

Markscheme

May 2026

Global Politics

Higher level and standard level

Paper 1

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Legitimacy in global politics: Sources of legitimacy of non-state actors

Bulleted lists in this markscheme indicate likely points that candidates may include in their answer: they are not exhaustive, and examiners should credit other valid points not listed.

1. According to Source A, outline **three** ways for an NGO to claim legitimacy. [3]

Points from the source may include:

- Source A shows that NGOs may emphasise the justice of their programmes, highlighting that they serve the most vulnerable.
- Source A suggests that NGOs may invite the communities they serve to actively participate in their processes, increasing legitimacy through direct community involvement.
- Source A illustrates that NGOs may be more transparent about their finances, processes and work to claim legitimacy.
- Source A suggests that NGOs may claim legitimacy by emphasising their accountability to governments and the public.
- Source A argues that NGOs' legitimacy relies on them being coherent, aligning their actions to their key messages and mission.
- Source A indicates that NGOs may emphasise the effectiveness and efficiency of their programmes to claim legitimacy.

Award [1 mark] for each relevant point up to a maximum of [3 marks].

Other relevant points not listed can also be rewarded.

2. With explicit reference to Source B **and one** example you have studied, explain the impact NGOs have on global politics.

[4]

Answers from source B may include, but are not limited to:

- Source B states that about 3,400 NGOs are recognized by the United Nations and are consulted on matters of their expertise.
- Source B indicates that NGOs sometimes can also bring up their own agenda items and open the debate at UN negotiations.
- Source B claims that it is doubtful that NGOs can claim to be a “voice of the people”, potentially limiting their impact.
- Source B illustrates that NGOs can organise citizen scientists to monitor environmental harm at the grassroots level.
- Source B expresses doubt about the impact of environmental monitoring, in that it could be limited and not lead to policy change.

Answers from own knowledge may include, but are not limited to:

- Examples of global campaigns with high NGO involvement e.g. non-proliferation, gender equality, environmentalism, bans on landmines and cluster munitions.
- Examples of NGOs playing an important role in monitoring government compliance with UN resolutions and national/regional laws and regulations, e.g. Human Rights Watch reporting on human rights abuses, Greenpeace reporting on violations of environmental regulations.
- Examples of NGOs having the most impact at a national or local level, e.g. Equal Education winning a lawsuit against the government of South Africa, Friends of the Earth Netherlands winning litigation against Shell.
- Examples of governments creating NGO bans and over-regulation, severely limiting their impact, e.g. China’s restrictive laws on foreign NGOs, the Indian government’s actions against Amnesty International.
- Examples of UN functions and other global governance mechanisms that do not invite the input of NGOs, e.g. the Security Council.
- Examples of NGOs not being very impactful, e.g. LGBT rights organisations in Uganda, Greenpeace campaigns against whaling in Japan.

Other relevant points not listed can also be rewarded. Students are not expected to make four separate points in order to achieve full marks. For each relevant point a maximum of [2 marks] may be awarded, up to a total of [4 marks]. If only accurate source detail is used or only accurate own-knowledge points are provided, award a maximum of [3 marks].

3. Compare and contrast the views of Source C **and** Source D regarding the effects of NGOs.

[6]

Potential points of comparison include:

- Source C states that NGOs play an important role in delivering much needed aid. Source D echoes this sentiment, saying that Oxfam's humanitarian work is widely respected.
- Source C highlights challenges in NGO-government relations. Source D addresses this by highlighting Oxfam's independence from governments.
- Both sources highlight that NGOs provide employment to locals, with Source C stating that "Foreign NGOs may recruit local workers" and Source D confirming that "Oxfam employs local people".
- Source C argues in favour of a "targeted grassroots approach to empower people". Source D echoes this, emphasising that the local people they employ have a deeper understanding of the issues at hand.

Potential points of contrast include:

- While Source C highlights the risk of internal brain drain when it comes to NGOs employing locals, Source D views the partnerships with local organisations and employment of local experts as positive.
- Source C cautions that NGO presence can disincentivise governments to work on long term solutions. Source D opposes this view, explaining the importance of Oxfam's advocacy and policy work, pressuring governments to act.
- Source C cites critics who argue that NGOs are part of a "broken system", while Source D states that Oxfam's work is widely respected.

Award [2] per relevant point of comparison or contrast up to a maximum of [6]. For a [6] mark response expect detailed comparison and contrast but do not expect all of the points above and allow other relevant points. For responses that do not attempt to compare or contrast the relevant sources at all or fail to meet the standard described award [0] as the command term was not addressed.

4. Using **at least three** of the sources **and** your own knowledge, examine the view that NGOs are not legitimate actors in global politics. [12]

Question 4 is assessed according to the markbands that follow, in conjunction with these marking notes.

Source material may include, but is not limited to:

Source A

- NGOs are legitimate actors, so long as they are accountable and transparent, using resources efficiently to meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations.
- NGOs' direct involvement of local populations through participation and deliberation can be seen as boosting their legitimacy, as it makes their work responsive to local needs.
- The legitimacy of an NGO's activities could be questioned in situations where there is competition between groups and there is no consensus on who are the most vulnerable and deserving recipients of NGO aid.

Source B

- UN authorisation can give NGOs more legitimacy.
- NGOs cannot simply claim to be a "voice of the people" and may in fact have a democratic deficit, casting doubt on their legitimacy.
- NGOs may not be legitimate actors if they are not effective in what they do – environmental monitoring, for example, might not lead to policy change.

Source C

- NGOs provide a humanitarian lifeline for millions, and while imperfect, are legitimate.
- NGOs can cause internal brain drain, moving qualified personnel out of the private and/or government sectors in the host country, stifling longer term development, making them illegitimate.
- NGOs can create long-term dependency and disincentivise coordinated government action, reducing their legitimacy.

Source D

- NGOs are independent, expert-run and able to help those most in need, lending them legitimacy.
- NGOs' own expertise and their work with local experts lends them legitimacy.
- NGOs are important actors to hold governments accountable, which makes them legitimate.

Own knowledge could include, but is not limited to:

- Reference to recent scandals involving prominent NGOs, including but not limited to sexual abuse of locals by Oxfam workers in the DRC, the disappearance of post-earthquake Red Cross donations in Haiti, aid corruption in the context of the Turkey/Syria earthquake.
- Reference to humanitarian aid from NGOs being co-opted for illegitimate means, e.g. by warring factions.
- Issues of representativeness of NGOs that claim to speak on behalf of other populations, e.g. struggles within parts of the feminist movement, criticisms of organisations such as Autism Speaks.
- NGO activity can further erode national sovereignty, e.g. in Haiti, making them illegitimate actors.
- NGOs can play a vital role in protecting civil society and holding governments accountable, e.g. in South Africa, Brazil, the USA.
- NGOs can be unfairly portrayed as illegitimate and be subject to crackdowns on civil society by authoritarian-leaning regimes, e.g. increasing restrictions on NGOs in Russia, China, Egypt, Angola, Nicaragua.

Do not expect all the above, and reward other relevant points not listed. These points need to be woven into well-organized arguments and counter-arguments.

*If only source material or only own knowledge is used, the response can only be awarded a maximum of [8]. To achieve the maximum [12], **responses must refer to at least three sources.***

Responses with effective evaluation should clearly conceptualise what it means for an NGO to be legitimate and that there may not be a standard definition or set of criteria. Strong responses will link specific factors, potentially including but not limited to effectiveness and representativeness to the concept of NGO legitimacy and may contrast this with more standardised notions of government legitimacy. Students may refer to Source A as a set of criteria for NGO legitimacy. Source B adds accreditation by the UN as another potential source of NGO legitimacy. Claims and alternative claims can be drawn from all sources.

Students should synthesize and evaluate evidence from the sources and from their study of the prescribed content and key concepts of the course.

Markbands for paper 1, question 4

Marks	Description
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–3	• The response shows a limited understanding of the demands of the question. • Little relevant knowledge is demonstrated. • References to the sources are made, but they are mostly descriptive or no clear evidence is integrated in the response. • Different perspectives are not identified.
4–6	• The response shows some understanding of the demands of the question. • Some knowledge is demonstrated, but this is not always relevant or accurate. • Evidence from the sources is partially integrated into the response. • Different perspectives are identified, but not explored.
7–9	• The response shows adequate understanding of the demands of the question. • Relevant and accurate knowledge is demonstrated. • There is synthesis of own knowledge and source material. • Different perspectives are explored.
10–12	• The response shows an in-depth understanding of the demands of the question. • Relevant and accurate knowledge is demonstrated throughout. • There is effective synthesis of own knowledge and source material, with appropriate examples integrated in the response. • Different perspectives are explored and evaluated.