloped during this period.

As competition between the United States and the Soviet Union intensified in the late 1940s and 1950s, the U.S. government invented another type of international assistance, but not engagement. Decolonization in Asia and Africa produced many countries with only fragile institutions. The United States supported the governments of these countries by providing financial and other assistance with the intention of increasing the number of their allies. The U.S. government believed that containment of the Soviet Union by a larger number of capitalist and liberal democracies sustained by American aid would lead to the collapse of the communist state.[2] The new international assistance that was executed via interstate frameworks was largely designed to serve the strategic aims of the United States rather than to help local people in recipient countries.

U.S. aid policy and international relations studies in those days possessed the same realistic and strategic perspectives. In addition, they shared the goal of defeating the Soviet Union without resorting to armed conflict. Against this background, international relations scholars provided the theoretical basis for the implementation of U.S. international assistance programs in developing countries. Along with political scientists and economists, they developed the modernization theory, or political development theory, and justified American policies. The theory insisted that the economic, social, and political difficulties experienced by newly independent states were merely

caused by the delay in their development; suitable assistance by the U.S. government would promote the development of these countries and produce *sound* nation-states characterized by democracy and capitalism (e.g., Almond & Coleman, 1960; Pye, 1962; Rostow, 1960). As Rostow's (1960) subtitle, "a non-communist manifesto," illustrates, studies on intergovernmental assistance in this period were politically biased and lacked humane perspectives embraced by international humanitarian assistance (Berger, 2003; Gilman, 2003; Latham, 2000; Sasaki & Nakajima, 2021; Yamamoto, 2007).

The Change in International Politics and New International Engagement

International politics began to change in the 1970s (Yamamoto, 2011). Although the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union continued, the tension between them was mitigated by détente. The distribution of power among countries began to change during this period as well. The economic growth of Japan, West Germany, and other European countries rendered them competitors to the United States. China emerged as another power in the Communist Bloc. The relaxation of tension allowed issues of so-called low politics, such as the economy, culture, and the environment, to become agendas in international politics. The emphasis on issues other than international security enabled non-state agents to become significant actors in the international arena. Consequently, MNCs, NGOs, lobbying groups, trade unions, and citizens have increasingly influenced the decision-making process of countries since the 1970s (Keohane & Nye, 1971).

Changes in international politics affected the practice of engagement as well. Although international humanitarian aid in the 1960s was not dormant, it was not as active as it was during and immediately after World War II. As the rivalry between superpowers reduced, civil wars occurring sporadically in developing countries became recognized as an agenda for international politics. This new agenda revitalized international humanitarian assistance in the 1970s. Thus far, international humanitarian assistance had focused on Europe. Changes in international politics extended the scope of its activities to include Africa and Asia. An example of the expansion of activity is the humanitarian crisis that occurred during the Nigerian Civil War in 1967–1970. The crisis was reported worldwide, and people grieved upon seeing pictures of extremely malnourished children. The most well-known reaction that ensued was the founding of Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) in 1971 (Heerten & Moses, 2014). Currently, the locus of international humanitarian aid is developing countries. However, this expansion did not occur until the 1970s.

Engagement activities other than humanitarian aid were confined to domestic projects during the intensive Cold War period. However, the new international politics in the 1970s allowed these engagement activities to cross national borders. The shift in Japanese citizens' engagement activi-

ties from domestic to international enterprises in the field of environmental issues illustrates this. Japan suffered from many pollution problems during the 1950s and 1960s. Citizens from outside the polluted areas helped the victims rally against polluters. The occurrence of Minamata disease was the most well-known tragedy. It was caused by the discharge of methylmercury from a factory. The company that operated the factory denied culpability. Non-members of the local community, among whom Jun Ui and Masazumi Harada were the most active, joined the victims and sustained them. In 1968, the national government finally concluded that the disease was caused by mercury poisoning. This disease and similar problems in those days reflected the dark side of Japan's industrial miracle (George, 2001).

Japanese citizens' engagement with environmental issues began to spread to countries outside Japan in the late 1970s. The normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the People's Republic of China in 1972 and the conclusion of a peace treaty between the two countries in 1978 allowed Japanese citizens to visit China. In those days, people in Inner Mongolia were suffering owing to the desertification of the region. Seiei Toyama, an agriculturist, was a pioneer who addressed this problem with the resolve to help the local people in Inner Mongolia. He went to China and, after a long struggle, succeeded in planting grapes in the late 1980s (Toyama, 1992). Following his efforts, the number of citizen-based organizations engaging in desert greening in China increased in the 1990s (Takahashi, 2005). Only five such organizations were confirmed in 1991. This number increased during the 1990s to 81 in 2004. Currently, the yellow dust that disperses across the Chinese border is a problem that affects a large part of East Asia. However, volunteers who participated in greening activities in those days considered the issue to be a local problem of soil degradation and food shortage in the continent; the supporters' intention was international, but it was not global engagement.

Tetsu Nakamura, who worked in Afghanistan, is another example of international engagement practiced by Japanese citizens (Nakamura, 2013). The Soviet army withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989. Although turbulence continues in the country to this day, the change in Afghan politics caused by the end of the Cold War allowed Nakamura and his team to open their first clinic in 1991–92. He was a physician, and his activity was initially limited to examining patients. However, he soon realized that medical treatment alone would not change the situation in the region and that the local people would remain impoverished unless other measures were also undertaken. He then determined to construct irrigation canals to improve the overall environmental conditions in the area. His humanitarian devotion to the Afghan people continued until he was killed in a shooting in 2019. He is an icon of international engagement in Afghanistan as well as Japan.

Non-state actors whose activities were international but did not cover engagement also became active in the 1970s. MNCs and other business-related organizations, such as trade unions and lobby-

ing groups, were typical examples (Nye, 1974).[3] The trade conflict between Japan and the United States from the 1970s to the 1990s illustrates the activism of business actors in the international politics of the period. The first example is the case of the automobile industry in the 1980s. Rising imports of Japanese cars in the United States plagued U.S. industry at the time. U.S. trade unions had previously handled trade conflict by lobbying Congress and the U.S. government. In this case, however, United Auto Workers (UAW) used not only conventional actions but also a new approach to achieve its goal. Douglas Fraser, the president of UAW, visited Japan in 1980 and demanded that Japanese automobile companies adopt a voluntary export restraint to the U.S. market and construct U.S. factories for American workers. His international activism impacted Japanese society and was called *Fraser Senpu* (the Fraser sensation) (Inoue, 1980).

Another example is the semiconductor industry of the 1990s. Trade agreements are typically negotiated among state governments. However, the series of negotiations that discussed the new framework that would be implemented after the expiration of the existing arrangement in 1996 included members of trade associations from both countries. In addition to official talks between the two governments, the Electronic Industries Association of Japan (EIAJ) and the Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA) held private meetings. In the final talk, joint meetings that involved both governmental officers and businesspeople were organized, and they produced two documents, each of which was a statement by their government and a private agreement between the EIAJ and SIA (Oyane, 2002).

By the 1990s, business agents emerged as significant in the international arena and acquired the power to directly affect the course of international politics. However, their activism was far from engagement. U.S. business agents used their power to benefit from international affairs. The corresponding actors in Japan were targets, not recipients. Japanese automobile companies were forced to produce cars in the United States, where production costs were much higher than those in Japan. Japanese electronics companies were compelled to reduce exports to the U.S. market and increase imports of American products to the Japanese market. Their relationship was merely competitive.[4]

The rise of economic issues in the 1970s produced a sub-discipline called International Political Economy (IPE) in international relations studies of that period (Gilpin, 1987; Strange, 1988). Strategic competition between Japan and the United States in trade issues was addressed using this new approach (e.g., Schoppa, 1993). In addition to economic issues, IPE customarily includes any topics other than military issues. Therefore, the new activities of international engagement, such as the environmental cooperation in China's desertification problem, could have been investigated under IPE. In fact, the investigation of international cooperation was the focus of IPE in the 1980s and the early 1990s (Krasner, 1983; Keohane, 1984). However, its approach to international cooperation retained the strategic, realistic, and rational perspectives that were incorporated in international

relations studies in the earlier days. Some IPE scholars recognized themselves as liberals. However, realistic perspectives were a requisite to avoid the innocence of the interwar-period idealism with which they were obsessed. Neoliberalism was the dominant liberal perspective in international relations studies in the 1980s and the early 1990s (Baldwin, 1993). Unlike traditional liberals or idealists, neoliberals emphasized strategic and rational calculation in forming international cooperation, and they were less interested in the normative and ethical perspectives required to analyze the activities of international engagement described above. Cooperation in the environmental field was also investigated from a neoliberal perspective (Young, 1989). Research on international engagement through international relations studies continued to be underdeveloped during this period.

The Emergence of Global Engagement

Every social aspect has a global dimension in the present day. Problems in a particular place are highly likely to affect other places worldwide. Environmental issues have become a global concern in the twenty-first century. The Climate Action Network (CAN) is a body composed of more than 1800 environmental NGOs across 130 countries that work together on the common issue of climate change (Climate Action Network, 2023). These NGOs are both supporters and recipients in engagement activities. Yellow dust dispersed by the desertification of Inner Mongolia is no longer a local issue, but a problem for the whole of East Asia; efforts to solve this problem are now a global engagement.

Moreover, the competitive interactions between non-state agents observed in the twentieth century are shifting to reciprocal relationships. The Japanese and U.S. automobile companies were purely rivals in the 1980s. However, the current situation in the industry has induced them to form global alliances to manage the shortage of components, develop next-generation automobiles, and so on. The change in the relationships in the semiconductor industry between Japan and the United States has been remarkable. Rapidus is a semiconductor manufacturer that was established in 2022 with the aim of reviving the Japanese semiconductor industry. Atsuyoshi Koike, the president of Rapidus, served as the president of the Japanese subsidiaries owned by American computer companies. In December 2022, Rapidus and IBM announced that IBM would provide Rapidus with their innovative technology (The Nikkei, 2022). Because Rapidus has been struggling to acquire the best technology, IBM is the supporter in this project. Meanwhile, semiconductors produced by Rapidus are expected to be supplied to IBM. Thus, the success of Rapidus will also benefit IBM. The relationship between the two agents is reciprocal; those who were rivals in the twentieth century presently engage in global cooperation.

Beginning with international humanitarian assistance in the nineteenth century, international

and global engagement has become ubiquitous in the twenty-first century. As described in earlier sections, engagement activities were not the main topic of international relations studies until the 1990s. However, the situation began to change largely because of the end of the Cold War.

First, faith in realism declined. Neorealism, as advocated by Waltz (1979), was the dominant perspective in international relations studies in the 1980s. He emphasized the power of states as the determining factor in international politics and argued that the most stable international system was bipolar. Nevertheless, the system dominated by the two superpowers collapsed easily, and no one foresaw this event. The reaction to the failure of the discipline was the reformulation of studies by noting factors other than power and interest. Constructivism, which emphasizes the intersubjectivity of people, was the most influential new approach, and it is currently established as another perspective in present international relations studies (Wendt, 1999). Another group of studies that prevailed in the late 1990s focused on the concept of norms possessed by people. These studies argued that norms, culture, and identity of people were factors shaping state policies and relations (e.g., Katzenstein, 1996). International and global engagement activities, such as humanitarian aid and environmental conservation, are usually motivated by ethics, norms, and other ideas embraced by people. Incorporating these factors into the analysis allowed studies on engagement to develop into international relations studies.

In addition, the mindsets of practitioners in international politics changed after the Cold War ended. The focus of international security shifted from nuclear war between superpowers to civil wars in unstable states in the 1990s. An example of such a change was the redefinition of the mission addressed by the United Nations in the post-Cold War era. Boutros-Ghali (1992) presented the procedure that the United Nations should follow in managing civil conflict and refined key concepts, such as preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. International humanitarian assistance plays a significant role in implementing operations in this procedure. Humanitarian aid was a subsidiary activity in securing global peace during the Cold War. Currently, this is the focus of global security.

The change in the discipline and the reframing of the goal of global security have produced many studies on international and global engagement and related subjects since the late 1990s. The term global governance became popular academic terminology around that period. A journal entitled *Global Governance* was first published in 1995. Books that included the term in their titles and subtitles were published (e.g., Watanabe & Tsuchiyama, 2001). As mentioned earlier, Young (1989) published a book on the environment titled *International Cooperation*. He edited a new book on the same topic in 1997, but entitled it *Global Governance* (Young, 1997). CAN is now a topic of research in the context of global engagement (e.g., Duwe, 2001).

In the previous section, we argued that international relations studies in the 1970s recognized

that non-state agents had emerged as important actors in world politics. However, these studies considered the activities of MNCs pursuing profits to be more influential than the advocacy of NGOs in determining the shape of international politics. NGOs were largely disregarded in those days. International relations studies in the late 1990s began to compensate for this deficiency (Davies, 2019). Many books and articles that have studied various aspects of NGOs, such as their growth in number, the roles played by them, and a range of issues, have been published since the late 1990s. Some studies have discussed not only the positive but also negative aspects of NGOs.

Along with a growing number of studies on peacebuilding (e.g., Cross, 2016; Chandler, 2017), international humanitarian assistance has now been established as a subject of research. An attestation of the establishment of a research subject is the publication of new journals that focus on that subject. *The Journal of Humanitarian Action* and *the Journal of Humanitarian Affairs* were established in 2016 and 2019, respectively. Because international humanitarian assistance must be implemented in a manner that combines various approaches to humanity, journals aimed at studying humanitarian aid are inevitably interdisciplinary. Nevertheless, humanitarian crises are largely caused by armed confrontation. Therefore, international relations studies constitute the primary approach employed in these journals.

Conclusion

Previous international relations studies have focused on investigating the strategic interactions between sovereign states from a realist worldview. Studies maintain this quality in the present day, and the original perspective is useful in analyzing events such as those recently observed in Russia's invasion of Ukraine. However, recent international relations studies have broadened their scope, with international and global engagement having become a prime topic of the discipline in the twenty-first century.

The response of international relations studies to engagement activities is not yet complete. In the previous section, we discussed global cooperation between MNCs in the twenty-first century. Although economics and business administration studies have investigated companies' global alliances, international relations studies have not sufficiently examined this type of global engagement. This situation is similar to that of the 1970s; economic aspects of MNCs' international competition were long investigated, but research on the political consequences of that competition was insufficient until the establishment of IPE as a sub-discipline. As IPE addressed this political question in the 1980s and 1990s, the influence of global engagement by the same economic actors on global politics should be examined in the twenty-first century. Since present economic difficulties—such as inflation, shortages of materials, and the U.S.–China economic rivalry—are likely to

continue to be stringent, the investigation of this global engagement remains ahead of other engagement activities.

Globalization has certainly increased affairs in which global engagement has not yet been observed but will be required in the future. Thus, international relations studies will increasingly focus on global engagement, and a change in the discipline is an appropriate response to the challenges faced by the world.

注

1 ） George Kennan was a Foreign Service Officer until 1953. However, he temporarily moved to the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton in 1950 partly because Dean Acheson, the newly appointed Secretary of State in 1949, did not rely on Kennan's analysis and judgment (Lukacs, 2007). In his academic life following that, Kennan was a renowned historian and leading critic of American diplomatic policy based on the realistic interpretation of international politics.

2 ） Stronger measures such as the rollback policy promoted by John Dulles were sometimes proposed during this period, but the U.S. administrations continued to maintain the policy of containment.

3 ） The rise of MNCs was so prominent that it caused rebuttals by realists who believed that sovereign states were robust (e.g., Gilpin, 1975).

4 ） An exception was the issue of the agricultural industry. In the process of Japan–U.S. governmental negotiations on the issue, American and Japanese companies cooperated to open the Japanese market (Kusano, 1983). The transnational alliance formed by these companies meets the definition of global engagement described in the second section because both sides played the role of supporters and recipients. However, most companies in those days hardly found common interests to form global alliances.

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