9. Discussion and outlook

This final chapter starts by recapitulating my main findings and discussing them with a view to the existing literature on the integration of women's rights into AI's work. Following the two-part structure of the empirical analysis, chapter 9.1 highlights the book's new insights into the mandate period and the post-mandate period separately. In section 9.2, I draw some broader implications and offer recommendations on how other human rights NGOs can best integrate women's rights into their work. By relating the results of the analysis back to the literature on norm diffusion and dynamics, section 9.3 discusses the new theoretical insights. It specifically highlights the study's contribution to the understanding of the ways comparatively powerless actors within a transnational network are able to cause a new norm to emerge, and elucidates the study's contribution to better comprehending the causes of incomplete norm diffusion. Section 9.4 then concludes with an outlook focusing on AI's internal developments with respect to women's rights in the years after the SVAW campaign until today.

9.1 Summary and new insights

This section starts by recalling the study's general objective and discusses the book's main insights into the mandate and the post-mandate period separately (section 9.1.1 and 9.1.2).

The present study intended to shed light on the reasons why AI chose VAW in the private sphere as the theme of its first global long-term thematic campaign, despite a historically grown gender-biased vision of human rights. AI largely informed the dominant understanding of human rights in the second half of the 20th century as individuals' rights to be protected from state despotism. It treated women's rights only marginally and mainly as violations

occurring in the public sphere. I therefore identified the organization's decision to focus its first global thematic campaign on the issue of VAW in the private sphere as a surprising development. Thus, the books has sought to answer the following questions: 1) Why did AI decide to focus its first global thematic campaign on the issue of VAW and, especially, on forms of violence in the private sphere?

As the condemnation of VAW in the public sphere preceded AI's interest in VAW in the private sphere and as these approaches interrelate, it was pivotal to clarify why and how AI dealt with issues of VAW during the mandate and in the post-mandate period. The study thus also intended to answer the following research questions: 2) Why has AI integrated VAW into its activities? 3) How has AI integrated VAW into its activities? How has AI's human rights policy changed and how was this transformation assimilated and integrated by AI's officials and activists? Relatedly, the book explored two sub-questions: What was the role of female activists and officials in the integration process? and Has there been any resistance from activists and/or from officials and, if so, what kind of resistance?

The study explored in detail how VAW developed from an ephemeral concern reflected in the adoption of cases of female prisoners of conscience, initiated at the end of the 1980s by female activists at the local level, to the central issue of AI's first global long-term campaign under the mission at the beginning of the 2000s. Female activists and officials substantially contributed to the integration of VAW into AI's work and to the decision to launch a first global long-term campaign on the issues of VAW in the private sphere in a bottom-up process. They did so in a beneficial international political environment marked by the fourth WCW in Beijing and using strategies of *parallel networking* and *analogous framing*. Nevertheless, AI wasn't successful in making VAW an integral part of its work through the SVAW campaign. Long-standing women's rights activists and officials lost their influence on AI's work on VAW and some activists and officials strongly resisted the campaign and, relatedly, the adoption of AI's first policy on abortion. These factors are key in explaining AI's failure to transform women's rights into part of its DNA through the SVAW campaign.

9.1.1   New insights into the mandate period

Female activists played a central role in initiating AI's work on women's rights at the end of the 1980s and in the subsequent bottom-up process of integrating VAW into AI's activities, which culminated in the SVAW campaign at the beginning of the 2000s. AI's growing interest in issues of VAW and, relatedly, the decision to make VAW the topic of AI's first long-term thematic campaign under the mission must mainly be seen as the result of the feminist strategies of *parallel networking* and *analogous framing*. These strategies were successful because the first was adapted to the overall structure and functioning of AI, while the second conformed to the organization's overall human rights policy. Because analogous framing did not challenge the organization's traditional understanding of human rights, which, at this time, essentially focused on civil and political rights, members or officials did not resist it.

While these feminist strategies are key to understanding developments at the international level, female activists and officials in different sections organized in accordance with the structure of their sections' voluntary members into local, regional, or thematic groups or networks in the 1990s. The subsequent professionalization of each section's work on VAW also followed the overall organization of the section's thematic work. While in the German section, the MaF pursued a strategy that sought to influence decision-making at the international level, female activists in the Swiss section first organized into four local groups and formed a national women's network in 2000, which focused primarily on their section's work. While the Swiss section started to professionalize its work on women's rights in the late 1990s, in the German section issues of violations of women's rights remained in the MaF's hands. Women activists and officials thus appear to have played a key role in the initiation of AI's work on VAW and its subsequent increase in the 1990s.

However, this does not mean that male activists and officials did not contribute to the integration process. While the data clearly indicate that it was predominantly women who had agency in this change process, we cannot conclude that men were not involved, as well. Both female and male ICM section delegates decided upon the adoption of resolutions. Therefore, it is worth assuming that men must at least have supported the issue from the moment the demand for more work on issues of women's rights became integrated into AI's policy at the 1989 ICM. Further, as the examples of the former SG Pierre Sané and the former ED of the Swiss section Daniel Bolomey show, men also played a positive role. Using a feminist research approach that fo-

cuses primarily on comparatively powerless actors, I have paid less attention to comparatively powerful actors, most of whom were men during this period. It is plausible that the study has somehow underestimated the contribution of men (particularly male officials) to the change process. In fact, as demonstrated by Kelleher and Bhattacharjya, Pierre Sané was committed to women's rights and took a leading role in enunciating AI's increasing interest in women's rights issues.[1]

Aside from the positive stance of the SG, it is possible that the increase in the proportion of women in the organization's leadership positions may also have contributed to making AI consider issues of VAW more seriously. Nevertheless, while these numbers indicate a relationship, they do not suffice to fully clarify the transformation process, as they tell us nothing about the agency of the women behind it.

We know that external factors influenced AI's interest in women's rights issues as well. For example, human rights violations' changing pattern amplified at the end of the bipolar world order. It made AI rethink its state-focused mandate and contributed to making AI consider violations of women's human rights during the 1990s more seriously.[2] More important, the growing international awareness of gender equality (initiated during the UN Decade for Women 1975-1985), which was reflected in the WCWs, did not leave AI unaffected. Relatedly, the international women's rights movement – or the Transnational Feminist Networks,[3] as Moghadam calls them – challenged AI and other human rights organizations to expand their mandate to violations of human rights in the private sphere.[4] In particular, the 1995 WCW in Beijing provided those within AI who wanted the organization to increase its work on VAW with an important momentum, and it can therefore be interpreted as a window of opportunity facilitating the integration process within AI.

In light of the internal and external factors that must have positively impacted AI's work on VAW in the 1990s, the results of the present study, with their emphasis on female activists' and officials' strategies, may at first glance seem too reductionist. It is therefore important to acknowledge the results in light of the book's specific focus and approach. In fact, the emphasis on AI's

---

1   Kelleher and Bhattacharjya 2013.
2   Thakur 1994; Pack 1999.
3   Moghadam 2010, p.294.
4   Bahar 1996.

inner life and the focus on women as competent actors within the organization, which follows from the theoretical paradigm of feminist constructivism, entail that the study has not concentrated on the role of more powerful actors and of potential external factors. Thus, we can assume that Pierre Sané's positive stance, the increase in the proportion of women in AI's leadership, and the favorable global political climate must have contributed to making AI increase its work on VAW as well. Nevertheless, the following reflections attribute AI's increasing interest in women's rights issues to feminist strategizing. In fact, events such as the WCW in Beijing, can only open windows of opportunities for actors exploiting them to their advantage.

In that sense, it is worth assuming that without women's appropriate strategizing within AI, AI would probably have integrated issues of VAW into its work as a result of an international bandwagon effect. Yet, the process of integration would probably have taken a different path and VAW in the private sphere would not necessarily have become the central theme of AI's first global long-term campaign under the mission. Consequently, although I have not demonstrated the interplay of all of the factors that eventually contributed to making AI increase its work on VAW during the 1990s, I have clearly demonstrated the existence of two feminist strategies – *parallel networking* and *analogous framing* – and their significance for the process of change.

9.1.2 New insights into the post-mandate period

The 2001 decision to launch the first thematic long-term campaign under the mission on the issue of VAW in the private sphere marked the end of the bottom-up process and the beginning of a top-down approach to the integration of VAW issues into AI's work. In fact, between 2002 and 2010, the organization's leadership initiated the majority of the ICM decisions concerning the work on violence against women. It also established campaign-machinery at the IS for the effective implementation of the organization's first global thematic long-term campaign. In contrast to the activities related to VAW in the 1990s, the SVAW campaign sought to change the organization from within by enhancing its members' and officials' awareness of gender equality. AI considered its staff's and activists' commitment to gender equality pivotal for AI's public credibility. The SVAW campaign was embedded in the major change of policy and working methods. It naturally followed from the adoption of the mission and combined an internal and an external aspect. It therefore was a highly ambitious and challenging endeavor.

It is thus not surprising that the campaign's flagship role and its structure and setting provoked the opposition of some members and officials. The *Review of the SVAW Campaign*[5] highlights that these elements certainly hampered the implementation of the campaign. However, my findings suggest that two other elements are key to explaining why AI did not succeed in making women's rights part of its DNA through the SVAW campaign. First, were the activists' and officials' content-related resistance to the SVAW campaign at the international and the national levels and the members' opposition to the adoption of a policy on abortion. Second, with the top-down campaign, female activists and officials who initiated and pushed the work on VAW in the 1990s lost their influence on the organization's work in this area.

My national-level analysis demonstrates that the Swiss section succeeded in integrating the issue of VAW into its work at least partially. Meanwhile, the German section did not succeed in integrating issues of VAW into its overall work through the SVAW campaign. This difference can be explained with the general differences between the two sections. The facts that there had always been more women in the Swiss section's EC and that the Swiss section had generally been more open to mandate modifications than its neighbor help account for this. Nevertheless, AI's grassroots democratic structure, which gives members the right to have a say, suggests that the reason for the difference is most likely to be found in the membership. An important indication of the conservative attitude of the German section's members is their relative closeness to the church. Data indicate that the German section's members are generally closer to the church than their colleagues at the Swiss section. However, this is a very general observation, and in order to better understand the members' attitudes, this connection should be further explored with more interview data. Moreover, German members have comparatively more power than their Swiss counterparts, which must have amplified the opposition to the SVAW campaign and to the adoption of the abortion policy. Furthermore, to reach a definite conclusion on the differences between the two sections, it would be worthwhile to take into account the societal contexts and, especially, the legislation processes related to VAW that took place in Switzerland and in Germany during the same period.

The analysis of the data on the German section reveals that, while the German section is representative of other big Western AI sections members- and funding-wise, it differs from the rest of the AI sections because of its special

---

5   Wallace and Baños Smith 2010b.

history. For a long time, the section developed in parallel with the international movement, on its own and without a model of how to organize its work. This implies that the internal generalizability of my findings is somehow limited. Because these two characteristics distinguish the German section not only from the Swiss section, but also from many other AI sections, and because other Western AI sections must therefore more closely resemble the Swiss section in terms of membership and structure, it is worth assuming that the extent to which other sections succeeded in integrating VAW into their overall work is similar to that observed at the Swiss section. To verify this assumption, it would be interesting to more closely explore how other European AI sections dealt with the issue of VAW in the frame of the SVAW campaign.

The study provides an internal explanation for AI's failure to make women's rights part of its DNA through the SVAW campaign by highlighting the content-related resistance to the latter and the opposition to the adoption of an abortion policy and by demonstrating the female activists' and officials' loss of influence on AI's work on issues of VAW in the frame of the top-down campaign. We should assess these findings keeping in mind that the feminist constructivist theoretical paradigm underpinning the book entails focusing on AI's inner life and on the role of female activists and officials. However, in order to understand AI's difficulties in making women's rights part of its DNA through the SVAW campaign, it is worth contextualizing the findings within the global climate on women's rights in the 2000s. With the 1993 UN Human Rights Conference in Vienna, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, and the 1995 WCW in Beijing, the 1990s had witnessed major progress in the area of women's rights and the international context for advancing the issue within AI was beneficial.

The global situation was different in the 2000s. A backlash against women's rights achievements took place in the post-Beijing period and especially in the aftermath of September 11, 2001.[6] Fundamentalist forces, including the Vatican, US Christian right organizations, and several African and Middle Eastern states, such as Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, Libya, and Sudan, had already organized around the UN conferences in the 1990s to counter the developments in women's rights, particularly with respect to sexual and reproductive rights. However, with a global climate changing away from

---

6   Müller et al. 2007; Yuval-Davis 2006; Elisabeth Jay Friedman 2003; Reilly 2007.

multilateralism towards a US unilateralism and a "disregard for international norms," these fundamentalist forces really gained momentum in the beginning of the 2000s.[7] For example, at a meeting of the UNCHR in 2003, the Vatican and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) countries strongly opposed a resolution calling governments to recognize discrimination based on sexual orientation as a violation of human rights.[8] At the same time, "the global consensus that VAW is a violation of human rights was also called into question"[9] at a meeting of the CSW. Aware of the rise of these anti-feminist forces, and in fear of losing the achievements gained since Beijing, the CSW deliberately decided not to call for a fifth WCW.[10]

This particular global climate must therefore be considered another element explaining AI's failure to make women's rights part of its DNA, as it strengthened the traditionalist voices within AI. Thus, similar to what I discussed in relation to the mandate period, it is important to take into account the global political climate in order to fully understand the developments in AI's work on VAW in the 2000s. Consequently, even though my analysis has downplayed these external factors and was not able to highlight the interaction of the internal and external elements, all of which must have played a role in AI's failure to make women's rights part of its DNA, I have nonetheless demonstrated the existence of content-related opposition to the SVAW campaign and to the adoption of the abortion policy, as well as its harming influence on AI's ability to integrate VAW into its work. Furthermore, I have also highlighted the loss of influence of those women activists and officials who pushed for the increase in AI's work in the 1990s in the frame of the top-down SVAW campaign and its potentially negative influence on AI's ability to make women's rights part of its DNA.

In consideration of the above, the study has largely answered the underlying research questions. Research question 3 is the only exception. In fact, I could not fully answer the research question How has this transformation been assimilated and integrated by AI's officials and activists? The fact that AI did not succeed in making women's rights part of its DNA through the SVAW campaign suggests that AI's officials and activists did not fully assimilate and integrate the transformation from a human rights approach centered

---

7   Reilly 2009, p.156.
8   Reilly 2009, p.156.
9   Reilly 2009, p.157.
10   Müller et al. 2007, p.35.

on violations of human rights in the public sphere to an approach considering abuses of human rights in the private domain. While I could demonstrate that women's rights issues were not paramount for the activists interviewed at the Swiss section, I was not able to describe in more detail exactly how activists and officials effectively assimilated and integrated issues of VAW. One of the reasons for this shortcoming is the limited number of interviews at the German section and at the IS. In order to fully answer this question, more interviews with activists and officials at the German section as well as with IS staff would have been necessary.

9.2   Implications for other human rights NGOs

I defined AI as a transnational network because of its structure with a central headquarters and a broad grassroots membership organized in country sections. However, as far as AI's work is concerned, the relevant literature and the media commonly refer to AI as a human rights NGO.[11] It is thus worth it to present the implications of the study for other human rights NGOs rather than for transnational networks, as this term refers first and foremost to the structure of a given organization and not to the focus of the organization's work. In fact, the findings offer several general recommendations on how to successfully integrate issues of women's rights into everyday work that are potentially useful for human rights NGOs.

Nevertheless, when we look at the following recommendations and think about applying them to other organization, we have to bear in mind that the findings are based on AI - an institution characterized by a networked organizational structure. Given that AI's approach to integrating issues of VAW was different before and after the adoption of the mission in 2001, my findings allow me to make recommendations on how human rights NGOs can successfully integrate issues of women's rights into their work in two situations: Either when an organization intends to integrate issues of women's rights into its public activities (such as campaigns or reports) or when an NGO chooses a gender-mainstreaming approach, implying an internal change process as well. In the first case, a favorable global climate and a window of opportunity

---

11   Similarly, when we consider the work of human rights NGOs, we speak about them as organizations rather than as networks, even though some of these NGOs are structured as transnational networks.

are important but not sufficient. While the commitment of an organization's leadership matters, the presence of women pursuing strategies for pushing their claims forward that are adequate to the organization is key. These strategies can be *parallel networking* or *analogous framing*.

However, the successful use of these strategies is subject to certain conditions. The strategy of *parallel networking* seems to be effective when the organization is structured as a network composed of a powerful central node and a large grassroots movement, when the internal decision-making process is based on democratic principles, and when a certain number of individuals, disseminated more or less equally across the basic network, become members of the parallel network. Further, the strategy of *analogous framing* seems to depend on the topics the NGO works on.

The case of AI showed the effectiveness of women's networking beyond the formal organizational units. When they frame their concerns in a way that is oriented towards this fundamental policy rather than in contradiction to it, women are likely to influence their organization's agenda. In a democratically organized network, where the members are involved in the decision-making process, such as AI, linking up with other like-minded individuals beyond the formal organizational units allows women to purposefully and efficiently influence the decision-making processes. However, given the myriad of very different organizations, other feminist strategies are conceivable as well. Further, a certain proportion of women in leadership positions seems to be important, too. This seems to be a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for successful integration.

In the second situation, when the issue of women's rights is embraced by the organization's management and promoted from the top, it is important to keep in mind that if a bottom-up process precedes the top-down approach, those who first initiated the issue and pushed it from the bottom be adequately involved in the ongoing process of integration. This means that the organization is able, if possible, to build upon preexisting (informal) organizational structures instead of (only) establishing new ones. If the organization decides to create new entities, it is pivotal to provide them with sufficient financial and personal resources and to embed them in the preexisting organizational structure, clearly defining their responsibilities and ensuring internal accountability. The management's commitment is important but not sufficient in this case either.

9.3   The study's theoretical contribution

This section relates the results of the analysis back to the relevant literature on norm diffusion and dynamics. It starts with a discussion of the new theoretical insights into the ways comparatively powerless actors within a transnational network are able to cause a new norm to emerge. The section then elucidates the study's contribution to a better understanding of the causes of limited norm diffusion.

9.3.1   Ways that comparatively powerless actors can influence norm emergence

Female activists and officials successfully used the strategies of *parallel networking* and *analogous framing* to make AI increase its work on VAW in the 1990s. The employment of these strategies was one of the factors that led AI to choose the issue of VAW in the private sphere as the topic of its first global long-term campaign, the SVAW campaign. The use of these strategies can thus be considered to have played a pivotal role in causing a new norm to emerge within AI: recognizing VAW as a human rights violation, whether it occurs in the private or in the public sphere and whoever the perpetrator. Since the integration of VAW into AI's work followed a bottom-up process and female activists and officials who were not part of AI's leadership spurred AI to work on VAW, I consider these women comparatively powerless actors. My results thus show that by using the strategies of *parallel networking* and *analogous framing*, comparatively weak actors in a transnational network are able to cause a new norm to emerge.

As such, my findings relativize the headquarters' essential role as the principal norm entrepreneur within AI as well as the IS's influence on AI's policy and thematic orientation that have both been highlighted by different authors.[12] Furthermore, my study confirms Hertel's (2006) findings on the influence of comparatively powerless activists on norm dynamics.[13] In her study *Unexpected Power Conflict and Change among Transnational Activists,* she has pointed to various ways in which comparatively powerless activists can alter the content of a transnational campaign. By differentiating between the

---

12   Welch 2001; Hopgood 2006; Lake and Wong 2009.

13   Hertel 2006.

senders framing the campaign from the North and the receivers of the campaign in the South, Hertel (2006) demonstrates that local activists at the receiving side of a transnational campaign could alter its content by employing two mechanisms: Blocking or Backdoor-moves. Powerless members of a normative community are thus able to change the content of a norm and influence its dissemination.

However, Hertel's study does not demonstrate if and how comparatively weak actors may affect norm emergence. My study's theoretical contribution departs from this point, as my research identifies the strategies of *parallel networking* and *analogous framing*, which comparatively powerless members of a transnational network can employ in order to influence their network's agenda and, consequently, norm emergence.

Nevertheless, the results of my study also suggest that the effectiveness of these strategies is linked to specific conditions. The strategy of *parallel networking* depends on three conditions. The first is the transnational network's overall structure; second - it's functioning; and third - the number and distribution of the people involved in the parallel network. A transnational network composed of a powerful central node and a large grassroots movement has been fruitful for comparatively powerless actors' use of the strategy of *parallel networking*. *Parallel networking* can be a successful strategy for weak actors within a transnational network if the network's decision-making process follows democratic rules.

Lastly, the strategy of *parallel networking* also needs a certain number of individuals to become network members and to be distributed more or less equally throughout the actual transnational network. Otherwise, they are less able to influence decision-making. In fact, a certain number of female activists and officials were present at various sections as well as at the IS. They were thus more or less broadly disseminated within AI. This enhanced the likelihood of constructing an effective intersectional network as it allowed them to reach out to the whole AI network and build majorities for their demands at the ICMs.

In contrast, the strategy of *analogous framing* seems to mostly depend on the transnational network's policy framework or, said differently, on the topics on which the basic network is focused. In order for this strategy to be effective, it must therefore conform to the themes of the basic network. In fact, because *analogous framing* did not challenge AI's traditional understanding of human rights, which, at the time, focused on civil and political rights, it did not result in major resistance from members and officials, and it was there-

fore successful. Consequently, my study's theoretical contribution to norm emergence comes down to the insight that norm entrepreneurs are not the only actors key to the emergence of new norms; comparatively powerless actors can create a new norm, as well. By using the strategies of *parallel networking* and *analogous framing*, comparatively powerless activists within a transnational network can influence the network's agenda and cause a new norm to emerge within the network under certain conditions. The deployment of these strategies, however, seems to depend on the network's structure, functioning, the number and distribution of those using the strategy of *parallel networking*, and on the network's overall policy framework.

9.3.2   Reasons for limited norm diffusion

I have provided evidence for two main arguments why AI failed to make women's rights a part of its DNA. Translating these findings into the terminology of norm diffusion allows me to highlight two reasons why the norm did not diffuse further within AI. First are activists' and officials' content-related resistance to the SVAW campaign and their opposition to the adoption of an abortion policy. Second is the loss of influence that female activists and officials who initiated and pushed the work on VAW in the 1990s went through as far as the organization's work on VAW in the frame of the top-down campaign is concerned. These outcomes confirm Wiener's (2007) and Müller and Wunderlich's (2013) findings about the importance of contestation for understanding norm compliance or non-compliance and norm diffusion.[14] Wiener (2007) demonstrated that the likelihood of norm contestation increases when a norm is transposed into a different context. In fact, when a norm is implanted into a new environment, its meaning becomes contested as differently socialized actors interpret it.[15] This process took place within AI with the norm that recognizes VAW as a violation of human rights. In my two case studies, the members' closeness to the church attested to their different socialization. Contestation was more important in the German section, where the membership was generally closer to the church, than in the Swiss section. That resistance against women's rights is widespread among church-related groups is not new. The Catholic Church is widely known for its conservative

---

14   Müller and Wunderlich 2013.

15   Wiener 2007, p.12.

and patriarchal values, having always opposed women's sexual and reproductive rights.[16] The Vatican was particularly active in restricting these rights in the 2000s.

Norm diffusion is also described as a permanent process of negotiation, throughout which norm entrepreneurs have to continually work to further consolidate the norms and to defend them against norm challengers.[17] If norm entrepreneurs fail to defend a norm, we observe norm regression. In the case of AI and VAW, I have shown that comparatively weak actors - female activists and officials - were the primary drivers of norm diffusion. However, the book has not provided information about whether these women's rights advocates defended the norm from internal norm challengers. The fact that members' participation in sections' decision-making processes may hinder the integration of VAW into AI's overall work indicates that norms interpreters' influence within a normative framework, as well as socialization, matters for norm contestation. In fact, my results about the consequences of members' participation in decision-making processes suggest that when the latter offer extensive power to norm interpreters, norm contestation is more effective and the likelihood of norms' continued diffusion decreases. Consequently, two main factors account for norm decay in a transnational network. First, are differently socialized actors who contest the norm; second is the norm contesters' power in terms of their access to decision-making processes.

To sum up my contribution to the understanding of norm diffusion: In addition to norm entrepreneurs, comparatively powerless actors within a transnational network are also able to cause a new norm to emerge by using the strategies of *parallel networking* and *analogous framing*. Second, beside the norm interpreters' socialization or norm entrepreneurs' capacity to defend their norm against norm challengers, the latter's power to access decision-making processes matters for norm degeneration.

9.4   Outlook

The present study has deliberately focused on the period between 1989, when AI first started to work on women's rights, and 2010, marking the end of

---

16   Strahm 2017.

17   Müller and Wunderlich 2013.

AI's first global long-term thematic campaign focusing on VAW in the private sphere. I have shown that AI's work on issues of VAW evolved tremendously within this period, even though the organization did not succeed in making women's rights part of its DNA through the SVAW campaign. Broadening the time frame, it becomes evident that AI has not stopped working on issues of VAW after the end of the SVAW campaign. In fact, the *Demand Dignity* campaign, the integration of the principle of a balanced representation of men and women within the organization, and the anchoring of gender mainstreaming in the 2010-2016 strategic plan all indicate that women's rights issues have remained relevant after the closing of the SVAW campaign. Moreover, AI underwent important changes with regards to its internal structure in the 2010s. The following paragraph briefly highlights the most important developments concerning AI's structure and functioning as well as its work on issues of VAW since 2010.

AI's "Moving Closer to the Ground" initiative, launched in the early 2010s, sought to create a bottom-up approach of human rights work that would enable the organization to work closely with local human rights organizations and to respond more quickly to human rights violations.[18] It must be considered the most important transformation in the functioning of the NGO. This structural shift entailed the delocalization of the regional programs from the headquarters to key regional hubs, such as Dakar, Johannesburg, Hong Kong, and Mexico[19] It has modified and continues to alter the power relations among sections, as new sections were founded in the Global South and already existing Southern sections grew.

This modification is also likely to have altered the direction of the movement's work on issues of VAW over the past years. Although AI has not launched an endeavor comparable to the SVAW campaign as far as length and resources are concerned, the organization has continued its activities in the domain of VAW and women's rights since 2010. Relatedly, its policy and its internal structure in these domains have continued to evolve since 2010. Activity-wise, AI has integrated VAW into the *Demand Dignity* campaign (its second thematic campaign under the mission), which was launched at the end of 2009 and focused on maternal mortality, forced eviction, discrim-

---

18   Shetty 2015.
19   Shetty 2015.

ination, and exclusion.[20] From 2014 to 2015, in reaction to the backlash against sexual and reproductive rights, AI organized the My Body My Rights campaign, seeking to promote people's rights to decide upon their bodies and a life free of coercion.[21] Today, AI's website shows a wide range of topics in which the organization is engaged, including sexual and reproductive rights.[22] Thus, sexual and reproductive rights have become a central topic of AI's work on women's rights over the past several years.

At the same time, as the examples of the Swiss and the German sections show, women's groups have continued to take action on issues such as FGM, trafficking, domestic violence, women human rights defenders, and forced marriage.[23] Concerning policy developments on women's rights, gender mainstreaming became of one of the central objectives of AI's ISP 2010-2016[24] as a consequence of the integration of the principle of gender equality in the nominations for IEC members and other international elected positions at the 2009 ICM.[25]

In addition, it is worth mentioning the recently adopted new policy on abortion calling for a decriminalization of abortion, which replaced the 2007 policy on the issue. Indeed, on July 9, 2018, the Deputy Europe Director at AI announced on Twitter: "Excited to announce @amnesty global movement has decided to trust women – we are fully pro-choice organization."[26] He was referring to AI's new abortion policy that guarantees "access to safe and legal abortion in a broad way that fully respects the rights of all women, girls, and people who can get pregnant"[27] adopted at the ICM in Warsaw in July 2018.

AI has also continued to pursue its commitment to human rights violations against women with the establishment of the Gender, Sexuality, and Identity Program at the IS in 2010. The organization has made gender one of the categories to consider when analyzing human rights abuses and how

---

20 Amnesty International: *AI's global Campaign for Human Dignity: a strategy to end human rights abuses that keep people poor*, 2008.

21 Amnesty International.

22 Amnesty International.

23 Amnesty International Sektion Bundesrepublik Deutschland; Amnesty International.

24 Amnesty International: *Amnesty International's Integrated Strategic Plan 2010 to 2016*, 2010.

25 Amnesty International, International Secretariat: *29th International Council Meeting Circular 46 ICM Decisions 2009*, 16.08.2009.

26 Van Gulik 2018.

27 Amnesty International, International Secretariat.

best to face them. As one of my interviewees explained, the restructuring of the *Gender Unit* into the *Gender, Sexuality, and Identity Program* also occurred because of the recommendations resulting from the SVAW campaign. The latter advised that AI not limit its gender or women's rights work only to a campaign but apply gender lenses to various aspects of its work.[28] Whereas AI slightly increased the human resources devoted to its work on women's rights issues by creating the Gender, Sexuality, and Identity Program, these resources were not sufficient to actually ensure that intersectionality is taken into consideration in each of AI's projects.[29]

The foundation of the *International Women's Human Rights Network* (IWHRN) in 2011 can be considered another recent, important structural change with respect to AI's work on VAW. In fact, by creating this network, former section SVAW campaign coordinators reconstituted the IWN. Their goals were to strengthen AI's work on women's rights and gender equality at all stages and to support and follow up on the process of gender mainstreaming formalized in the ISP 2010-2016 through the organization.[30] At the national level, one can observe a continuity in the structural entities responsible for the work on violence against women within the Swiss and the German sections. In fact, a permanent position at the secretariat of the Swiss section has been responsible for women's rights issues since the SVAW campaign. The national women's network, composed of a coordination group linking the women's groups (Geneva, Zürich and Bern) to the secretariat and to the IS, has continued to coordinate the section's work on women's rights. In the German section, the work on women's rights violations has continued to be primarily in the hands of the thematic expert group MaF.

At the same time, women's rights issues have continued to challenge the organization from within. The head of the *Gender Unit*'s departure from the IS,[31] can be mentioned as one example of such internal challenges.[32] Later, the adoption of an official position in favor of decriminalizing prostitution in

---

28   Ganzfried: *Interview with B.C.*, 24.06.2012.

29   Ganzfried: *Interview with B.C.*, 24.06.2012.

30   C.: *AI International Women's Human Rights Network*, 2011.

31   The departure followed a public dispute with AI's senior management in 2011 for publicly endorsing a survivor of torture at Guantanamo Bay who was also supposedly linked to violent fundamentalist groups.

32   Kelleher and Bhattacharjya 2013.

May 2016 apparently led to important internal debates, provoking the with-
drawal of many long-term activists and causing huge opposition from other
organizations in the field of women's rights, human rights, and trafficking.[33]
As the example of one of my informants who left AI shows, the newly adopted
pro-choice position on abortion must have also provoked internal discussion
and withdrawals. In fact, the informant explained that she was very happy to
have left AI before this policy change, as she could no longer identify with this
new direction.

This outline of the developments that have taken place since 2010 shows
that the internal structures responsible for women's rights issues, which were
established during the 1990s and the 2000s, have remained beyond the SVAW
campaign and that AI has continued working on VAW, among other issues
the organization is focusing on. Since the SVAW campaign, AI has mainly
addressed VAW by framing it as an issue of sexual and reproductive rights.
This emphasis reflects a growing awareness of the gendered nature of hu-
man rights and a willingness to consider violations of human rights equally,
whether occurring in the private or the public sphere and whoever the viola-
tor.

However, if sexual and reproductive rights are addressed as the rights of
every individual regardless of their identity, then this focus bears the risk of
ignoring the gendered power relations that put women in a subordinated po-
sition in most societies. Further, the adoption of the pro-choice position on
abortion could be interpreted as a significant advancement for the progres-
sive feminist voices within AI, as such a policy change would not have raised
a majority of the ICM delegates ten years before. It can thus be assumed that
focusing on the 2010s would have given a more positive picture of AI's work on
women's rights. Given AI's democratic decision-making process, it is worth
assuming that this development is also the result of a change in the mem-
bership, not only due to the organization's age but also as a consequence of
the AI's "Moving Closer to the Ground" initiative that has only recently come
to an end. In fact, a younger, more global and diverse generation of activists
has joined the movement over the past decade and is therefore unaware of
AI's former limited mandate. Instead, they have identified with a broader
understanding of human rights. Such activists have increasingly shaped the
organization and its thematic directions, and it is they who must have made
policy changes, such as the one on abortion, possible.

---

33   Geist 2016.

On account of these structural modifications and the continuing emergence of new human rights challenges, AI's work will continue to evolve in the future. What this means in terms of AI's work against VAW and the respect of women's rights remains to be seen. As the recently adopted pro-choice position on abortion demonstrates, however, it is likely that AI will continue to evolve in a progressive direction, addressing human rights violations equally wherever they occur and whoever the perpetrator is. At the same time, due to the empowerment of local activists, the decentralization process could also lead to an increase in internal debates on the positions that AI should take on particular women's rights issues. These hypothetical considerations lead to the question of whether and how the recent internal change process has affected AI's work on VAW. Are there new or different feminist demands articulated due to the decentralization of the organization? Does the "Moving Closer to the Ground" facilitate feminist strategizing, or does it hamper feminist demands?

In conclusion, I would like to highlight a few points about the study's significance and contributions to our knowledge of AI's work on women's rights and beyond. By closely following AI's work in the field of VAW over a period of 20 years, the book has shed light on a little-known part of the work of the one of the most important human rights organization worldwide. By giving a voice to AI's female activists and officials, whose actions have often remained unnoticed by the overall organization and by the public, I have made them visible as important internal actors and showed that female activists and officials were key to leading AI's growing interest in women's rights issues and to the decision to launch the organization's first global thematic long-term campaign on the issues of VAW in the private sphere.

Additionally, the study has provided a comprehensive picture of the functioning of two of the most important AI sections in terms of members and funding, thereby making a major contribution to the documentation of AI Switzerland and AI Germany, as well as to their work on VAW. In this endeavor, I have consulted and analyzed a wide range of largely unknown, firsthand archive material. In addition, the book has facilitated the further development of knowledge on norm dynamic, as it has provided evidence that both comparatively powerless actors and norm entrepreneurs can cause a new norm to emerge under certain conditions.

Moreover, my findings indicate that in addition to norm interpreters' socialization and norm entrepreneurs' capability to defend their norm from norm challengers, norm challengers' ability to access the decision-making

process helps explain why a norm ceases to diffuse. The constructivist and feminist theoretical paradigm underpinning my work, my qualitative case study approach, and the use of GT research techniques were essential for gaining new insights into why and how AI integrated women's rights into its work between the late 1980s and 2010 and contributed greatly to the development of new theoretical insights. Consequently, diversifying the focus away from the mainstream approach of cross-national research towards the micro level, placing individuals in the center, is worthwhile for the production of knowledge in the area of norm dynamics. Further, analyzing processes of norm diffusion with gender lenses can be fruitful, as this allows for the discovery of power relations informing these processes that are invisible at first glance.