7 Appendix

This appendix covers research ethics and the methods used in our human subjects research, which included interviews, a survey, and focus groups. Our Online Appendix (referenced throughout the book) contains additional supplementary information, such as details on variable coding and robustness checks for our statistical analyses.[1]

7.1 Research Ethics

The ethical principles that guided our research have been informed by the American Political Science Association's (APSA) "Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research."[2] The sections that follow address many of the ethical issues that arise when conducting human subjects research, including consent; confidentiality; laws, regulations, and prospective review; and compensation. We address these issues for each type of human subjects research separately in the sections that follow.

Additionally, we mention here five cross-cutting ethical issues for our human subjects research. (1) Power: The individuals involved with our human subjects research (high-level staffers at American international nongovernmental organizations [INGOs]) are not generally vulnerable or low-power participants. Nevertheless, we made every effort to follow the APSA recommendation to "respect their autonomy, protect them from harm, and treat them fairly."[3] (2) Deception: Our study did not involve any deception. We described our research in an accurate way in our invitations to participate and consent scripts. (3) Harm and Trauma: We did not anticipate that participating in our research would cause harm or trauma to any human subjects. Our

[1] Bush and Hadden (2025a).
[2] Ad Hoc Committee on Human Subjects (2020).
[3] Ibid. (3).

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

research topic – INGO strategies – is something that the human subjects commonly discuss as part of their professional responsibilities. INGO performance can be a sensitive topic, but any risk of professional harm that could come from sharing a critical view of INGOs should have been minimized by our assurances of anonymity (for the survey) and confidentiality (for the focus groups and, when requested, the interviews). (4) Impact: Our research did not "compromise the integrity of political processes for research purposes."[4] (5) Shared Responsibility: We affirm that the "responsibility to promote ethical research goes beyond the individual researcher or research team." Research assistants (RAs) involved with this research completed human subjects research training when appropriate, and we worked with them to "identify and address ethical issues related to research."[5]

7.2 Interview Methods Appendix

We conducted semi-structured interviews with founders, leaders, and other senior staff at American INGOs. This interview data collection project was determined exempt by our university Institutional Review Boards (IRBs).[6] This section describes our methods in greater detail, following some of the recommendations of Erik Bleich and Robert Pekkanen.[7]

7.2.1 Interview Team and Timeline

We conducted fifty three interviews with individuals working in fifty two American INGOs between 2016 and 2023. The interviews proceeded in two phases. First, we began interviews in the civil society and democracy (Bush) and conservation (Hadden) populations in 2016, drawing on our background knowledge of these issue areas gained from previous experience interviewing staffers in these populations. Some interviews in these populations were added in later

[4] Ibid. (13).
[5] Ibid. (20).
[6] University of Maryland IRB protocol number 1244959-6; Yale University IRB protocol number 2000023665.
[7] Bleich and Pekkanen (2013).

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

years as opportunities arose to connect with individuals who had not responded to our earlier requests for interviews.

In the second phase, graduate RAs joined the project to assist with interviews. We trained Connor Kopchick (from the University of Maryland) to conduct interviews with American global health INGOs in 2020. Bush and Hadden also conducted or co-conducted some interviews within this population. In 2021, graduate RA Melissa Pavlik (from Yale University) completed a similar training with us and conducted interviews with American humanitarian INGOs. Hadden co-conducted a few interviews within this population.

7.2.2 *Sampling Procedures and Response Rate*

Since we sought insights into organizational decision-making and history during the interviews, we targeted senior-level INGO personnel – particularly organizational founders, leaders (presidents, chief executive officers, executive directors, etc.), or senior staff (vice presidents, chief operating officers, etc.). We identified potential interviewees in these roles using desk research and, in a few instances, snowball sampling. A total of 23 percent of our interviewees had founded their organization.

We employed a two-part sampling procedure for each population to achieve a balance between capturing the perspectives of the major players in an issue area and those of smaller groups. The exact approach was tailored to the size of the population and its balance between large and small organizations. Similar to our approach with the quantitative data in Chapters 3–5, which relied heavily on US government data on nonprofits, we first used the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) dataset as a sampling frame to identify a random sample of around twelve organizations in each population. We then sorted the NCCS data by revenue to generate a list of the largest organizations in each population. Depending on the distribution of resources in the population and which groups were included in our initial random sample, we added 2–6 large organizations to the initial sample.

We used this sampling approach to generate a list of twelve organizations within each population to approach for interviews. In each sector, we included organizations founded in different time periods and used this criterion to prioritize which groups to select from our random sample. We continued conducting interviews until we felt that we

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

had reached saturation within the population (i.e., when interviewees ceased to provide new information). This approach resulted in seven interviews in civil society and democracy, twelve interviews in the conservation sector, eighteen in the global health sector, and sixteen in the humanitarian sector. We conducted fewer interviews in the democracy population because we consulted notes from more than 100 interviews conducted by Bush for a previous project on democracy promotion nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to identify relevant material for understanding the dynamics within this sector.[8] We added extra interviews from both the large organization list and an additional random sample to achieve saturation in the global health population. In two cases, we added interviews with individuals who contacted us after receiving a survey or focus group invitation.

Our overall response rate to interview requests after three follow-ups was 79 percent. Contacted individuals very rarely declined to be interviewed; they simply did not reply to our attempts to reach them. In general, we had more nonresponses from smaller organizations. Despite vigorous Internet sleuthing, we occasionally had a difficult time identifying any staff members associated with such groups, leading us to contact generic e-mail addresses when we could. It is possible that some of the organizations we failed to reach had "died" yet still maintained an Internet presence. When we failed to reach an organization after three attempts (via email, phone, or both), we replaced that organization with another group that was founded around the same time and reported similar revenue.

7.2.3 Interview Procedures

Nearly all interviews were conducted remotely via Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or telephone and in English. As our respondents were busy professionals located throughout the United States, virtual meetings were more conducive to scheduling. Moreover, a good portion of our interviews were conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, when in-person research was not permitted. All interviews were, when the interviewee gave permission, recorded and transcribed. We coded the transcripts for key themes using the NVivo software program.

Interviews were typically thirty minutes in length; some lasted up to ninety minutes. We used a standardized interview protocol to facilitate

[8] Bush (2015).

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

semi-structured interviews. While each interview asked the same core questions (see what follows), the interviewer had discretion regarding which follow-up and additional questions to ask. Before each interview, we conducted background research on the organization where the interviewee worked to learn as much as possible about its history and approach. We also consulted biographical information about the interviewee when possible. This approach allowed us to make the most of our time by tailoring our questions to the most pertinent areas of discussion.

7.2.4 Reporting

At the outset of our interviews and as part of the process of securing interviewees' verbal consent to participate in the research, we asked them which type of attribution they preferred: (1) on the record (we could use material from the conversation in academic publications and refer to the respondent by name), (2) not for attribution (we could use the material but would not refer to the respondent by name), or (3) off the record (we couldn't use material from the conversation in academic publications).[9] We sought to design our questions to be nonsensitive, and the majority of our interviews were on the record. But some of our respondents chose the "not for attribution" option or asked for a hybrid approach – a default of "not for attribution" with the option to use key quotes with attribution if we received explicit permission, or a default of "on the record," with a few more sensitive comments treated as "not for attribution" or "off the record." In a handful of cases, respondents chose to be completely "off the record." Respondents in the humanitarian sector were the most likely to request to be off the record.

7.2.5 Interview Protocol

Table 7.1 presents the complete interview protocol, along with the rationale for including each question. Questions designated as "optional" were utilized at the interviewer's discretion. We note

[9] We gave interviewees the option to not have their identities be kept confidential since they are a relatively powerful group and in some cases preferred to be identified to have their work with INGOs enter the historical record and be useful to researchers and other practitioners.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

Table 7.1 ***Interview questions***

Questions	Rationale
Background: When did you start working in the field of [name]? Which organizations have you worked for? What is your current position? How long have you been in this role?	To contextualize the respondent's answers.
Founding: How and why was your organization founded? What did the field of [name] look like at the time that your organization was founded?	To understand the founding process and its different steps. Ask respondent to describe steps in the process, with particular attention to how other organizations may have shaped decisions and the legitimacy processes that operate between groups.
Missions: Why did your organization adopt this particular mission? Has the mission changed over time in any way? If so, why?	To understand the process of mission selection, with particular attention to how market conditions might shape the kinds of issues entrepreneurs choose to focus on.
Geography: How did you decide where your organization would work? Has this changed over time? If so, why?	To understand the process of geographic selection, with particular attention to how market conditions might shape organizations' approaches.
Optional, missions: What makes your organization distinct from other organizations? What are the benefits of your approach?	To further clarify the organization's niche, if it does not come up in questions above.
Optional, funding: How is your organization funded, and has this changed over time? How does this affect your work?	To understand how resources affect organizational strategy, with particular attention to how resources are distributed among groups.
Optional, attention: How much attention is there to the issues your organization works on? Has this changed over time? How does it affect the work you do?	To understand how issue attention affects organizational strategy.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

Table 7.1 ***(cont.)***

Questions	Rationale
Population density: Looking out at your field, do you think there's room for more organizations to enter the sector, or would it be difficult to create a new group? Why or why not? What are some new groups you know of, and what has been their experience?	To gauge perceptions of sector density and the factors associated with it.
Population concentration: Looking out at your field, do you think resources are more evenly distributed or more concentrated in the hands of a few groups? Has it always been this way? How does it affect how NGO [service provision/advocacy] takes place in this field? What are some examples?	To gauge perception of sector concentration and variation over time and to understand the implications of concentration for service provision. Ask for specific examples when possible.
Population competition: Are organizations in your field generally more competitive or more collaborative? Has it always been this way? How does it affect how NGO [service provision/advocacy] takes place in this field? What are some examples?	To gauge perceptions of the level of competition and variation over time. To understand the implications of competition for service provision. Ask for specific examples when possible.
Population innovation: How innovative is your sector? Are new ideas emerging regularly, or is it hard to break the mold? What are some examples of innovation in your area? Where do new ideas come from in your area, or what prevents new ideas from emerging?	To gauge perceptions of the level of, sources of, and barriers to innovation.
Competitors: Are there any other kinds of organizations that have emerged as challengers to NGOs in your area? What are the advantages and disadvantages of those groups?	To name and evaluate potential challengers.
Closing/Evaluation: When thinking about your field as a whole, how effective do you think the sum total of NGO efforts has been? What are some of the barriers to effectiveness?	To understand effectiveness as a performance outcome.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

Table 7.1 ***(cont.)***

Questions	Rationale
Optional, successful NGOs: Which NGO models have proven to be most successful? Why?	To have an open-ended discussion of effectiveness.
Optional, new approaches: Are there any issues or approaches within the field of [name] that are not getting the attention they deserve? Why?	To have an open-ended discussion of ineffectiveness.
Optional, challenges: What are some of the biggest successes and challenges for your organization? What have you learned over time?	To have an open-ended discussion of effectiveness.
Closing thoughts: To close, if you were to offer advice to someone considering founding a new NGO in your area, what would you tell them?	To have an open-ended discussion of the founding outcome.

Note: The interviewers used this list as a guide for what questions and follow-ups to pose during interviews.

that many of our interview questions deliberately sought to gauge perceptions (e.g., of density and competition) and that it is possible that interviewees could have had inaccurate perceptions about their organizational populations. Nevertheless, their perceptions are quite important to measure since perceptions are usually what shape organizational decision-making.

7.2.6 *Organizations Sampled and Interviewed*

As described previously, we identified a sample of American INGOs in four populations within which we sought to interview key staff members. Table 7.2 lists each organization that was included in that sample and whether we were able to conduct an interview with a staff member of that organization. In cases where the interviewee requested that the conversation be "off-the-record," we list it in what follows as an anonymous organization.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

Table 7.2 ***Organizations sampled and interviewed***

Population	Organization	Interview?
Civil society and democracy	Abdorrahman Boroumand Foundation	Yes
Civil society and democracy	America's Development Foundation	No
Civil society and democracy	Center for a Free Cuba	No
Civil society and democracy	Foundation for Culture and Society	Yes
Civil society and democracy	Foundation for Democracy in Africa	Yes
Civil society and democracy	Global Justice Center	No
Civil society and democracy	Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti	Yes
Civil society and democracy	International Center for Not for Profit Law	No
Civil society and democracy	International Judicial Academy	Yes
Civil society and democracy	International Women's Democracy Center	Yes
Civil society and democracy	National Democratic Institute	Yes
Civil society and democracy	Partners for Democratic Change	No
Civil society and democracy	Project on Middle East Democracy	No
Civil society and democracy	Vital Voices Global Partnership	No
Conservation	A Rocha USA	Yes
Conservation	Birdlife International	Yes
Conservation	Conservation International	Yes
Conservation	Elephants of Africa Rescue Society	No
Conservation	Galapagos Conservancy	Yes
Conservation	Global Wildlife Conservation (Re:wild)	Yes
Conservation	International Primate Protection League	Yes
Conservation	Nature Conservancy	Yes

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

Table 7.2 *(cont.)*

Population	Organization	Interview?
Conservation	Pachamama Alliance	No
Conservation	Pan African Sanctuaries Alliance	Yes
Conservation	Pandas International	Yes
Conservation	Safari Club International	Yes
Conservation	Wildlife Conservation Network	Yes
Conservation	World Wildlife Fund-US	Yes
Conservation	Anonymous Organization	Yes
Global health	Access Health International	Yes
Global health	Champs 4 Kids	No
Global health	Curamericas	Yes
Global health	Engender Health	Yes
Global health	Grassroot Health Aid Organisation (GHAPO)	Yes
Global health	Health Bridges International	Yes
Global health	Health Horizons International	Yes
Global health	Hope Foundation for Women & Children of Bangladesh	Yes
Global health	International Health Emissaries	Yes
Global health	International Health Partners – USA Inc. (IHP)	Yes
Global health	International Water and Health Alliances	Yes
Global health	Management Sciences for Health (MSH)	Yes
Global health	MAP International	Yes
Global health	Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)	Yes
Global health	Medical Teams International	Yes
Global health	Mental Health Family Mission	No
Global health	Milwaukee Medical Mission	Yes
Global health	Sekolo Projects Inc	Yes
Global health	Ubuntu Africa NFP	No
Global health	Anonymous Organization	Yes
Humanitarianism	American–Jewish Joint Distribution Committee	Yes
Humanitarianism	Americares	Yes
Humanitarianism	Childfund International	Yes
Humanitarianism	Children's Hunger Fund	Yes
Humanitarianism	Christian Relief Fund	Yes
Humanitarianism	CORUS International	Yes

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

Table 7.2 *(cont.)*

Population	Organization	Interview?
Humanitarianism	Food for the Hungry	Yes
Humanitarianism	Friends of Medjugorje	No
Humanitarianism	Heart to Heart	Yes
Humanitarianism	International Committee for the Red Cross	Yes
Humanitarianism	Partnership for Supply Chain Management	Yes
Humanitarianism	Pour International Inc.	No
Humanitarianism	Rebuild Sri Lanka Foundation	No
Humanitarianism	Save the Children	Yes
Humanitarianism	Uganda Fund	Yes
Humanitarianism	UNICEF USA	Yes
Humanitarianism	Widows Mite Experience	No
Humanitarianism	Anonymous Organization	Yes
Humanitarianism	Anonymous Organization	Yes
Humanitarianism	Anonymous Organization	Yes

Note: Our methods of selecting organizations and inviting interviews to participate are discussed in the text.

7.3 Survey Methods Appendix

We conducted an original survey of American INGO leaders. This research was determined exempt by our universities' IRBs.[10] To the best of our knowledge, this was the first large-scale survey of leadership staff at international nonprofit organizations across a variety of issue areas. Previous studies either focused on single sectors, such as civil society and democracy or human trafficking,[11] or used long-form interviews on smaller samples.[12] Other related research has focused on the views of domestic NGO staffers, exploring what they view as the factors that shape their ability to secure funding.[13]

[10] University of Maryland IRB protocol number 1244959-6; Yale University IRB protocol number 2000023665.
[11] Barkan (2012); Hafner-Burton, LeVeck, and Victor (2015); Kelley (2017).
[12] Hermann et al. (2010).
[13] Springman et al. (2022).

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

7.3.1 Survey Mode

We conducted our survey online using the Qualtrics platform in August 2019. Respondents were invited via e-mail to take the survey. The survey was anonymous to ensure that respondents could answer questions freely and their answers could not be linked with them afterward. This survey mode was conducive to eliciting truthful responses from participants. A number of questions were about organizational strategy, and individuals' perceptions of effectiveness are potentially sensitive. Although we did our best to minimize the threats to inference posed by such sensitivities during the interviews, such as by offering to conduct them "not for attribution" or "off the record," it is difficult to eliminate them altogether. Personal settings generally put more pressure on respondents to answer in socially desirable ways.[14] Allowing respondents to answer questions about their experiences working in (and beliefs about) the international nonprofit sector in a self-administered, anonymous Internet survey thus promoted data quality.[15]

7.3.2 Survey Sample and Response Rate

Although INGO founders are drawn from the general public, the people who are most likely to have the interest and resources to found a new organization are a relatively specialized group. Following the suggestion of researchers who note the value of conducting international relations surveys of theoretically relevant elite populations,[16] a key task for this research was therefore to build a sample of INGO leaders since such a database did not already exist. We focused on INGOs headquartered in the United States, similar to our approach in Chapters 3–5.

We constructed a sampling frame of American organizations active in 2012 in the NCCS dataset.[17] We included INGOs active in eight

[14] Heerwegh (2009).
[15] The survey's experimental component's hypothetical and multidimensional design may have also alleviated any remaining social desirability concerns among elite respondents. See Dietrich, Hardt, and Swedlund (2021, 603–603).
[16] Dietrich, Hardt, and Swedlund (2021); Kertzer and Renshon (2022).
[17] As discussed in Chapter 4, although the NCCS now makes its data publicly available for free, that was not always the case, and we purchased a proprietary data release from the NCCS for use during an earlier stage of

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

international issue areas: conservation, civil society and democracy, global health, human rights, humanitarianism, international education, migration and refugees, and peace and security. Although these issue areas do not represent every sector of INGO activity in the United States, they cover a good variety of population types, including those that are more or less concentrated, more or less dependent on government funding, and focused on both commons issues and other issues. In this way, the survey sample was designed to be representative of a range of perspectives within the American INGO landscape. Our sample also included all of the issue areas that have received significant treatment in the political science literature on INGOs and the INGO populations with the most organizations. Thus, we expect the sample to touch on important debates about INGOs in world politics.

For each INGO in the sample, we gathered staff members' names and e-mail addresses from Internet research. As much as possible, we focused on individuals in leadership roles such as founder, president, and (for larger organizations) program director. Up to three individuals from the same organization could be included in our sample. Similar to our approach in other chapters, for larger populations (e.g., humanitarianism), we searched for contact information for a random sample of organizations in the population, whereas for smaller populations (e.g., conservation), we searched for contact information for all organizations in the population. We oversampled in smaller populations to ensure we had enough responses to explore issue-area variation in our data.

It was not possible to find contact information for any staff members for about 25 percent of the INGOs in the sample. We suspect many of these organizations no longer exist and perhaps were never very large or active. Given this missingness and other facets of our approach, our survey respondents should not be understood as a fully representative sample of leadership staff at American INGOs. Unfortunately, there is no population data on the individual leaders of INGOs in the United States against which we can benchmark the characteristics of our sample. However, our sample represents a range of perspectives in terms of issue areas, professional backgrounds, organizational

research for this book. 2012 was the most recent year to which we had access at the time when we were beginning work on this survey.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

size, and organizational type (i.e., INGOs focused on service delivery, advocacy, monitoring, enforcement, or some combination thereof).

We invited 1,383 individuals via e-mail to take our survey; 197 completed it for a response rate of around 14 percent. Although we had hoped for a higher response rate, this rate compares favorably with those of other recent e-mail-based surveys of political elites.[18] To promote a high response rate, we contacted individuals multiple times, clearly communicated the project's intended broader impacts, offered to share our findings via a follow-up message, and provided a $10 electronic gift card.[19] It is not obvious why individual characteristics that may have made respondents more likely to agree to participate in our survey would bias us in favor of finding support for our theoretical expectations. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the potential for selection bias in terms of who agreed to participate.

7.3.3 Sample Characteristics

We succeeded in attracting high-level respondents to our survey, which was our goal. Over half (55 percent) of our respondents described themselves as being the leader of their organization. In addition, 40 percent of respondents reported that they had founded a nonprofit organization in the past, and 51 percent said they would consider doing so in the future. Thus, given the relevance of its sample, our survey can shed significant light on INGO entrepreneurship, both in the past and in the future.

Though they were generally seasoned leaders within the international nonprofit community, our survey respondents had experience working in a range of types of INGOs. We asked participants about

[18] It is challenging to recruit elites to participate in surveys because of the demands on their time and their concerns about privacy. Other recent online elite surveys report response rates of 4–9 percent, including a survey of politicians (Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth, 2018, 530), INGOs (Nielson, Hyde, and Kelley, 2019, 698–701), and World Bank staff (Briggs, 2021, 7). For a further discussion of elite survey recruitment for INGOs, see Safarpour, Bush, and Hadden (2022).

[19] To maintain survey respondents' anonymity, respondents were invited at the end of the survey to click through to a separate form where they could enter their e-mail addresses to receive the gift cards. Their e-mail addresses were not linked to their survey responses in any way.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

the organizations where they currently worked, and the median organization in the sample was founded in the 2000s, although the survey included respondents working at organizations founded as early as the 1940s (or before) and as recently as the 2010s. The median INGO had a budget of between $500,000 and $999,999, though numerous respondents worked for organizations with an annual budget of less than $100,000 or greater than $50 million. Reflecting the fact that the respondents were relatively senior staff, 58 percent reported having ten or more years of prior work experience in their field, the median age was 45–54 years old, and 60 percent reported having a graduate degree. As expected, given the demographics of international nonprofit organization staffers, the sample skews toward those on the political left: 61 percent of respondents consider themselves Democrats, 8 percent Republicans, and 24 percent Independents.

7.3.4 Questionnaire Design

We developed the survey questionnaire after a pilot period in which we shared the questionnaire with a handful of long-time INGO practitioners; we used their feedback to refine the questions to improve comprehensibility. The questionnaire contained several sections. We first asked respondents a number of questions about their personal and professional backgrounds. These questions were designed to shed light on the types of individuals who work in international nonprofit organizations in the United States and on these individuals' perceptions of topics such as organizational effectiveness.

Next, the experimental component of the survey (a forced-choice conjoint experiment) was designed to identify the relationship between (1) environmental factors and (2) INGO foundings and perceived effectiveness (see discussion in Chapter 6).[20] This experiment was placed relatively early in the survey to avoid the respondents being "primed" to think about other issues related to INGOs before answering the experiment's outcome questions. After the experiment, the survey continued with further questions about the respondent's background and opinions about nonprofit organizations.

[20] Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto (2014); Hainmueller and Hopkins (2015).

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

7.3.5 Data Quality

We included timers in the survey to gauge how much attention respondents paid to the conjoint scenarios.[21] The median respondent spent about 83 seconds on each of the five conjoint task pages, which contained the hypothetical pair of scenarios and the outcome questions. Since the conjoint tasks were relatively brief and simple, we infer that most respondents were fairly engaged in the survey since they spent over a minute considering each page. As noted earlier, we took several steps designed to encourage participation and engagement, including emphasizing the importance of our results and providing a monetary incentive.

7.4 Focus Groups

We conducted four focus groups with senior staff at American INGOs in October 2022. This section describes our procedures.

7.4.1 Recruitment and Response Rate

Our goal for this data collection was to have open-ended conversations among senior INGO leaders who could reflect on challenges and opportunities related to INGO density, competition, innovation, and performance. To achieve this goal, we recruited participants via a random sample of mid-to-large-sized organizations across a variety of issue areas, including conservation, civil society and democracy promotion, international education, global health, humanitarianism, international development, human rights, and peace and security. We invited participants from a wider range of issue areas than we did for our interviews for three reasons, informed by suggestions for focus groups from Jennifer Cyr.[22] First, including a wider set of issue areas ensured that a more representative set of perspectives was included in our study. Second, we sought to reduce the probability that

[21] Another approach would have involved asking respondents manipulation check or treatment recall questions. We were concerned that the elite respondents – who, as noted earlier, are often difficult to encourage to participate in surveys – would find such questions annoying and might drop out if confronted with them.

[22] Cyr (2019, 43).

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

participants would know one another and thus perhaps be reluctant to share more critical reflections. Finally, we wanted to avoid situations in which groups were too comfortable with one another and failed to articulate assumptions that could be "taken for granted" within their sector.

We sent our e-mail invitations to senior staff based at American INGOs that we had not yet contacted for interviews or to complete our survey. We focused on recruiting high-level staff (executive directors, vice presidents, etc.) of mid-to-large-sized American INGOs. We expected these individuals to have the broadest perspective on developments in their respective populations because they had usually worked in multiple positions in the issue area in addition to their current roles. We also sought out participants with similar backgrounds (in terms of leadership positions within their organizations) so that these would be conversations among individuals with homogeneous professional expertise.[23]

Our personalized invitation e-mails specified that the focus groups would take 90 minutes and offered participants a choice of four sign-up dates. Participants who completed the focus group received a $100 gift card. We sent a total of ninety five invitations and received twenty eight initial sign-ups, for about a 29 percent response rate. However, consistent with our experience organizing other kinds of online events, only 16 (57 percent) of those who signed up attended the focus groups, usually due to other pressing professional obligations that came up. This attrition makes our final response rate around 17 percent. Despite the large number of no shows, we were still able to reach our desired group size of 3–5 high-level participants in each focus group.

7.4.2 Procedure and Reporting

The focus groups took place on Zoom due to Covid-19 restrictions on in-person research and because our participants were based in many different locations. The human subjects research was determined to be exempt by our universities' IRBs.[24] Hadden served as the moderator for each of the focus groups, with Bush as the note taker.

[23] Morgan (1997, 35).

[24] University of Maryland IRB protocol number: 1244959-6; Yale University IRB protocol number 2000023665.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

After discussing consent and the study procedures, participants were invited to introduce themselves. Although the focus group participants' identities were therefore known to each other, we stipulated that we would not refer to them in an identifying way (i.e., by name or organization name) in our academic research. We believed that this arrangement would allow participants to speak freely and avoid the awkwardness of determining each individual's attribution guidelines in a group setting.

Hadden then facilitated the discussion following the protocol described in what follows. The focus groups were structured as follows: All groups considered the first four questions on the protocol and Hadden exercised discretion regarding follow-up questions and prompts directed toward certain participants. Only half of the groups had time to consider the fifth question.

All focus groups were recorded and transcribed with the participants' permission. The transcripts were coded for key themes using NVivo. In our analysis of the transcripts, we tried to identify themes in individual responses as well as to assess the degree to which groups reached consensus on the questions under consideration.[25]

7.4.3 Protocol

After introducing the study, obtaining consent, and covering the ground rules for discussion, we asked the following questions:

1. Working on difficult global issues raises a lot of challenges. Thinking about your experience in NGO work, please take a few minutes to write down three things that come to mind as potential barriers to achieving change in your issue area. Would anyone like to share?
2. In some issue areas and countries, people have observed that the number of NGOs has grown to the point that there are very few resources available to new NGOs trying to enter the field. Have you experienced that in the issue area where you work? Do you think that there's space for new organizations to enter your field?
   (a) If not, what is your perception of the issue area in which you work?
   (b) Probing/prompting: What are some examples?

[25] Cyr (2019).

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008

3. Is there much competition between NGOs, in your experience? If so, how does competition affect NGOs' abilities to achieve their goals?
   (a) Can you give some examples?
   (b) Overall, does competition make organizations more effective or less effective? More or less efficient?
   (c) How could any negative effects of competition be mitigated?
4. What are some examples of recent "innovations" in your area? How does innovation come about?
   (a) What are some barriers to innovation?
   (b) What do you think are the best ways to encourage productive innovation in your issue area?
5. Wrapping up now, I have just one more question: Do you see other types of actors besides NGOs becoming more important in your issue area? For example, for us as college professors, some people see higher education institutions as being challenged by massive online courses or other freely available online courses. Is there something analogous in your sector?
   (a) Can you give some examples?
6. Those are all the questions I have. Is there anything that anyone would like to add?

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 17 Nov 2026 at 11:47:04, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009557351.008