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Established in 1976,* Hemispheres *is the Tufts University Journal of International Affairs. The Journal addresses a variety of social, economic, political, and legal issues, both contemporary and historical, within the framework of international relations. The articles contained herein reflect diverse views of undergraduates at Tufts, as well as other universities. While the Editorial Board is solely responsible for the selection of articles appearing in Hemispheres, the Board does not accept responsibility for any opinions or biases contained within.

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Essays

Photographic Exploration

Editorials & Reviews

Interviews

Editors' Note

In this year's issue of Hemispheres, we shift our attention from previous themes that have focused primarily on international and transnational currents by examining the role of domestic civil society in affecting national and international politics. Part of our motivation was to have *Hemispheres* contribute to an ongoing discussion within academic and development circles over the permanance of lasting social change that comes from the grassroots. We understand civil society as the full range of collective action by a state's citizens, and it represents a fourth venue for an individual's social actions alongside that of the state, market, and family.

Indeed, the political character of the state will serve to influence the personality and effectiveness of civil society. Our first essay argues that civil society will have limited effect in mixed economies; to foster long-term preservation, a number of ideological compromises must be made. In this sense, the state is viable affecting civil society. What informs the intended theme of this edition is the reverse – how can civil society affect the state? The second and third essays examine the use of community newspapers and the internet as tools for civil society organizations, and the general sense is that civil society only stands to benefit from a concerted use of technology and media.

There appears to be consensus that grassroots civil society can have significant effects on the domestic and international characters of the state. The final three essays examine civil society organizations from multiple dimensions – international funding, partnerships between transnational and local partners, national operations, and grassroots projects – with the conclusions almost in agreement that civil society serves as the nexus of state legitimacy, and that civil society organizations are important partners in national governance. Our expert interview, with L. David Brown of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, explores the issues associated with foreign funding and transnational cooperation for domestic civil society.

We are also pleased to announce the addition of a number of new sections to the journal's content, designed to align the publication's content with that of professional academic journals, as well as provide more writing opportunities for members of our editorial staff. Two editorials contribute to the dialogue of civil society by investigating its different manifestations. A book review of a current volume of international relations methodological research is also included.

Hemispheres would like to thank Professor Malik Mufti, Kirk Okano-Lange and Moira Connors of the International Relations program for their invaluable assistance and counsel in the production of this edition. We would also like to thank the Economics and Political Science departments as well as the Study Abroad Office for their continued support. Finally we extend our sincerest gratitude and congratulations to our published student authors as well as to all of our staff members. The collective effort in putting together our humble publication represents the best of active citizenship, and for this we are deeply grateful.

Anita Gardeva and Paul Lemaistre

No Peace For Our Time: The Paradox of Quixotic Government

by Joseph Newhard

Abstract:

This paper argues that two principle forces have been behind the world-wide spread of democratic capitalism in the past century. 1) War is endemic to international relations, and worldwide competition among sovereign states impels each state to pursue a level of taxation at or near the vertex of the Laffer curve. Since there is a direct relationship between tax revenue and defense expenditures in the long run, ceteris paribus states whose level of taxation nears the vertex of the Laffer curve have a comparative advantage over other states in the pursuit of militarization and expansion. 2) Nation-states with greater economic resources to expropriate similarly possess a comparative advantage over other nation-states in the eliminative process of interstate competition. These two principles of international affairs have endowed the world's mixed economies with a military advantage over more commanding and more laissez-faire economies. This compels the members of civil societies across the globe to embrace mixed economy for the sake of their security and preservation, despite their possibly divergent ideological leanings.

Introduction: Politics by Other Means

This essay analyzes the role the members of civil society play in determining their nation's foreign policy, particularly in Western nations. By *civil society*, this essay refers to the citizens of a nation in their capacity

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as members of voluntary, non-governmental institutions such as businesses, labor unions, religious affiliations, charities, advocacy groups, and other such non-coercive coalitions. Thus, a critical distinction is drawn between the nature of society and that of government,[1] and denied is the notion that the state represents the apotheosis of the masses.[2] Civil society consists of voluntary associations; the state's *modus operandi* is violence.

Some political scientists may consider it superfluous, and others may think it cynically misguided, for the present essay to attempt to establish its primary syllogism upon the premise that war is endemic to human relations. Intrinsic to war's chronic occurrence is the notion that its regularity plays no small part in shaping the nations in which we reside. Yet if these propositions are true, it follows that the members of civil society do not shape their nations by their own creativity and will, but rather, to the extent that they have any influence at all, merely observe the actions of rival nations and react accordingly. Political science provides us with a term for this despondent bleakness born of an anarchic world: *political realism*.

Political realism is characterized by its emphasis on political or economic dominance, rather than ideals or morals, as the primary motive of state actors on the world stage. For disciples of the *realpolitik*, the Hobbesian anarchy of international affairs, pronounced by fitful bouts of war and periods of diplomacy, is driven solely by the pursuit of national interest, whatever the rulers deem that to be. Underlying this cynical worldview in which nations compete "without a common superior on earth with authority to judge between them"[3] is the solemn avowal that power, rather than ideals or principles, is the impetus behind state action. In that vein, the present essay will attempt to demonstrate not only that power trumps ideals in the long run on the world stage, but that it cannot be otherwise given the economic nature of interstate aggression.

Central to *realpolitik* is the notion of power, which stands inextricable from the definition of the state as delineated by Max Weber. According to Weber, a state is "a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given terri-

tory."[4] For some, a mastery of violence is not only the *sine qua non* of the state; it is also (historically and by logical necessity) the source of its origin. Franz Oppenheimer, for instance, who originated the "conquest theory" of the state, explains; "The State, completely in its genesis, essentially and almost completely during the first stages of its existence, is a social institution, forced by a victorious group of men on a defeated group, with the sole purpose of regulating the dominion of the victorious group over the vanquished, and securing itself against revolt from within and attacks from abroad. Teleologically, this dominion had no other purpose than the economic exploitation of the vanquished by the victors."[5]

Bertrand de Jouvenel likewise sees mankind's transition from nomadic tribes to agrarian civilizations as one soiled by the bloodstains of violence; "Is seems certain that all primitive societies answer to our description of the ritual rule of the Elders. Rule of that kind was necessary to guide men's uncertain footsteps past nature's ambushes. But, for society to take wing again, the old rule with its unchanging essence must be overthrown or, more accurately discarded. What we may call the first political revolution was precisely that process. What was the cause of it? Beyond all question, war."[6]

Murray N. Rothbard demonstrates a view similar to the two above when he writes, "Since production must always precede predation, the free market is anterior to the State. The State has never been created by a "social contract"; it has always been born in conquest and exploitation."[7] Said plainly, state action cannot be rightly understood to be anything other than violent action.[8] The confiscation, redistribution, and legislation that constitute the bulk of domestic state action are by their very nature necessary only because they impel citizens and subjects to behave in ways they would not voluntarily. The same goes for state action in international affairs: "International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aim of international politics, power is always the immediate aim."[9]

Since aggrandizement of power is the goal of any enduring government, marked by the pursuit of such typical national interests as state security and resource accumulation, governments by their very nature exist in a

state of competition with one another. As Hans-Hermann Hoppe explains, the state is "a territorial monopolist of compulsion--an agency which may engage in continual, institutionalized property rights violations and the exploitation--in the form of expropriation, taxation, and regulation--of private property owners."[10] As monopolists, "all states (governments) can be expected to make use of this monopoly and thus exhibit a tendency toward *increased* exploitation"[11] as a means of securing its own preservation. This may take the form either of domestic exploitation or territorial expansionism.

Governments increase the domestic exploitation of their subjects by levying new taxes or increasing old ones on economic activity, by selling legislative favors to special interest groups, and by inflating the money supply. Governments may also increase their tax base by expanding outward and conquering neighboring nations. "In doing so, however, they will come into conflict with other, competing states. The competition between states qua territorial monopolists of compulsion is by its very nature an eliminative competition. That is, there can be only one monopolist of exploitation and taxation in any given area; thus, the competition between different states can be expected to promote a tendency toward increased political centralization"[12] as smaller states are enveloped by more powerful ones.

In any conflict between two states, ceteris paribus the state with the larger armed forces will win. If we may extrapolate that the size of the military is directly related to amount of government revenue, then it follows that the state that collects more revenue will win. We may now establish two principles of interstate warfare. First, in a war between two nation-states of equal economic resources, ceteris paribus the state that collects more in taxes will win. Second, in a war between two nation-states with equal tax rates, ceteris paribus the one with greater economic resources to exploit will win.

The rest of the paper unfolds as follows; in the next section I present the Laffer curve, an economic model that describes the principle of optimum tax revenue generation. I then argue that states must attempt to tax at the vertex of the Laffer curve in order to build a military sufficient for their

preservation. The following section then outlines the Western transition from monarchy to democracy; Western democratic republics possessed several advantages in warfare over their monarchic neighbors, contributing to the effective death of Western monarchies in the 20th century. This section is followed by a discussion of the comparative advantage possessed by mixed economies over socialist and laissez-faire economies in the production of warfare. I then comment on the notion of mixed economy as the mode of human existence for the bulk of civil society. Finally, this paper concludes that in the long term, laissez-faire and socialist economies cannot survive interstate competition against mixed economies, and goes on to contemplate what this may mean for the future of the United States.

The Laffer Curve: Maximization of the *Res Publica*

The Laffer Curve, named after economist Arthur Laffer, is an economic model that illustrates the elasticity of taxable income. Along the x-axis of the model in Figure 1, the percent of taxed income ranges from zero to one hundred. The y-axis measures government revenue. As the income tax increases above 0%, the amount of tax revenue collected by government begins to increase. Yet the somewhat unintuitive aspect of the Laffer curve is that at some unknown point between 0% and 100%, tax revenue reaches a vertex and then begins to decrease. In other words, government will not maximize revenue with a 100% tax, but will rather reduce its revenue to zero as it approaches a tax rate of 100%.

The reason for this peculiar phenomenon is the interaction between the arithmetic effect and the economic effect. "The arithmetic effect is simply that if tax rates are lowered, tax revenues (per dollar of tax base) will be lowered by the amount of the decrease in the rate. The reverse is true for an increase in tax rates."[13] However, the economic effect addresses the impact that lower taxes can have on labor, output, and employment. Assuming rational choice, taxes have an inverse relationship with incentives for individuals to engage in market activities. As taxes increase, the marginal benefit of increased labor and production decreases. As taxes approach 100%, laborers either refuse to work or work only if they can successfully evade the tax. The total reduction in taxable economic pro-

duction completely offsets the arithmetic effect.

Thus a government taxing at or near 100% of its country's income would have to reduce its tax rate in order to maximize its revenue. "Declines in income tax rates can increase tax revenue only if the rate reduction causes taxable income to increase by a greater percentage than the percentage reduction in tax rates... [Because] the negative effect of the reduction in tax rates on tax revenue is offset by the positive effect on revenue of increased work and investment that increase both labor and capital income subject to tax."[14] Likewise a state taxing at close to 0% of the GNP would have to increase taxes in order to maximize its revenue for obvious reasons.

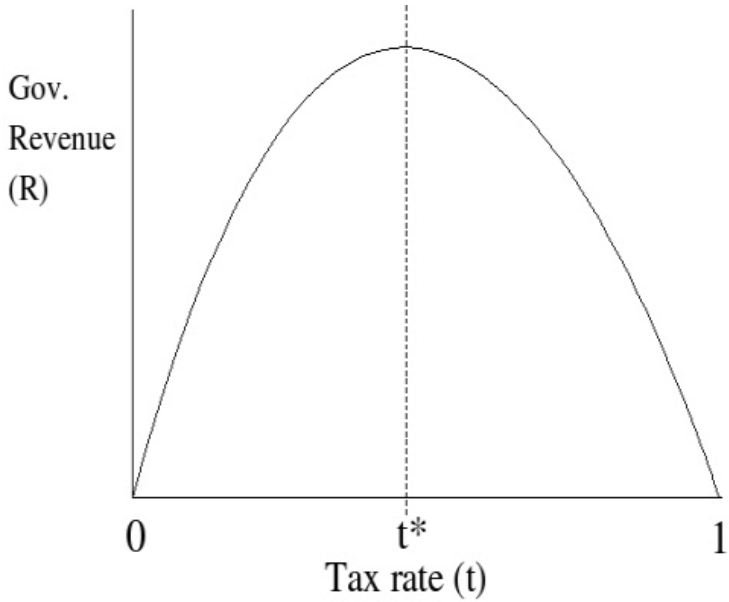

Figure 1. The Laffer Curve

What are the implications of this on the world stage? Since the two principles of interstate warfare delineated in the above section suggest that revenue maximization is a prerequisite for state survival in the

long term, then if the state is to survive, the pursuit of power must take precedent over the achievement of "higher" ideals. If we may be permitted to correlate the aggregation of state power with an increase in its tax collection, then the state's burgeoning power is dependant upon it taxing at the optimum point indicated by the Laffer curve. Taxing too little may result in its modest military being vanquished by comparatively stronger foreign invaders. Taxing too much achieves short-term revenue maximization at the expense of economic productivity, capital accumulation, and long-term revenue maximization, subjecting the state to the threat of similar foreign invasion in the distant future.

This principle precludes the idealism of both socialist states that control all transactions and suffer stagnant economies as well as classical liberal states that enjoy productive economies and limited taxation. States that are too far to the left of the vertex (such as classical liberal republics) are forced to move right to develop militaries on par with their interventionist neighbors. Likewise states too far to the right of the vertex (such as socialist democracies) are forced left to avoid economic disaster and maintain the healthy tax base necessary to maintain adequate defensive abilities against belligerent nations. The states that fail to adapt in this way are eventually conquered by interventionist states that have achieved maximum military strength through optimal taxation. The wisdom of the Laffer curve is the best guide states have to maintain power over the populace while simultaneously defending their territorial monopoly of violence against outside invaders. Ignoring it may result in diminished revenue and therefore a diminished ability to prevent inner rebellion and outside invasion.[15]

This truth has been a principal causal force in civilization's drive toward the mixed economy, i.e., democratic capitalism in the past century marked by the end of laissez-faire in the West and the collapse of socialism in the East. The transition from monarchy to democracy in particular led to the growth of the state and the concomitant revolutionization of warfare. As described above, states of equal economic resources may gain a comparative advantage in war by taxing at the vertex of the Laffer curve. What we observe in the process of democratization that swept Europe in the 20th century is the legitimization of this historically unprece-

dented level of taxation. Consequently, the Western democratic republics were able to develop weapons and tactics inaccessible to monarchies, rendering these democracies with a comparative advantage in war that enabled them to defeat the last remaining monarchies of Europe in the early 20th century.

From Monarchy to Democracy: The Accretion of State Power

Only three democratic republics existed in Europe prior to World War I: France, Switzerland, and Portugal. In 1914 the United Kingdom was the sole parliamentary system of the major monarchies in Europe.[16] By the war's end four years later, some of the largest European monarchies had suffered defeat, and Russia, Germany, and Austria transformed into democratic republics, while in "Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the Scandinavian countries, monarchs no longer exercised any governing power."[17] By 1918 the Western transition from monarchy to democratic republicanism that began with the American Revolution in 1776 and the French Revolution thirteen years later was all but complete.

Thus the Allied victory in World War I, led by the United States, can be seen as a triumph for democratic republicanism as well. Woodrow Wilson certainly saw it this way, declaring in 1917 that America's entry into WWI would "make the world safe for democracy."[18] Democracy was probably destined to defeat the monarchies of Europe since its modern inception in the 18th century, but not for reasons of idealistic superiority or its populist virtues. On the contrary, democratic republicanism was the political system that most effectively provided for the mutual accommodation of economic production and state aggrandizement. While Western economies possessed no comparative advantage under democratic republicanism as opposed to monarchy, the transition allowed the democratic states to achieve historically unprecedented size.

In the 16th through 18th centuries, "Wars were fought by comparatively small armies of professional soldiers. War was not an affair of the peoples; it concerned the rulers only... Even the belligerent armies respected the "neutrality" of the civilians. As they saw it, they were fighting the

supreme warlord of the hostile forces, but not the noncombatant subjects of the enemy."[19] The Western transition from monarchy to democracy revolutionized the art of war, having four pernicious consequences for civilization. First, the process of democratization legitimized war in a manner unprocurable to kings. Second, it provided the state apparatus with unprecedented levels of revenue from which it could now draw the funds necessary to raise armies. Third, it produced the advent of conscription of the common people. And finally, it beget the targeting of civilians and civilian structures in combat, known today as a "war of attrition" or a "total war."[20]

While all four of these changes are relevant to the present analysis, the most pertinent is the enhanced ability of democratic governments to expropriate their nation's resources. The reason the democratic republics were able to secure greater funds is immaterial for the present discussion, though this likely had to do with the legitimization of the state due to its populist organization.[21] What matters for the present discussion is that they obtained the funding and devoted much of it to war. War under monarchy was extremely limited in medieval times because "power was a small-scale affair and entirely lacked those two essential controls, the conscription of men and the imposition of taxes."[22] The advanced military tactics developed by the Western democratic republics were inaccessible to the European monarchies, resulting in the inevitable downfall of the *Ancien Régime* once the democracies and the monarchies were to wage war against one another.

All power is relative in that it can only be measured against the strength of potential opponents. Thus when one government obtains the ability to either conscript solders or levy taxes that increase the size of its defense budget, its enemies in war are obliged to do the same in order to avoid military defeat. During World War II, for instance, "Germany was employing in her design of world conquest all her national resources, and there was no restraining her by other countries with only a part of theirs... In like manner, the enemy who, to render its bodies more docile, mobilizes the thoughts and feelings of men, must be copied by the other side, who will otherwise fight at a disadvantage. Thus it comes about that, just as duellists follow each other's thrusts and feints, nations at

war copy each other's "total" methods."[23] As Jouvenel explains in his example drawn from WWII, the military tactics of one nation are necessarily emulated by its enemies. It is because of this that the expansionist ambitions of tyrants can force peaceful nations to deign to build armies, conscript soldiers, and devote ever-increasing resources toward war preparations.

Thus the Western transition from monarchy to democracy was not a deliberate process on behalf of the rulers or of civil society, but rather the end result of an eliminative process of interstate competition which the relatively wealthy democratic republics were destined to win. The monarchies and the democratic republics of the 19th century had comparable economies--indeed capitalism emerged under the English monarchy--but the democratic republics, particularly the United States, were able to expropriate larger sums of their nations' productive resources and devoted them to the waging of war. The American democratic republic, though relatively small in its early stages[24], eventually rendered the Unites States government the size it needed to dominate in international affairs. As a consequence of all this, the 20th century was to become the century of democratic republicanism, and the bloodiest in history.[25]

The Triumph of Interventionism & The Dissolution of a Superpower

History suggests that the Western democratic republics obtained strategic superiority over the European monarchies because of the former's enhanced abilities to tax their citizens. But how were they to fare against the socialist dictatorships of the East? Quite well, as it turned out. Though the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics possessed a level of command that lay out of reach to the rulers of the Western democracies, it was this command that destroyed the productive resources of the member states of the Warsaw Pact. This prevented it from keeping up with NATO in an arms race that lasted for 40 years, and from maintaining the strength necessary to continue its subjugation of the populace, contributing to its eventual disintegration. Yet the Cold War and its aftermath were not a display of capitalism's triumph over socialism; rather, it was a triumph for the mixed economy. The Western military policy of containment left economically weak and relatively poor USSR unable to

enlarge its economic base through expansion, condemning the uneconomical nation-state to inevitable dissolution.

The characteristic feature of politics in our age is that of interventionism marked by an historically unprecedented amount of taxation and regulation. In 1789, the classical liberal United States government's expenditures were at about 2% of the gross national product.[26] These expenditures rose slowly for 150 years interrupted only by surges in spending necessitated by the War of 1812, the War Between the States in 1861, World War I in 1917, and World War II in 1941. World War II was the watershed in American history after which government expenditures, taxes, and debt began to increase at an accelerating pace.[27]

According to economist Ludwig von Mises, this is a trend that must result either in complete socialism or a return to America's laissez-faire roots. As he explains, "Interventionism cannot lead to a permanent system of social organization... All varieties of interference with the market phenomena not only fail to achieve the ends aimed as by their authors and supporters, but bring about a state of affairs which... is less desirable than the previous state of affairs which they were designed to alter. If one wants to correct their manifest unsuitableness and preposterousness by supplementing the first acts of interventionism with more and more such acts, one must go farther and farther until the market has been entirely destroyed and socialism has been substituted for it."[28] Mises goes on to point out that "In abolishing economic calculation the general adoption of socialism would result in complete chaos and the disintegration of social cooperation under the division of labor."[29]

Mises considered socialism to be unstable due to its inherent flaws[30] and seemingly believed that capitalism would win out in the end, but it is far from clear to his critics that he was right. As Joseph Schumpeter remarked, "Can capitalism survive? No. I do not think it can... [Capitalism's] very success undermines the social institutions which protect it, and "inevitably" creates conditions in which it will not be able to live and which strongly point to socialism as the heir apparent."[31] According to Schumpeter, the advancement of capitalism would be concurrent with the rise of corporatism and the growth in popularity of ideals contrary to

laissez-faire. In the end, Schumpeter was right and Mises was partially right, and in the world today we observe the dying embers of socialism strung out alongside the petrified remnants of classical liberalism. There are no classical liberal states or socialist states in the West today; only mixed economies characterized by a combination of property rights and government controls.

As Jeffrey Rogers Hummel points out, history has proven that von Mises was wrong about interventionism; "Rather than being inherently unstable, it is the gravity well toward which both market and socialist societies sink... Because concentrated groups face fewer free-rider problems in seeking government transfers, they have an inordinate influence on policy."[32] Hummel believes special interests and political corruption is what led both 19th century America and 20th century USSR toward the mixed economy that characterizes both today.

Whether or not Hummel is correct that special interests and corruption led to the drive toward mixed economy in the US in its 230 years of existence, the fact remains that the US government transformed from a modest republic to the world hegemony in that time. Could the transition to mixed economy have been a requisite for the achievement of superpower status? In the 20th century, the US economy continued to grow while its enemy the Soviet Union suffered from relative stagnation and poverty. The USSR was unable to dedicate as much money to its armed forces as the US did to its own through the 1940s and beyond, possibly because the US was closer to the vertex of the Laffer curve than the USSR throughout the latter half of the century. The United States' immense size, abundant resources, and extensive capital formation doubly guaranteed its world ascendance, its massive economic production rendering it a comparative advantage in war, and consequently now "behaves as powerful nations do."[33] In the end, both capitalism and socialism were the casualties of the Cold War.

Enemies of the State: The Idealistic Response

According to the above analysis, it would seem that relatively moderate-sized government is the mode of existence for the bulk of civil society.

States that grow too powerful and authoritative destroy their productive base and collapse either from without or within, a fate that eventually befalls small governments as well. The best hope states have to defend their territorial monopolies of violence against enemies foreign and domestic is to maximize their military strength. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau writes, "A state if it is to have strength must give itself some solid foundation, so that it can resist the shocks that it is bound to experience and sustain the exertions that it must make to preserve itself; for all peoples generate a kind of centrifugal force, by which they brush continuously against one another, and they all attempt to expand at the expense of their neighbors... Thus the weak are always in danger of being swallowed up, and indeed no people can well preserve itself except by achieving a kind of equilibrium with all the others which makes the pressure everywhere the same for all."[34] Or, as realists from Sun Tzu to President Ronald Reagan have aptly summed the principle, "Peace Through Strength."

It is this happy medium of moderately strong government that we might expect to be most conducive to the happiness of the *plebeians*. When the government allows the moderate freedom of civil society while at the same time providing the defensive strength necessary to guard them against invasion by foreign aggressors, the masses carry on in apathetic enjoyment of their relative status as free men without desire for rebellion against a state whose fall may result in their coming under the domination of a worse regime. It appears that states must be relatively aggressive and comparatively strong or their power declines. A nation with too small a government does not compile the military resources necessary to prevent it from being vanquished by invaders, while a nation with too great a government destroys the economic resources needed to compile these military resources in the future.

Yet maximizing the strength of the state apparatus meanwhile condemns civil society to a state of thralldom to a government against which any act of sedition would be considered an exercise in futility. Successful rebellions in colonial America in 1776 and Berlin in 1989 were waged against powers that were probably too far left and too far right of the vertex of the Laffer curve, respectively. How can civil society overthrow

a power that has achieved maximum obtainable strength? Rousseau muses, "The more the state is enlarged, the more freedom is diminished... In proportion as the enlargement of the state means offering the holders of public authority more temptation and more opportunities to abuse their power, it follows that the more power the government needs to control the people, the more power the sovereign needs, in its turn, to control the government. I am speaking here not of an absolute power, but of the relative power of the different elements in the state."[35] Yet the ability of the members of civil society to organize and to fund the defense of their ultimate sovereignty is reduced with every tax and expenditure executed by the thriving state.

Recognizing this state of affairs as one of a despotic nature and yet one endemic to humanity, anarchists blame this mode of human existence on states themselves[36] Yet states as territorial monopolists of aggression are undoubtedly here to stay. Indeed all aggressors are by necessity aspiring monopolists who attempt to obtain such a monopoly over the property of others, and certainly there will never be any elimination of all the aggressors in the world completely. As Llewellyn Rockwell explains, states and not civil societies are responsible for the wars that have underscored human history.[37] But could anarchism really prevent such events? Aggressors such as states could only be checked by greater powers, and what then would check the greater powers? Territorial monopolists of aggression are endemic to the planet, a consequence of the scarcity of land. In those regions where the supreme power, whether government or warlord, does not protect property rights and contracts, no anarchist institutions have arisen to address this need. Consequently, economic production has stagnated and in many cases regressed in these regions.

This has not prevented anarchists from asserting that a stateless world would be well adept in liquidating aggressors. Anarcho-capitalists routinely assert that the withering away of the state would precede unprecedented economic growth. Jeffrey Rogers Hummel, for instance, writes; "Since there is an inverse relationship between the extent of government and the rate of economic growth, stateless societies would almost undoubtedly have an advantage in military capital."[38] Yet this is a highly speculative claim with little if any empirical validation. The economic

effect of the Laffer curve does not take into account that services that may be necessary for economic growth in the first place would have to be funded by the revenue generated by the government through taxation. As for the war-torn anarchies of the world, where warlords constitute the local territorial monopolist of violence, what kind of entity besides another competing monopolist could counter their aggression?

Conclusion: Civilizations Wax and Wane

Anarchist pockets, like those advocated by libertarians and socialists, will never be able to compete against the states of the world, which enjoy productive economies and draw from them in order to build massive armies. This fact forever restricts the members of civil society, whatever their individual political preferences, to the middle-of-the-road polity of democratic capitalism, at least in the long term. History seems to indicate that neither classical liberal states nor socialist states can survive on the world stage because both fail to generate the revenue needed to maintain the defense budgets necessary to preserve their existence against stronger powers. Interstate competition in the long term will result in the elimination of nation-states that fail to tax at the revenue maximizing point of the Laffer curve, as well as those nation-states which do maximize tax revenue but possess smaller economic bases from which to draw these funds. The eliminative process of interstate competition favors larger to smaller populations and more economically productive to less productive ones.

As Hoppe explains, "In order to come out successfully from interstate wars, a state must be in command of sufficient (in relative terms) economic resources... As an exploitive firm, a state is by nature destructive of wealth and capital accumulation. Wealth is produced exclusively by civil society; and the weaker the state's exploitive powers, the more wealth and capital society accumulates. Thus, paradoxical as it may sound at first, the weaker or the more liberal a state is internally, the further developed capitalism is; a developed capitalist economy to extract from makes the state richer; and a richer state then makes for more and more successful expansionist wars. It is this relationship that explains why initially the states of Western Europe, and in particular

Great Britain, were the leading imperialist powers, and why in the 20th century this role has been assumed by the U.S."[39] The question for rulers thus becomes not whether they should attempt to maximize government revenue, but rather, how will they go about this?

Assuming nothing more than self-interest on the part of the rulers of the government apparatus, it may be concluded that they will seek to maximize the revenue of their respective governments by taxing at the vertex of the Laffer curve. Furthermore, among governments seeking to maximize tax revenue, those which are established on the principles of organization most conducive to economic growth will have more resources from which to draw, and thus will enjoy greater relative success in war and expansion than the governments of less productive nations. States that pursue a level of taxation other than the maximization point indicated by the Laffer curve engage in an act of idealism that potentially compromises their persistence and stability. While this model of interstate competition emphasizes, if not exaggerates, the importance of war over diplomacy, it reflects a body of thought that considers diplomacy's effectiveness to ultimately reside in the threat of latent power by the nations involved. This model also holds foreign policy as the prime motivating force behind government growth and decline, considering domestic issues only secondary or incidental.

This model of interstate competition also relies on the notion that war is endemic to international relations. It is the view that war is the mode of human existence that has contributed to the popularity of such dictums as Randolph Bourne's "War is the health of the state" and Carl von Clausewitz's "War is the continuation of politics by other means." Yet such cynicism would suffer rarefaction if only violent conflicts did not continue to erupt across the globe with grievous regularity, despite annunciations of a "new world order." Wars will continue to erupt, and will forever constitute a source of legitimization for the growth of state power. "Every encroachment by Power on society, whether it has been made with a view to war or for some totally different purpose, gives that Power an advantage in war."[40] As Robert Higgs points out, government post-war expenditures never return to pre-war levels.[41] "Times of danger," Jouvenel notes, "when Power takes action for the general safety,

are worth much to it in accretions to its armoury; and these, when the crisis has passed, it keeps."[42]

At one end of the Laffer curve, we have states like 19th century America. On the other end we have states like 20th century USSR. Interstate competition makes the long-term success of socialism and classical liberalism questionable, and the 21st century will likely see the growth of democratic capitalism characterized by free trade, moderate taxation, wealth redistribution, internal improvements, continued economic productivity, and large militaries. The Laffer Curve will continue to impel the nations of the world toward its vertex, a point which the powerful Western nations probably have already achieved, and which the formerly socialist Russian Federation and China are likely moving toward. Their successful achievement of this point will reap simultaneous industrial growth and government growth of massive proportions.

The United States government continues to grow in size at historically unprecedented levels. We have already established that among states that maximize tax revenue, ceteris paribus states with greater resources will win. If a nation's resources are sufficiently abundant, like in the United States, the Laffer curve vertex need not even be achieved to dwarf other military budgets. Despite this the US annual military expenditures for 2005 nearly exceeded those of every other nation in the world combined.[43] It remains distrustful of international rules and norms as an alternative to the use of raw power[44] and consequently seeks to maintain its dominance in international relations[45] in a world where its unique geographic isolation becomes increasingly irrelevant with every passing year. Whether The US government's tax rate continues to increase as a percentage of GNP or eventually levels off remains to be seen, but the answer could be integral to its ability to maintain hegemony status as Russia, China, and a politically unified Europe grow in power and influence in the 21st century.

Notes

1 For the skillful elaboration of this sentiment, see Thomas Paine, Common Sense (London: Penguin Books, 1986), pg. 65

2 On this, see Murray Rothbard, Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature and Other Essays, 2nd ed. (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2000), pg. 55-57

3 John Locke, The Second Treatise of Government and a Letter Concerning Toleration (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc, 2002), pg. 9
4 Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," Weberian Sociology of Religion Homepage, http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber/lecture/politics_vocation.html.
5 Franz Oppenheimer, "The State," Franz Oppenheimer Homepage, http://www.franz-oppenheimer.de/state0.htm.
6 Bertrand de Jouvenel, On Power: The Natural History of its Growth (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1993), pg. 89-90
7 Murray N. Rothbard, Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature and Other Essays, 2nd ed. (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2000), pg. 60
8 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc, 2003), pg. 294
9 Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), pg. 29
10 Hans-Hermann Hoppe, Democracy The God That Failed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005), pg. 107
11 Ibid., pg. 107
12 Ibid., pg. 107
13 Arthur B. Laffer, "The Laffer Curve: Past, Present, and Future," The Heritage Foundation, http://www.heritage.org/Research/Taxes/bg1765.cfm.
14 David N. Hyman, Public Finance, 8th ed. (Mason, OH: South-Western, 2005), pg. 531
15 For a divergent analysis of this principle, drawing from economics, history, anthropology, and biology, see Jeffrey Rogers Hummel, "The Will to be Free: The Role of Ideology in National Defense," in The Myth of National Defense, ed. Hans-Hermann Hoppe (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2003), pg. 275-297
16 Hans-Hermann Hoppe, Democracy The God That Failed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005), pg. ix
17 Ibid., pg. ix
18 Richard M. Gamble, "Woodrow Wilson's Revolution Within the Form," in Reassessing the Presidency, ed. John V. Denson (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2001)
19 Ludwig von Mises, Human Action (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 1998), pg. 818
20 On these four aspects of the transition from monarchy to democracy, see John V. Denson, A Century of War (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2007); John V. Denson, ed., The Costs of War: America's Pyrrhic Victories (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2003); Hans-Hermann Hoppe, ed., The Myth of National Defense (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2003); and Bertrand de Jouvenel, On Power: The Natural History of its Growth (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1993)
21 On this see Hans-Hermann Hoppe, Democracy The God That Failed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005); and Bertrand de Jouvenel, On Power: The Natural History of its Growth (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1993)
22 Bertrand de Jouvenel, On Power: The Natural History of its Growth (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1993), pg. 7
23 Ibid., pg. 4
24 Robert Kagan, Of Paradise and Power (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), pg. 10
25 On this see John V. Denson, A Century of War (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2006)
26 Jeremy Atack and Peter Passell, A New Economic View of American History, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), pg. 652
27 Ibid., pg. 651-656
28 Ludwig von Mises, Human Action (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute: 1998), pg. 854
29 Ibid., pg. 857

30 On this see Ludwig von Mises, Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1981)
31 Joseph Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy (New York: Harper Perennial, 1976), pg. 61
32 Jeffrey Rogers Hummel, "The Will to be Free: The Role of Ideology in National Defense," in The Myth of National Defense, ed. Hans-Hermann Hoppe (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2003), pg. 288
33 Robert Kagan, Of Paradise and Power (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), pg. 11
34 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract (London: Penguin Books, 1968), pg. 92
35 Ibid., pg. 104
36 For more on this, see Hans-Hermann Hoppe, Democracy The God That Failed (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005)
37 Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr., "War and the Capitalist Press," LewRockwell.com, http://www.lewrockwell.com/rockwell/capitalist-press.html.
38 Jeffrey Rogers Hummel, "The Will to be Free: The Role of Ideology in National Defense," in The Myth of National Defense, ed. Hans-Hermann Hoppe (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2003), pg. 296
39 Hans-Hermann Hoppe, The Economics and Ethics of Private Property (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2006), pg. 134-5
40 Bertrand de Jouvenel, On Power: The Natural History of its Growth (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1993), pg. 155
41 Jeremy Atack and Peter Passell, A New Economic View of American History, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), pg. 653
42 Bertrand de Jouvenel, On Power: The Natural History of its Growth (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1993), pg. 142
43 "Recent Trends in Military Expenditure," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_trends.html.
44 Robert Kagan, Of Paradise and Power (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), pg. 11
45 On this see Daniel Axelrod and Michio Kaku, To Win a Nuclear War (New York: Black Rose Books, 1987); also Chris Hables Gray, Postmodern War (New York: The Guilford Press, 1997)

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The Community Newspaper: the Nexus of Community and Communication

by Cindy Hong

In recent decades, America has seen a decline in civic engagement, individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern (Pew Center). Many scholars decribe this decline as indicative of an America in trouble - of a land that is heading towards fragmentation and a fragile democracy. Similarly, other scholars like Robert Bellah believe that civic engagement is necessary to maintain the happiness and health of a society. Civic engagement is a link to social capital, which some scholars posit as an essential component of a functioning, inclusive democracy. Putnam defines social capital as "connections among individuals, social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them."[1] Social capital can be valuable because it leads to greater trust in each other and ultimately greater trust in the government.

Closely tied to the declining trend in civic engagement is a declining trend in newspaper readership. Indeed, Robert Putnam even points to a decline in readership as a symptom of the decline in civic engagement. "Those of us who rely solely on TV news are not quite as civic in our behavior as our fellow citizens who rely on newspapers," Putnam

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writes, suggesting that the correlation between newspaper readership and citizen participation is significant.[2] However, even Putnam recognizes the limits of the trends by acknowledging that correlation does not necessarily equal cause. Should the American public be alarmed that newspaper readership is dropping and what can be done to prevent this decline?

One type of newspaper that can offer more insight into the relation of newspaper readership to civil society is the community newspaper. The National Newspaper Association defines the community newspaper as any paper that views itself as committed to serving a particular geographical community. Community newspapers hold a special position in the American media landscape. National newspapers, magazines, and television serve as mass media, targeting the largest audience possible. Advertising has partially encouraged this development. By nature, the expense of running a television or radio station also lends those companies to develop ways to target the most people possible.

Not surprisingly, the community newspaper, like its regional and national counterparts, has also suffered in recent years. Because these papers are mostly targeted towards specific audiences, their effect on local behavior and role in local communities may be more striking than that of mass media. Examining the relationship between local newspapers and civil society may also reveal a way to remedy the lack of civic engagement in today's society. Is a community newspaper conducive to civic engagement? Does the community newspaper build social capital? Do community newspapers also enhance democracy?
In this essay, I propose that anyone who believes that active civic engagement is a necessary component of democracy *should* be alarmed that community newspaper readership and thus community newspapers are on the decline because community papers have the potential to promote civic engagement amongst their readers. However, the community paper's decline doesn't simply reflect a shift in consumer tastes for news media, but also a greater problem in the newspaper industry itself. Once the nexus of community and communication, newspapers had the influence to drive civic engagement in the community. Today, however, external forces have created a dearth of readers as well as a shift away

from the components of the community paper that have traditionally tied together the community. The future of the newspaper industry, therefore, requires a new way to help members of a community to connect to each other.

This essay first establishes the relationship between newspapers and civic engagement by examining historical and academic research. Next, it explores the causes of the decline in both newspaper readership and civic engagement. I then present a case study that demonstrates the evolving role of the community newspaper in a town. Finally, I conclude with some remarks on the possible solutions to revive newspaper readership and thus civil society.

Today, there is a huge decline in both newspaper readership and civic engagement. From 1990, when newspaper circulation peaked at 62.3 million, readership has been in steady decline, dropping to 55.1 million by 2003.[3] Needless to say, the percentage of total population that reads newspapers has declined in even greater numbers. From November 2004 to March 2005 alone, newspaper circulation declined by 1.9 percent in the nation's 814 largest papers.[4]

The drop in civic engagement is even more dramatic. Not only does it seem as though Americans are helping each other out less, they are also participating in group leisure activities less. In the political realm, only 48.9 percent of Americans voted in the 1996 elections compared to 62.8 percent in 1962.[5] Although more people are contacted by political parties, fewer people volunteer for the parties. While Americans may report that they "volunteer" more in recent years than in the past, community service performed as a group has declined.[6] Non-profit organizations that have come to symbolize civil society, have seen increases in donations, but drops in participation at the local level.[7]

But why is there such a correlation? Is it because people who read newspapers are more likely to be civically engaged or because newspaper reading makes a person more civically engaged? Studies suggest that there's merit in both of those statements. Keith Stamm even writes that "the fact the evidence can be read two different ways highlights the point

we don't really know what it is we know."[8]

Indeed, studies suggest that certain demographics of people are more likely to read papers. Scheufele writes that "Political participation has long been understood as being dependent upon individuals' socio-economic status." Verba, for example, has identified that time and money are the two crucial components of an active citizen. "When inputs of time and money are coupled to civic skills, citizens become not only more likely to participate but also more likely to be effective when they do," he writes. In support of Verba, Keith Stamm found only mixed support for his hypothesis that local media use leads to greater political involvement. He did find that the most community members who considered themselves "stable" within the community read papers the most while those who considered themselves "drifting," read the least. Incidentally, these people are also more likely to be civically engaged.

Although it's certainly true that specific people are more likely to read newspapers, reading newspapers may also encourage these people to be more civically active than they would have been otherwise. Studies suggest that newspapers contribute to a community's level of civic engagement.

Much research consistently confirms the positive effects of newspaper reading on political participation. Reading about local public, for example, is positively correlated with participation (Bybee et al). In a study of factors that influence a person's political participation and issue awareness conducted through a random telephone survey of people in the same zip code, the "largest proportion of incremental variance was accounted for by local media use and political knowledge." Newspaper consumption is the biggest predictor in strong community ties and civic participation.[9]

A study by Hye-Jin Paek and colleagues revealed that in communities with higher local print news reading, the effects of an individual's social interactions on community participation will be stronger. "The use of local public affairs content, especially print news, has positive effects on political discussion and community participation."[10] Christopher Beau-

doin's research "demonstrated strong support...that news use has positive ties to social capital." In a study where he controlled for demographics such as age, education, and years in community, he found that the levels of community participation in people of the same demographic were higher in those who read newspapers. In addition, he also found that television watching correlated with less civic engagement. Likewise, Steve Collins also found that newspaper reading contributed to the engagement of college students within a local campus community.

The community newspaper can promote citizen participation because it has an inherent role as the nexus of community and communication. As opposed to mass media, the local newspaper is the forum where people living within close proximity to each other can share ideas publicly. Features in the local newspaper such as the obituaries, event listings, and high school sports are inherently more engaging than national news items since they feature local people. Moreover, newspapers help to integrate the members of a society – to help them get to know each other more. McLeod writes that "Through communication, citizens acquire information about issues and problems in the community and learn of opportunities and ways to participate." Indeed, when newspapers act as a channel of communication, the newspaper facilitates social capital..

In the realm of volunteerism, newspapers provide a forum for the asking for volunteers. As Putnam contends, "people who know each other more are more political active because they can ask each other..." Newspapers also provide social trust because if everyone in a given community knows that the newspaper will report on each others' activities, people are more likely to behave in a socially responsible way. It promotes a sense of trust within the community. Robert Putnam argues that "A society characterized by generalized reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society."[11]

Indeed, historically, newspapers occupied just this role in the United States as an open forum for the community. The Constitution itself was first circulated in newspapers for the general public to critique and approve. The Founding Fathers then needed to publicly argue for the validity of the document in the public sphere via newspapers once more.[12]

From the start, newspapers have helped facilitate democracy and transparency in this country.

In the early days of the republic, many newspapers were circulated to less than 10,000 people and covered limited areas. However, early American newspapers had markedly different goals from today's community paper. In the Eighteenth Century, the purpose of many papers was to stir political debate in the public sphere. James Franklin founded the *New-England Courant* by printer James Franklin, to support Cotton Mather's proposal to use inculcation to fight smallpox.[13] For much of American history, newspapers did indeed play an important role in promoting public discourse by making information available to the public. As sociologist Paul Starr wrote of America at the turn of the century, "If any single institution or organ dominated the public sphere in this era, it was the daily newspaper."[14]

While the rise of newspapers in this country can partly be attributed to the limited means of communication throughout the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries, the relative success of the medium in the United States compared to Europe suggests that newspapers were important in this country for other reasons than simple communication. Because America was a democracy, people had a greater incentive to inform themselves. An economic difference also enabled Americans to publish more than Europeans. The state subsidized newspapers in the United States whereas the state taxed newspapers elsewhere. The post office facilitated the easy delivery of papers.[15] At the same time, the fragmentation of authority on the level of the federal government prevented patronage, allowing local, private newspapers to flourish.

By the late Nineteenth Century, as newsprint became cheaper and advertising increased, newspapers could expand outside the realm of strict news into the realm of features, including sports pages, women's sections, advice columns, and comic strips. "Increasingly, newspapers became general-interest publications, vehicles of entertainment as much as of information."[16] One British observer noted that Americans "would consider themselves defrauded if they did not have a bale of printed matter delivered at their doors" on Sundays.[17]

But newspapers have now lost the luster they once had; they no longer occupy such a central role in American society. Since newspapers do have the ability to integrate communities and make people more civically engaged, it should be a concern that newspaper reading is on the decline. An examination of why newspaper readership is on the decline may lead to some solution of how to reverse the trend.

Some theorists, like Robert Putnam believe that the trend is mostly the result of increased apathy in America as a result of external factors such as the rise of television, suburbanization, increased mobility and other lifestyle changes have "caused" people to cease their newspaper consumption.

Putnam points toward a generational change. "When people are asked whether they 'need to get the news every day,' the answer turns out to depend on when they were born."[18] Likewise, Converse and Zaller have argued that the difference in people's attitudes towards local politics is largely attributable to stable demographics. In other words, a person's inherent place in society determines whether he will read the paper. Indeed, it's possible that the main reason for the decline in newspaper readership stems from the people themselves. After all, research suggests that people who are already inclined to be civically engaged read the paper the most.

Nonetheless, the situation is more complex. The relationship between readers and newspaper readership is not linear, but circular. As external factors such as television and radio became more competitive, newspapers responded to their competition by developing more ways to compete, in essence, losing their inherent structure as the voice of the community.

The changes mostly began during the war years. Up until then, newspapers seemed to face much competition from other newspapers. However, by the 1940's "newspaper publishers…conveyed a complacency that owed the most to the condition of the market."[19] Because community newspapers had little competition from other media, and because there

was mostly one paper per community, there was little incentive for them to spend many resources on in-depth, investigative reporting. In big cities with multiple newspapers, each paper had its own niche audience, sparing themselves from any serious competition. Newspapers could also afford to skimp on readable newsprint when the public spent a good deal of time on newspapers nonetheless. In the words of one small-town publisher in 1944, "Monopoly is more difficult than competition…You don't shoot quite so fast and throw things around so vigorously."[20]

Perhaps this lack of vigor made the newspaper industry vulnerable to even the slightest attack from the television industry in the next decade. Although newspaper subscriptions continued to rise despite the penetration of television into households in the 1940's and 50's, Americans spent less and less time with the paper.[21] It didn't help that newspapers responded by investing even *less* money than before on quality of news and newsprint.[22]

Television, however, was less a replacement for newspapers rather than an alternative. Newspapers could have capitalized on the fact that most families viewed television as a diversion. Unfortunately, newspapers decided to compete with other forms of mass media by becoming more similar to those forms rather than trying to maintain a distinct identity.

Newspapers experienced two phenomenons in the rise of the television industry: the increasing corporate ownership of local newspapers and the marketing of newspapers as a form of entertainment. In order to keep up with the competition, many newspapers tried new strategies, including new ownership and an emphasis on different content.

A study on the impact of corporate ownership on news quality in "community" newspapers in 2001 showed that "going public, which newspapers began to do in 1963, has had major consequences for journalism" (Cranberg). Cranberg reported that as of 2001, over 40% of dailies were public corporations. The report claims that incorporation drives newspapers to elevate profits to their top priority and "reduced concern for the general readership but more concern with affluent subscribers." Moreover, corporate newspapers bring outsiders in to run the paper. Gannet,

the nation's largest newspaper chain, owns ninety-nine newspapers spread across country, but holds its headquarters in Tyson's Corner, Virginia.[23] Whereas members of the local community operate and write for the traditional local newspaper, today's newspapers bring in professionals from outside the community. Not only does this mean that writers for the paper might report information less well, but that they also have less of a stake in the community.

These structure changes in the community newspaper have influenced content. As newspapers became more corporate, the content of newspapers also changed, becoming less focused on local news and more focused on entertainment. A content analysis study by the Readership Institute from 2004 shows that about 45% of all stories, including a third of the stories on the front page are from wire or news services. Although there is not much content analysis information from fifty years ago, it was not likely to be the case fifty years ago. Besides Politics/government and sports, content areas that have a significant presence are Entertainment and Crime/Legal. The latter two topics probably draw in more readers than other topics. The Annual Report on American Journalism from 2005 shows that whereas 33% of A1 articles in 1977 and 1987 were on the government, only 27% of A1 articles in 2003 were on the government. At the same time, the percentage of lifestyle stories rose from 4% in 1977 to 8% in 2003. In addition, the report points out that the smallest newspapers had the greatest percentage of stories on the government. Among papers of under 100,000 circulation, government affairs "alone account for 40% of the stories, most of which focused on local news." Perhaps as newspapers got bigger, they shifted away from local coverage.

The report also points out that "few stories directly address the reader" and that "a very small number of stores directly solicit content or feedback from readers." In short, community newspapers escaped from the model of a public forum for open discussion to a business that puts profits before community.

Perhaps these changes made newspapers more similar to other media like television and radio, thus removing the newspaper from its special

role in society as a bridge in the community. Perhaps because newspapers had already entered the entertainment business, it made them more vulnerable to television station, which entertained better. It would be useful to look at data on the public's attitudes towards newspapers versus other forms of communication in the 1940's. Newspapers have been successful to the extent that only 30 percent of the American public believe that newspapers are "very different" from television today.[24]

James Baughman goes as far as to say that the decline in newspaper readership is actually the result of a self-fulfilling prophecy: "What was new was the news media, taking up what had been a newsmagazine chant, repeatedly telling Americans how busy they were and hw much it needed to have information synthesized for them…In the end, Americans lived in an essentially imaginary 'information age.'"[25] … Given a choice between a flat, two-dimensional product and a colorful, three-dimensional product of the same content, most Americans chose the latter.

This isn't to say that today's newspapers are simply profit-driven entities that have completely lost touch with the community. Nor is the decline in paper readership – and thus, civic engagement – entirely the newspaper industry's fault. After all, recent studies of newspaper and influence on political participation cited above demonstrate that people who do read newspapers are more active in their communities. Indeed, compared to other forms of media, newspapers still devote the most coverage to government and military affairs. 35% of A1 articles of all newspapers sampled had reported on government affairs whereas 20% of morning commute radio covered government affairs, and only 14% of cable television stories reported in this category. These studies also never provide data on the exact usage of newspapers that would allow them to affect civic engagement, further suggesting that the relationship between newspaper reading and community involved is not straightforward.

Readership satisfaction surveys show that people actually prefer fewer crime stories, more original local reporting, and information that empowers them. Health and fashion articles that provide specific directions rate better than those that don't. Heavy readers also prefer community announcement listings.[26] This suggests that it's possible that over the

past fifty years, as people started to read newspapers less, newspapers themselves have fueled the attitudinal change. As the American public came to have different expectations of newspapers and as newspapers failed to reach out to the American public, they lost their influence. Community newspapers have removed themselves from the community. What's ironic is that as American readership of papers started to decline, the newspaper industry responded with more features that only drove away readers still. Although still in the position as the "heart of the community," the pulse is dead.

The new, modern newspapers lost the quintessential portions of the newspaper that bonded the reader to the community. As demonstrated above, newspaper content has changed over the past few decades. The papers lost their purpose as a creator of social capital. Gone were the local news stories that made readers feel like they were part of the community. Gone were the addresses and contact information for writers that gave readers a way to reach out to their fellow citizens. Without a way to actually contribute to the paper, the community could no longer use the paper as a forum to communicate.

One case study of changing newspapers over time is the *Princeton Packet*, a twice-a-week publication, distributed in Princeton New Jersey. At first glance, the course of the *Princeton Packet* seems to defy the idea that the newspaper's role has diminished in society, but closer inspection suggests that *The Packet* is less of a nexus of communication than it once was.

Like many other papers in the country, circulation of the *Packet* as a percentage of the population of the local community has declined, like that of newspapers around the country.[27] The *Packet* demonstrates many of the changes of the past fifty years that have caused other newspapers to suffer. The newspaper is now part of a larger chain of publications, Packet Publications that also publishes other local newspapers. In any given issue, many of the articles appear in more than one newspaper. The cover photograph, however, is specific to each publication.

At first, it appears as though the current *Packet* is an extremely success-

ful community newspaper that embodies all the characteristics of a publication that builds social capital and encourages civic engagement. *The Packet* still focuses plenty on local events. The January 9, 2007 issue, for example, includes articles on a gypsy moth "invasion," the new arts center, and an update on the local animal shelter. Although announcements on local civic engagement activities no longer dominate the front page, a "Bulletin Board" page updates readers on volunteer opportunities such as with groups like "Literacy Volunteers" or the Court Appointed Special Advocates of Mercer County.

However, upon closer inspection, *The Packet* actually doesn't serve as the nexus of community and communication for this town anymore. Now, the only people who read the Packet are indeed the ones who are more engaged in the community in the first place. Managing editor Steve Urbish points out that there are demographics in Princeton that *The Packet* doesn't reach, including lower income residents and minorities. Many of the people who read *The Packet* now are only those for whom it has become habit.

Although there are still reports of goings on, the paper is less of a forum than before with less opportunity for input from the community. It now receives information mostly in one direction as opposed, as it had in the past. Like other newspapers, *The Packet's* content has changed over the years. The front page of any given issue of *The Packet* from the 1940's through 1950's is packed with local community announcements. For example, the January 9, 1950 issue has no photographs on the front page. Instead, it has articles on Women's League of Voters' next steps. Below the fold headlines include "Church Association Meeting Next Monday," and "Westminster Concert Tonight." These articles, many with fewer than a hundred words – told readers about the latest activities in the town. Local residents' names were always printed with their addresses.

In contrast, today's front page usually has a large colored photograph. Fewer community announcements fill the pages. Overall, there is less text. The January 9, 2007 issue, for example has a large image of various residents enjoying an unexpected surge of warm weather on the cover. Despite the focus on local residents on the cover, there is little

information on specific community meetings or ways to be active. In many ways, the course of *The Princeton Packet* reflects the course of the country's newspapers.. Where the paper was once a vehicle for civic engagement, it has, in recent years, become more of a business with pressing financial motivations. As the content changed, the role of the newspaper in the town has also changed.

Today, newspapers, most community newspapers, such as *The Packet* recognize their shortcomings in reaching out to wider audiences. However, instead of only trying to boost circulation by selling what the readers want, newspapers should try to regain their former position as the nexus of community and communication. They need to become necessary habits in the life of the average consumer.

The community paper still holds an important role in society. Newspapers themselves can make some changes such as publishing more interactive articles. Newspapers could add articles that the Readership Institute suggests. One readership satisfaction surveys show that people actually prefer fewer crime stories, more original local reporting, and information that empowers the reader. Health and fashion articles that provide specific directions rate better than those that don't. Heavy readers also prefer community announcement listings.

Now that newspapers are facing a more diverse population, the newspaper could also try to reach out to engage minorities. The Readership Institute suggests that both African-Americans and Hispanics want content that convey a sense of "belonging/fulfillment" and that the newspaper "cares about me." Indeed, these are traits that all newspaper readers probably look for. African-Americans and Hispanics both want more "community announcements, obituaries," and information on "ordinary people." They also rank content as more important when deciding to subscribe to a newspaper than service.

However, the possibility of building civil society by building print newspapers is slim. Luckily, there is a new medium that could potentially simulate the same hub of community voices that the community newspaper throughout American history. This is the online community paper.

Many sites such as Savannahnow.com report on the same type of news and provide the same services as local newspapers. Like newspapers, these web sites contain local advertisement and news stories. They even have the potential to do a better job than print products because they provide more real time information and can hold more information in one place. The one downfall is that these are virtual. Some fear that this only exacerbates isolation since the Internet is a solitary activity.

At the same time, the newspaper industry faces financial pressures from mass media corporations. Government spending in favor of newspapers could boost readership and thus civic participation. A recent *Nation* article suggests a tax incentive for newspaper subscribers. The government could also offer newspaper companies that

The newspaper industry is at a precipitous point in history. With the advent of self-driven media, it's easy to see the newspaper as an archaic form of communication. After all, this year "you" is Time magazine's person of the year precisely because communication has become focused on individuals on not on communities. But if we as a nation value community newspapers, perhaps it's time for newspaper companies to receive tax cuts like big businesses do. If newspapers make a comeback, the American public has a chance of reviving participation, political action, and forming a true democracy.

Notes

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Disengagement in Great Britain: Is the Internet the Solution?

by Matthew A. Raifman

Abstract:

Through an examination of the academic research and conclusions published thus far, this essay will attempt to provide an assessment of the contemporary explanations and solutions proposed for political disengagement in Britain. In light of recent developments in internet technology and its growing mainstream adoption, the potential of the internet as a solution to the problem of disengagement is assessed. Research suggests that, while the internet is able to potentially ease reengagement and serve as a forum and tool for civil society, it is not capable of alleviating the political strain caused by poor political education, increased distrust of politics, and an inefficient electoral system.

Introduction

Since the Second World War, Britain has undergone 60 years of increasing political disengagement. Every decade since the 1950s has brought a reduction in formal political engagement - most evident in declining voter turnout to general elections. In the 1950s, over 80 per cent of the population validated the government through the electoral process. Over the fifties and early sixties, voter turnout never dropped below 76 per cent. But since 1964, turnout has only risen above 76 per cent twice.[1]

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While the long-scale trend of decreased turnout has prompted investigation into its historical causes, the sudden drop in electoral turnout of over 12 per cent between 1997 and 2001 has fueled a recent wide-ranging investigation into the state of British politics. The relatively small increase in turnout between 2001 (59.4) and 2005 (61.2) of 1.8 per cent substantiated the fear that the 2001 turnout was not an outlying situation.[2] The rapid decline in voter participation in the early 2000s has led many academics to conclude that the British political system in gravely ill and in need of immediate reformation if we are to save British representational democracy.

Year	Turnout (%)
1945	73.3
1950	84.0
1951	82.5
1955	76.8
1959	78.7
1964	77.1
1966	75.8
1970	72.0
Feb. 1974	78.1
Oct. 1974	72.8
1979	76.0
1983	72.7
1987	75.3
1992	77.7
1997	71.5
2001	59.4
2005	61.2

Figure 1: General Election Turnout in the UK

Source: British General Election of 2001
(Table copied in its entirety from Kellner, 2004, p. 831)

British disengagement from politics is not only evident in turnout levels but can also be found in other aspects of society. The public, especially young people, seems to be uninterested in learning about the British political system. Apparently, the majority of the public does not have an adequate understanding of the role of Parliament, Members of Parliament, council representatives, and local government.[3] Furthermore,

according to a study conducted by the Electoral Commission and Hansard Society that asked participants to comment on their understanding of the political system, more than half the voting age public claimed in 2004 and 2005 that it "did not know very much" or even "nothing at all" about politics.[4] Complicating the situation, it seems that British democracy should be stronger than ever.[5] With citizenship education now on the national curriculum, citizens are taught from a young age of their civic responsibility to vote. The proliferation of the media allows the public to take an educated stance on political issues through breaking news broadcasts and political analysis. Further, the advent of the internet and mobile technology has made acquisition of information even easier. It would seem that disengagement is not a product of a poor political education.

The public is not unaware of its civic duty to vote. In fact, according to the Citizen Audit consensus conducted six months before the 2001 election, 72 per cent of citizens felt that it was their duty to vote in the election but only 59 per cent actually did so.[6] [7] Complicating the issue, research suggests that disengagement from formal politics cannot be explained, as some have tried to do, as a product of apathy among the population. Britons are involved in political and non-political aspects of society just not in formal politics. The Citizen Audit revealed that the public *does* embrace non-formal political causes – for example by buying organic foods, vegetables produced in the U.K., or avoiding the products of certain companies.[8] There is no conclusive research on the discussion of public interest in politics however. Some research (Pattie) suggests that the public is "more engaged in giving money, voting, and signing petitions than contacting a Member of Parliament, attending a political meeting, or joining in a public protest,"[9] while other research (Parvin and McHugh) concludes that public involvement in protests "suggests that they[the public] increasingly see voting in elections or lobbying MPs or joining political parties as a less effective means of getting things done than taking matters into their own hands and hitting the streets".[10] Indeed, the number of people who consider themselves a strong supporter of a specific party has dropped from 45 per cent in 1964 to seven per cent in 2003.[11] The real problem, however, is that political interest – whether gauged in protests, restrictive purchasing, or donations – is not translating into formal political engagement.

Possible Causes of Disengagement

What has been termed "the politics of contentment" was one of the first explanations for voter disengagement and is sometimes still offered as support of the apathy explanation.[12] As political disengagement has gone hand-in-hand with economic growth and financial well-being, it has been suggested that once someone is satisfied with his social and financial status he is no longer preoccupied with attempting to achieve contentment through political means.[13] However, electoral statistics do not support this theory. The lowest voter turnout levels are not found in the well-to-do areas but in the inner city seats where the public has little cause for social or financial contentment.[14]

Some (Harrop, 2001, Pattie and Johnston, 2001) argue that the public is failing to engage in formal politics because recent outcomes have become overly predictable. There is some historical evidence reinforcing this explanation. Charles Pattie and Ron Johnston conducted complex statistical analysis of voter turnout by mathematically modeling responses to the Gallup Poll question, "Irrespective of how you yourself will vote, who do you think will win the next general election?" since World War II, and found that "close elections produce high turnout, but widely anticipated landslides (as in 1997) produce low turnouts."[15]

Year	% Feel a Great Deal of Difference+	% Turnout in General Election
1945	Na	73.3
1950	Na	84.0
1951	Na	82.5
1955	Na	76.8
1959	Na	78.7
1964	48	77.1
1966	44	75.8
1970	33	72.0
Feb. 1974	34	78.1
Oct. 1974	40	72.8
1979	48	76.0
1983	88	72.7
1987	85	75.3
1992	56	77.7
1997	33	71.5
2001	17	59.4
2005	21	61.2

Figure 2: Difference and General Election Turnout since 1945

na: information not available

+ Difference study only considers difference between Conservatives and Labour

Sources: (Kellner, 2004; Curtice, 2005).

It has also been suggested that excessive similarity between political parties generates an apathetic response to voting, and with it, disengagement.[16] [17] Indeed, in 2001 turnout was 7 per cent higher among citizens who perceived a major difference between the parties.[18] There is some correlation between public conception of the differences between the two main parties and turnout – in fact, the post-1997 fluctuations in voter turnout are reflected in difference research. As can be seen in table two, in 1997, 33 per cent of participants felt that there was a "great deal of difference" between conservatives and labour. The percentage of those who felt there was a difference dropped significantly to 17 per cent in 2001 and rebounded slightly to 21 per cent in 2005 – mirroring election turnout. Furthermore, in particularly contested seats the turnout remained relatively high, suggesting that low turnout is indeed linked to the predictability of the outcome.[19] It is important to note that, while similarities between the parties may have contributed to the rapid decrease in voter turnout recently, historically the correlation is not so concrete – voter participation has been in gradual decline whereas the percentage of people who felt there was not a great difference between the parties has fluctuated, peaking in 1983 with 88 per cent with a widely expected Conservative victory under Thatcher. It is possible that the substantial decrease in the difference poll between 1992 and 2005 could be a reflection of New Labour's move towards the center-ground. As Labour and Conservative politicians converge on the center in order to win valuable moderate votes, they appear more similar to the public and, as a result, encourage disengagement, as evidenced by the correlation between voter turnout and difference polls.

There is also a correlation between public opinion of politicians and disengagement. The public is increasingly unwilling to participate in a conversation with politicians who are thought to bend the truth to fit their agenda. In 2004, the Hansard Society commissioned Market and Opinion Research International (MORI) to conduct a study across Britain to further examine the causes of disengagement. According to Vidya Ram, the study revealed that "many participants felt MPs were solely in politics to make money or advance themselves socially at the expense of others, rather than to represent their constituents or the country's interests"[20] Indeed, public trust of politicians today is half of what it

was 30 years ago.[21] The public seems to be significantly cynical towards Parliament in general on account of perceived excessive bickering.[22] While politicians often compromise in Westminster, the public does not understand this. Instead, the combination of increased negative media coverage, market campaigning, and an increasingly less -ribal, educated public, seems to have portrayed Westminster as an inefficient, childish institution.[23] This negative view of politicians has most likely led to political disengagement in recent years and perhaps is a good explanation for the general trend of disconnection since the Second World War.

Today's politicians also make more unfulfilled promises than those of the past, according to a study conducted by Judith Bara (2005). In her study of the number of pledges made by political candidates in campaign manifestos since 1945, Bara found the over the past 20 years pledges have become increasingly more "vague" and "general."[24] [25] Furthermore, she found that there has been a significant rise in the number of pledges made in party manifestos (see table three). During the 1980s the average number of pledges in a campaign manifesto was 76 – up from 51 across the seventies – but since 1992, the average number of pledges has risen to 279.[26] The evidence suggests that politicians do uphold some of their pledges but that the push towards a greater number of increasingly vague pledges has damaged public trust in politics. Bara believes that the vague and general promises are "fuelling the public perception that they [political parties] are indeed untrustworthy."[27] Henn, Weinstein and Forrest, through analysis of MORI research conducted between 2001 and 2005, and a postal survey of 705 young people, have observed that youths, especially, disengage because the unlikeliness that politicians will uphold their promises.[28] If not one of the main reasons for formal disengagement, declining trust of politicians and political parties seems to have exasperated disengagement among the public.

Year	Winning Party	Number of Pledges
1945	Labour	18
1950	Labour	14
1951	Conservatives	15
1955	Conservatives	20
1959	Conservatives	33
1964	Labour	49
1966	Labour	44
1970	Conservatives	52
Feb. 1974	Labour	43
Oct. 1974	Labour	57
1979	Conservatives	50
1983	Conservatives	33
1987	Conservatives	118
1992	Conservatives	452
1997	Labour	177
2001	Labour	207

Figure 3: Number of Pledges in Manifestos of Winnings Parties, 1945 – 2001

Source: Table copied in its entirety from Judith Bara, "A Question of Trust: Implementing Party Manifestos," *Parliamentary Affairs,* Vol. 58, Issue 3, 2005: p. 588.

Of particular interest is the disengagement of young voters which can be seen as a warning sign of further disengagement in the future. Election turnout data reveal that the greatest decline in voter turnout after 1997 was among youth voters – greatest for the 18-24 group and second greatest for the 25-34 group.[29] Some (Parry et al., 1992; Verba and Nie, 1972) have suggested that young people have a lifestyle that is not conducive to political involvement - increased mobility, lack of long-term attachments, and an absence of patterns of electoral registration result in a failure to connect with politics in the first place. Therefore, we might expect a rise in voter turnout among young voters as they grow older and become more integrated into society, but this is not the case. In 1992, 24 per cent of 18-24 year olds did not vote in the general election. By 1997 (when the 18-24 group had become the 25-30 group) voter turnout had dropped such that only 44 per cent of the 25-30 year old group voted.[30] Rather than becoming increasingly more involved in formal politics, the young voters seem to be increasingly disengaged from politics.

Another possible explanation for youth disengagement is the adoption of more market-type campaign strategies.[31] Henn, Weinstein, and Forrest concluded from their postal survey:

> "(youth cynicism towards politics) suggests that at the heart of young people's declining election turnout and their apparent disenchantment with Westminster politics is a strong sense of political alienation rather than political apathy – the political system in Britain is failing to provide the stimuli necessary to encourage young people to take a greater role in political life, and as such, faces a crisis of democratic legitimacy."[32]

Politicians and political parties are more interested in targeting key voters rather than the general public in order to get the votes needed for victory at the lowest possible cost. The result is a campaign focus on issues and events targeting the middle-class, middle-aged voting bracket.[33] Of course, general decreased participation in formal perpetuates this by reducing the resources, both financial and human, available to political parties, forcing the adoption of market-based activity.[34]

It has also been suggested that young people have alternative political values that do not fit with formal politics. Richard Kimberlee (1998) suggests that youths are more interested in single-issue campaigns and social movements. The recent adoption of centralized, middle-ground politics has reduced coverage of fringe political issues and potentially sacrificed young engagement as a result. Youth participation is indeed vital to the legitimacy of the British democracy. New generations are not learning to be involved in formal politics nor are they acquiring such interest as they age. Continued disconnection will only further the crisis of disengagement as generations of pensioners, who leave behind a legacy of political involvement, are replaced by youths uninterested and uninvolved in British politics.

The Power Commission Report (2006) represents the most recent cumulative attempt to examine the causes of British disengagement. The Commission, headed by Baroness Kennedy, was comprised of 10 specialists from different backgrounds and political affiliations. The Commission concluded that it is not contentment, an increase in sleaze, negative media, or busy voter lifestyles that is the cause of public disengagement from politics. Rather, the Commission suggests that disengagement is caused by a number of issues:[35]

1. Citizens disconnect because they feel their views are not taken into account by policy makers[36]
2. The main parties are too similar[37]

3. Inequality in votes[38]
4. Party manifestos cover too broad a range of issues[39]
5. Basic understanding of the political system is insufficient[40]
6. Voting procedures are inconvenient[41]
7. A change in the socio-economic composition of citizens

Most intriguing is the Commission's socio-economic explanation which suggests that disengagement "arose not so much from changes in the political system but in changes in the citizens."[42] Since World War II, the composition of British citizens has undergone significant change. A switch from a manufacture-based to a service-based economy has meant expansion of professional classes, increased proportional affluency, increased education, greater social and occupational mobility, increased concern for securing material possessions, and the embracing of globalization.[43] The result of such rapid socio-economic change, the Commission suggests, is the creation of a larger affluent, educated class that has benefited from the rise in the service sector, as well as, the creation of a smaller, perpetually marginalized, disadvantaged class that has been negatively affected by the transition.[44] Disengagement has been nurtured on both fronts as affluency and education have created a demand for more choice and recognition in politics among the benefited class, and marginalization and exclusion from political life have alienated the disadvantaged class.

The Power Commission Report was not the first to suggest a historical socio-economic-transition explanation for disengagement. Philip Parvin and Declan McHugh (2005) suggest that the advent of neo-liberalism in the late-seventies and eighties decreased participation in trade unions and organizations – fuelling a transition from community involvement that fosters engagement in politics and political parties, to individualist activity that encourages disengagement. Such a shift is even visible in the transition from traditionally collectivistic recreational activities like football and rugby to more individualistic sports like swimming.[45] The shift to a consumer lifestyle was accompanied by a shift to consumer politics. Increased individualistic politics results in decreased communication and compromise between the public and politicians.[46]

Furthermore, the neo-liberal minimalization of the state reduced the importance of the state in lives of the people and, in doing so, reduced the importance of formal politics.[47] The seventies and eighties also saw an increase in the importance of world economic institutions and multinational corporations like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations, McDonalds, CitiGroup, and Microsoft, that brought mainstream criticism of the merge between politics and economic interests into the limelight – further damaging the reputation of Westminster and increasing the differential between the people and political institutions.[48] A historical socio-economic explanation would suggest that the primary cause of disengagement is the failure of British political institutions to adapt to historical economic and social transitions since the Second World War.

Possible Solutions

A plethora of possible solutions has been proposed to deal with political disengagement from electoral reform, to reestablishing trust in political institutions, to increasing political education. Every possible cause has a possible solution. As it is reasonable to believe that there is no single cause of political disengagement – rather that there are a number of issues that produce disengagement in different voting groups – it is also probable that there is no single solution to disengagement. Recently, specialists have begun to truly consider the possibilities of the internet in addressing disengagement. Internet technology may help to ease structural reformation and to open an earnest dialogue between politicians and the public, but there seems to be an early consensus emerging that suggests the internet should not be viewed as the primary solution to political disengagement in Britain. Rather, it should be used as a tool to deal with the more structural causes of disengagement like poor electoral procedures, insufficient education, and public distrust of the political system. The internet provides the medium for individuals to engage in civil society but it is not the end-all solution.

One of the most often proposed solutions to disengagement is electoral reform. There is a natural connection between the electoral process and voter turnout that suggests improvement of the electoral system can

increase turnout, but there is also reason to believe that electoral reform can deal with the issues of trust and equality as well. Some (Harrop, 2001) propose that the electoral process should be changed to make voting easier for the general public. Apathetic and preoccupied abstainers might be more inclined to vote if the polling stations came to them – to shops, supermarkets, offices and gyms – or, since historically weekend elections yield higher turnouts, if elections were always held on the weekend.[49] The postal vote was offered to more citizens in advance of the 2001 election to allow electors to vote at their own convenience and increase turnout. For the 2005 election, just under 12 per cent of the U.K. was given the option of using a postal ballot – three times the number in 2001.[50] Electoral evidence suggests, however, that despite increased ease of voting, postal ballots did not produce much of a change in voter behavior.[51]

The logical progression from postal voting is to internet or mobile voting technology. A number of Government papers and academic reports have suggested internet voting as a possible solution to the disengagement problem.[52] Indeed, the ease of internet voting and the wide use of the internet among young persons are likely to significantly increase voter turnout among young people – the age group that is arguably most disengaged from politics. Not only might internet voting produce higher voter turnout but it might also help to engrave electoral responsibility in youths from a young age, thus avoiding the problem of decreasing voter turnout in the future. But there are some significant concerns with utilizing "e-voting." Internet voting can only be implemented after voter security can be assured. Hasty implementation has the potential to cause more harm than good. Perhaps more importantly, internet voting would not actually fix any of the proposed causes of disengagement except perhaps the "lack of time" and the conflicting youth culture explanation – internet voting would not help to increase trust of the British political institution or alleviate socio-economic strain. The Power Commission Report expresses a justified fear that electoral reformation – especially the adoption of "e-voting" – could be adopted in lieu of necessary structural reformation.[53] Public response to the idea of internet voting is mixed but overall positive. The Power Commission found that the public seems to feel that easier voting procedures would increase participation substantially.[54] Lusoli, Ward, and Gibson commissioned a National

Opinion Poll (NOP) survey in 2004 to investigate potential incorporation of the internet into British politics. The survey found that 41 per cent of the public is not in favor of online voting and 18 per cent have no views.[55] [56] While there is support for internet voting and reason to believe that its adoption would increase voter turnout, additional electoral reformation is needed, as well as, continued use of non-electronic voting techniques.

The adoption of a proportional representation system has also been proposed as a way of dealing with disengagement. As the Westminster first-past-the-post system is notoriously unfair in its distribution of seats, there is reason to believe that the adoption of a proportional system might increase participation in British politics. Indeed, it is predicted that a switch to proportional representation will increase voter turnout by around 10 percentage points.[57] Further moves towards increased equality in British politics, like redesigned electoral divisions such that the incumbent party is less favored, might also increase participation. In 2001, the Conservatives had to win 50,333 votes for every MP elected compared to 26,005 for Labour; furthermore, if Labour and the Conservatives switched places, the Tories would require at least a 10-point lead in votes to be elected.[58] There is no question that such inequality is not increasing engagement; rather, it is likely to be contributing to disengagement. Electoral reformation would certainly improve the British political system and probably reduce some distrust, apathy, and inequality-driven disengagement.

Today's citizens are more skeptical of politics whether because of increased education, unfulfilled promises, or the prevalence of criticism of politics in the media. Vidya Ram concluded from evidence obtained through the 2004 MORI study, that "…it is not so much the idea of formal, representative politics which the majority of participants felt so negatively about, as much as the way it is currently seen to be practised"[59] The public is disengaging from politics in part because the word "politics" has become synonymous with key words like "spin," "sleaze," and "money." The media is no doubt a major player in perpetuating this relationship. Through sensational pieces under the guise of genuine investigative journalism, the media not only feeds adverserialism by publicizing conflicting party discourse, but also encourages "disengage-

ment by itself adopting an increasingly adversarial attitude towards the whole political class"[60]

In order to reestablish themselves as public servants who are interested in the well-being of their constituents and the country, British politicians must separate themselves from the spin.[61] Some politicians have recently campaigned almost exclusively on "no spin politics" like David Davis in the recent Conservative leadership election. In order to reform public opinion of politics, and with it encourage engagement, politicians must identify their real priorities for the public. They need to make shorter, clearer, and more transparent manifestos.[62] They must strive to create a genuine dialogue with electors through increased involvement and recognition of community issues and experiences.[63] With consumerism infiltrating the economy, society, and the world of politics, politicians must strive to separate themselves from the consumerist agenda in order to make tough political decisions on behalf of constituents.[64] At this point, politicians must earn the trust and respect of the public through earnest cooperation and communication. Publicity campaigns like Labour's "Big Conversation" will not successfully encourage engagement – the public must earnestly feel that it is respected, represented, and understood.

The population's knowledge of Parliament and British politics is significantly minimal. The public knows little about committees, All Party Groups, Members of Parliament, or the differences between the Houses of Parliament.[65] But there is reason to believe that education can increase engagement. After initially determining participant opinions, Vidya Ram informed study participants of some basic information regarding the structure of the British political system. Ram found that participant opinions following minimal education were less negative than their original opinions – perhaps suggesting that education can decrease negativity towards politics and potentially increase engagement.

The Internet as the Solution

The majority of Britain currently uses the internet and this percentage will rapidly increase in the near future - about half of Britain's popula-

tion uses the internet with about one third connecting from broadband at home.[66] Furthermore, it is estimated that 96 per cent of the country know a place to get online if they need to.[67] Some specialists believe that the incorporation of new information technology could "increase administrative efficiency of the institution [Parliament], improve information access and dissemination, and finally enhance MPs' and assemblies' interaction with citizens."[68] Most research, indeed, suggests that the internet can make political participation easier, connect constituents instantly with MPs and other constituents, and provide the public with nearly unlimited information resources to become actively involved in informal and formal politics. While it is apparent that the internet can make engagement easier, it necessitates the presumption that the public *wants* to reengage. Therefore it is important to remember that, while advances in internet technology are definitely capable of reducing disengagement in Britain, important changes in the public perception of politics must occur as well.

The internet provides a comprehensive mechanism to encourage informal political engagement. On political blogs[69], message-boards, and forums, individuals are able to engage at the citizen-citizen level. Political blogs and message-boards have the potential to "significantly impact" political engagement according to the Hansard Society.[70] There is substantial public interest in political blogs – according to the Power Commission, the popular website PoliBlog[71] links to 257 entirely political blogs receiving up to 15,000 visits every day.[72] Political sites on the internet, by nature of their consumer-driven format, almost always provide an outlet for readers to contribute – even most internet news sources now offer the opportunity for users to voice an opinion through a comment or informal letter-to-the-editor. Furthermore, internet users seem desperate to engage at this citizen-citizen level on the internet. Heated political debates often erupt between readers in the comment sections of the popular video website, *YouTube,* whenever a video of a politician is hosted. Such informal expression is vital to encouraging a healthy civil society. It is important that politicians and the political system change to accommodate a world where citizens get their news and political incite from the internet.

The internet also provides a barometer for the public's political senti-

ments. Low barriers to entry mean that virtually anyone can use the internet to voice an opinion to hundreds of thousands or even millions of users. Consequently, the internet is a fairly good indicator of the opinions, passions, and ideals of the public. Motivated Members of Parliament can use the internet as a resource to research public opinion. The more MPs use the internet to determine their constituents' opinions, the more constituents will use the internet to voice their opinions; thus creating a positive spiral towards engagement. It is important to note that this is a good example of the internet's role as facilitator but not creator. If MPs are not interested the opinions of their constituents then they are unlikely to utilize the internet as a resource. Likewise, if the public is not interested in voicing its political opinions then we cannot expect the internet to be effective at conveying them. The internet is, without a doubt, encouraging informal engagement in politics. Easy of use, instant access to a large and diverse population, and greater freedom of speech combine to make the internet the ideal medium for lower-level discourse. But we have seen that informal political engagement has not been a significant problem in Britain. Is it possible for the internet to contribute to formal politics as well?

Through internet features like e-petitions, email, and government websites, the public may find formal political engagement more appealing and less cumbersome than in the past. Through the Scottish Parliament and the 10 Downing Street websites, citizens are able to submit public petitions to be examined by the Public Petitions Committee and the Prime Minister's Office, respectively.[73] On the 10 Downing Street site, internet users can view previously submitted e-petitions, as well as, the Government's responses. The internet also makes generating public support for single issue groups much easier through mass emailing, message board posting, and website links. In turn, e-petitions may help to encourage single-issue groups to become more involved in formal politics. E-petitions may allow the public to take a more active role in influencing the actions of Government and potentially perceive increased transparency in the Government's actions.

The public may also use the internet to instantly connect with Members of Parliament, local council members, and Ministers directly through e-mail. As of 2002, typically 10 to 20 per cent of a Member's corre-

spondence might be received through e-mail although, according to the Parliament website, two-thirds of Westminster MPs now use e-mail.[74] [75] However, e-mail contact is both a blessing and a curse for MPs and constituents alike. Internet contact allows MPs to create constituency databases with little effort, but at the same time, ease of contact can generate an increased demand for correspondence that MPs are not able to meet.[76] E-mail has the capacity to damage an MP's relationship with his constituency if enough constituents feel that the MP is not making enough of an effort to reply. There is also some concern in Parliament offices over recent use of spam-e-mailing by lobbying organizations. Mass e-mailing jeopardizes constituency contact and provides cumbersome assignments for Parliamentary staff. For these reasons, some research[77] has been conducted into utilizing a mandatory intermediary link to constituents with their MP through an internet filter. Already popular websites like "Write to them"[78] and "Epolitix"[79] have been suggested by Parliamentary research studies as possible intermediaries but no scheme has been adopted by Parliament yet. Westminster has, as of yet, only attempted to create contact guidelines for constituents that recommend communicating with MPs through post as opposed to the telephone or the internet (You and Your MP fact sheet, 2005). Internet contact in Britain, while not yet as widely used or as smoothly operated by Parliament as by some institutions, like the U.S. Senate, has increased the ability of the constituent to get in touch with the MP and, in doing so, helped bridge the gap created by disengagement.

Many constituencies and MPs have created websites to bridge the government-constituent gap. These council-funded, government sites provide, at a minimum, public services, breaking news, and important contact and biographical information.[80] While a step in the right direction, this is not enough. Some exceptional council websites now incorporate more interactive aspects like MP blogs, daily diary entries, and discussion-based e-forums. Members of Parliament like Sadiq Khan[81] (Labour, MP for Tooting) and Boris Johnson[82] (Conservative, MP for Henley on Thames) post frequent blog entries regarding their activates, opinions, and plans – constituents and members of the greater public are definitely taking the time to read and comment on MP entries as, in some case, single entries have received over 100 replies. Other constituency sites have developed interactive forums devoted to varying subjects and

discussions. The Cumbria County Council website has a number of e-forums for participating neighborhoods enabling constituents to continue discussions begun at public neighborhood forums or comment on important and insignificant issues if they were unable to attend specific forums - in one e-forum for High Furness, a constituent opened a debate about a specific road crossing; in another for Cockermouth, a constituent voiced a complaint about a local animal charity.[83] Special e-forum moderators help to move the discussion along and provide answers to specific inquires – for example, who to contact to petition for a new bike bath. E-forums provide much of the same resources and discussion of a proper neighborhood forum but allow participants to engage at their own leisure. E-forums and constituency websites on a whole offer constituents an easy, informative, and productive way to learn about their council government and participate. Very few websites offer such services that encourage communication and formal engagement. As websites are far less expensive to maintain and operate, offer constituents 24-hour information services, and potentially may increase engagement across the country, MPs and constituency offices must take this opportunity more seriously and further develop their council webpages.

Conclusions

British political disengagement has become a significant issue since the 1997 general election. Rather than one particular cause, it seems that a number of issues ranging from apathy, to distrust of politicians and the system, to poor political education have combined to create the current extreme disconnection. Similarly, the best way of solving the situation seems to be to address all the possible causes. Internet technology offers an opportunity to encourage engagement through electoral reform, political education, informal participation through blogs, and direct communication through e-forums and e-mail, and MP blogs. It has the capacity to encourage informal engagement and strength civil society. The internet provides Westminster with an opportunity to reduce the obstacles blocking citizens on their path towards reengagement but it is not the solution. The internet is a tool that will make communication easier but it will not fix disengagement on its own. Politicians and the political institution have taken democratic legitimacy through voter participation

for granted, and now must earnestly work to reconnect with the British public. British politicians must endeavor to increase political education especially among young voters, regain the trust of the British public, and act in the best interests of their constituents and the country at large, if British representational democracy is to encourage public engagement and regain its populist mandate.

Notes

1 Peter Kellner. "Britain's Culture of Detachment" Parliamentary Affairs (Vol. 57, issue 4, 2004) p. 380
2 Electoral statistics vary depending upon various inclusions. This essay will use electoral statistics excluding Northern Ireland. In any case, the difference is marginal.
3 Vidya Ram. "Public Attitudes to Politics, Politicians and Parliament" Parliamentary Affairs (Vol. 59, issue 1, 2006) p. 192
4 Electoral Commission and Hansard Society. An audit of political engagement 2. London: The Electoral Commission and the Hansard Society, 2005.
5 Philip Parvin and Declan McHugh. "Defending Representative Democracy: Parties and the Future of Political Engagement in Britain" Parliamentary Affairs (Vol. 58, issue 3, 2005) p. 634
6 Charles Pattie, Patrick Seyd, and Paul Whiteley. "Civic Attitudes and Engagement in Modern Britain" Parliamentary Affairs (Vol. 56, issue 4, 2003) p. 617
7 The Citizen Audit was a consensus conducted in 2000 and 2001 in order to observe civic attitudes and behavior leading up to the 2001 general election. Charles Pattie, Patrick Seyd, and Paul Whiteley used the Citizen Audit as a way to observe participation in non-formal politics in their essay "Civic Attitudes and Engagement in Modern Britain" (2003).
8 Pattie et al, "Civic Attitudes and Engagement in Modern Britain" p. 621
9 Ibid., p. 655
10 Parvin and McHugh. "Defending Representative Democracy: Parties and the Future of Political Engagement in Britain" p. 636
11 Meg Russell. "Must Politics Disappoint?" London: Fabian Society, 2005. p. 42
12 W.H. Morris Jones. "In Defense of Apathy: Some Doubts on the Duty to Vote" Political Studies (Vol. 2, 1954) pp. 25 – 37
13 Jones, "In Defense of Apathy: Some Doubts on the Duty to Vote" pp. 25-37
14 Martin Harrop. "An Apathetic Landslide: The British Election of 2001" Government and Opposition (Vol. 36, issue 3, 2001) p. 310
15 Charles Pattie and Ron Johnston. "A Low Turnout Landslide: Abstention at the British General Election of 1997" Political Studies (Vol. 49, 2001) p. 286
16 John Curtice. "Turnout: Electors Stay Home – Again" Parliamentary Affairs (Vol. 58, issue 4, 2005) pp. 776 – 785
17 Russell, "Must Politics Disappoint?"
18 Ibid., p. 35
19 Harrop, "An Apathetic Landslide: The British Election of 2001" p. 310
20 Ram, "Public Attitudes to Politics, Politicians and Parliament" p. 190
21 Russell, "Must Politics Disappoint?" p. 4
22 Matt Henn, Mark Weinstein, and Sarah Forrest. "Uninterested Youth? Young People's Attitudes Towards Party Politics in Britain" Political Studies (Vol. 53, issue 3, 2005) p. 571
23 Russell, "Must Politics Disappoint?"

24 Judith Bara. "A Question of Trust: Implementing Party Manifestos" Parliamentary Affairs (Vol. 58, issue 3, 2005) p. 589
25 In order to provide a qualitative assessment of manifesto pledges, Bara devised four divisions whereby to classify pledges: vague, general, specific, and detailed (ordered in increasingly clarity and detail). Bara defined a "vague" pledge as one which "stipulates a commitment to a particular course of action but this is defined weakly" and a "general" pledge as one which "commits the party to a particular course of action but lacks precise specification or detail of either the intended outcome or means of implementation" (Bara, 2005, p. 589). Bara's analysis found that the majority of pledges fell within the middle ground classifications of "general" and "specific" but that there has been a progression towards the vague end of the spectrum over the last 20 years.
26 Bara, "A Question of Trust: Implementing Party Manifestos" p. 597
27 Ibid., p. 597
28 Henn et al, "Uninterested Youth? Young People's Attitudes Towards Party Politics in Britain" p. 571
29 Kellner, "Britain's Culture of Detachment" p. 834
30 Ibid., p. 834
31 Henn et al, "Uninterested Youth? Young People's Attitudes Towards Party Politics in Britain" p. 559
32 Ibid., p. 574
33 Richard Kimberlee. "Young People and the 1997 General Election" Renewal (Vol. 6, issue 2, 1998) pp. 87–90
34 Kellner, "Britain's Culture of Detachment"
35 As a cumulative report, the Power Commission incorporates previous explanations (many already referred to in this essay) in its explanation of the causes of disengagement. This essay will only consider point 7 of the Power Commission Report as it contributes a socio-economic explanation not yet considered in this essay but it should be noted that this is not intended to discredit the remaining, uncovered points.
36 Power Commission. (2006). Power to the People. York: York Publishing Distribution. pp. 72-76
37 Ibid., pp. 77-80
38 Ibid., pp. 82-83
39 Ibid., p. 87
40 Ibid., p. 88
41 Ibid., pp. 93-94
42 Ibid,. p. 99
43 Ibid., pp. 99-101
44 Ibid., p. 101
45 Parvin and McHugh, "Defending Representative Democracy: Parties and the Future of Political Engagement in Britain." p. 638
46 Russell, "Must Politics Disappoint?"
47 Parvin and McHugh, "Defending Representative Democracy: Parties and the Future of Political Engagement in Britain." p. 638
48 Ibid.
49 Harrop, "An Apathetic Landslide: The British Election of 2001"
50 Curtice, "Turnout: Electors Stay Home – Again." p. 782
51 Ibid., p. 784
52 See the House of Commons paper "e-Democracy" (2004) written by Keith Parry of the Parliament & Constitution Centre at (http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/notes/snpc-02600.pdf) for a summary of the Government Green Paper "In the service of democracy"

highlighting possible internet solutions; or the House of Commons Select Committee on Modernisation's "Connecting Parliament with the public" (2003/4) at (http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmmodern/368/368.pdf); or the House of Commons Information Committee's report "Digital technology: working for Parliament and the public" at (http://www.e-democracy.gov.uk/knowledgepool/default.htm?mode=1&pk_document=188)

53 Power Commission, p. 215

54 Ibid., p. 214

55 Wainer Lusoli, Stephen Ward, and Rachel Gibson. "(Re)connecting Politics? Parliament, the Public and the Internet." Parliamentary Affairs (Vol. 59, issue 1, 2006) p. 35

56 The NOP poll inquired of general public participants – not limited only to internet users which account for roughly 50 per cent of the population. Therefore, the statistics actually suggest that the public at large is starting to consider the idea of internet voting.

57 Arend Lijphart. Patterns of Democracy (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999)

58 Harrop, "An Apathetic Landslide: The British Election of 2001" p. 311

59 Ram, "Public Attitudes to Politics, Politicians and Parliament" p. 191

60 Russell, "Must Politics Disappoint?" p. 29

61 Kellner, "Britain's Culture of Detachment" p. 840

62 Bara, "A Question of Trust: Implementing Party Manifestos." p. 597

63 Kellner, "Britain's Culture of Detachment." p. 841

64 Russell, "Must Politics Disappoint?"

65 Ram, "Public Attitudes to Politics, Politicians, and Parliament"

66 Lusoli et al, "(Re)connecting Politics? Parliament, the Public and the Internet"

67 James Crabtree, William Davies, and Anna Randle. "Invisible Villages: techno-localism and the enabling council" London: New Local Government Network, 2005. p. 21

68 Lusoli et al, "(Re)connecting Politics? Parliament, the Public and the Internet" p. 27

69 A "blog" is a website that where the creator(s) post frequent messages for other online viewers to read and comment on. Blogs often focus on particular subjects but are sometimes used as essentially online diaries. Since the rise of online blogging around 1995, the webblog has become an extremely popular internet feature.

70 Electoral Commission and Hansard Society. (2004). An audit of political engagement. London: The Electoral Commission and the Hansard Society.

71 U.K. PoliBlogs. (http://www.voidstar.com/ukpoliblog/index.php)

72 Power Commission, p. 45.

73 The Scottish Parliament's e-petitions webpage can be found at (http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/); the Westminster e-petitions webpage can be found at the Number 10 website, (http://www.number10.gov.uk/output/Page297.asp)

74 Keith Parry. "e-Democracy" Report on behalf of the House of Commons Parliament and Constitution Centre, 2004. Last update: 17 September. p. 9

75 The Parliament MP contact list can be found at: (http://www.parliament.uk/directories/hciolists/alms.cfm)

76 Parry, "e-Democracy" p. 9

77 House of Commons Information Committee. (2001). "Digital technology: working for Parliament and the public" First report of session 2001-02.

78 The "WriteToThem" website (www.writetothem.com), formerly "FaxYourMP," generates a custom webpage based on a user's post code. The site provides the specific Councilors, London Assembly Members, Member of Parliament, and Members of the European Parliament for every post code, as well as, a contact form to write a message to each politician.

79 "Epolitix" (www.epolitix.com) is an all-encompassing information website devoted to Westminster, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, London, European Union, and local governments. One can find information on anything from political news to special interviews with political

actors to political blog addresses. It is a truly impressive site that covers a wide breadth of information and political levels.

80 For information on MPs and blogging see the Hansard Society publication "MPs and Blogging: a modern way to communicate? at: (http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/node/view/189)

81 Sadiq Khan's personal MP blog can be found at: (http://www.sadiqkhan.org.uk/blog/sadiqblog.htm)

82 Boris Johnson's personal MP blog can be found at: (http://www.boris-johnson.com/)

83 The Cumbria County Council neighborhood e-forum website can be found at: (http://www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/forum/)

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American Civil Society Assistance: A Comparison of Poland and Egypt

by Joshua Benjamin

Introduction

As part of the United States National Security Strategy, published in 2002, a central aspect of American foreign policy will be helping countries ruled by authoritarian regimes make the transition to democracy. For two reasons, this strategy has recently focused on the Middle East. Firstly, the Arab world is currently the seat of some of the most fervent forms and displays of anti-Americanism. If the United States wishes to pursue a more hegemonic role around the world, it will look to spread democracy that will, it is hoped, help eliminate this anti-Americanism by allowing for everyone to coexist in a liberal world system. Secondly, and most central for the purposes of this paper, is the fact that the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is the least democratic area of the world. According to Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* survey, seventeen out of the eighteen countries that make up the region are either "not free" or "partly free," with a lower percentage of "free" countries in MENA than anywhere else in the world. It is in this area of dismal democratic performance that even the most mild democratization efforts will stand out against a backdrop of otherwise totalitarian regimes. This is a principal reason why the American government has decided to exercise its muscle of democracy assistance there.

Rather than examine the ultimate merit of this grand strategy, and wheth-

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er it will succeed in making the United States more secure in a post-September 11th world, this paper operates within the context of the Security Strategy, and asks what policy, under this strategy, can most effectively accomplish the goal of democratization. One of the Bush administration's key policies in accomplishing this is supporting the growth of civil society, which this paper will examine in four parts.

It begins by defining civil society based on some existing theories of what composes it—both human actors and organizational actors—and how its members can contribute to democratization efforts. The paper proceeds from this foundation to look at a historical instance of civil society playing a significant role in toppling an authoritarian government: pre-democratic Poland. While this may appear irrelevant to a discussion on democracy aid in MENA, it actually provides a functional basis of comparison because of the important role civil society played in democratization there, and the large financial role the United States in allowing this to happen. The paper then looks at Egypt as a case study of a MENA country, studies what the current civil society climate looks like there, and assesses current American policies toward civil society. While discussing Egypt, I will challenge the existing, conventional definition of civil society, under which the United States operates, and show why it is necessary for the United States to shift its civil society paradigm in order to provide the most beneficial and most efficient democracy support. It begins by defining civil society based on some existing theories of what composes it—both human actors and organizational actors—and

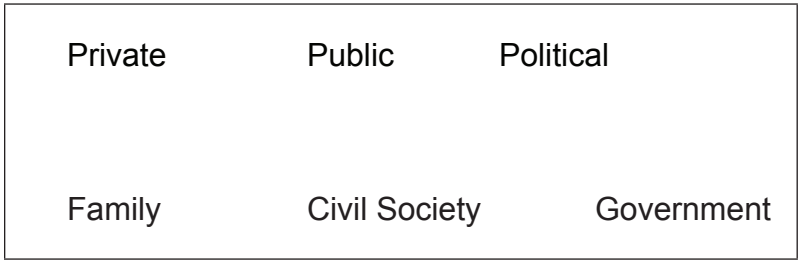
how its members can contribute to democratization efforts. The paper proceeds from this foundation to look at a historical instance of civil society playing a significant role in toppling an authoritarian government: pre-democratic Poland. While this may appear irrelevant to a discussion on democracy aid in MENA, it actually provides a functional basis of comparison because of the important role civil society played in democratization there, and the large financial role the United States in allowing this to happen. The paper then looks at Egypt as a case study of a MENA country, studies what the current civil society climate looks like there, and assesses current American policies toward civil society. While discussing Egypt, I will challenge the existing, conventional definition of civil society, under which the United States operates, and show

why it is necessary for the United States to shift its civil society paradigm in order to provide the most beneficial and most efficient democracy support.

This paper then compares the two countries of Poland and Egypt, and explains how the experience of one country's transition to democracy, the speed and efficiency of which came as a shock to many outside observers, is indeed possible in Egypt, a nation-state that is currently on a doubtful path to democracy, but which may end up surprising the world. I conclude by recognizing the arguments that could be made against civil society assistance, and by looking at what the future holds for civil society as a cornerstone of democracy.

Civil Society: Operating in the Cracks

In order to define what is, in reality, an ambiguous concept, it helps to envision civil society as part of a spectrum of associational life, rather than as a separate and independent organ. The associational spectrum looks as follows:



At one end of the spectrum lies the family, or private life, where interaction with a small, knowable group of people is socially obligatory. Within the family structure, people's actions occur within the physical walls of a house, or within the figurative walls of the family structure. Events in the family structure are not far-reaching.

At the other end of the spectrum we find political life: the area where political actors, electoral activities, and government speeches are

relatively public, but where individual citizens have difficulty gaining access because of the elitist and exclusive nature inherent to even the most liberal government.

In the middle of the spectrum lies civil society, or public life. The hardest to understand and define of all the ranges on the associational spectrum, civil society is composed of the following: (a) any voluntary organization—including professional organizations, officially recognized non-governmental organizations, business bureaus, grassroots organizations, unions, and advocacy groups—that is not kinship-based, and that is also not part of any governmental structure; (b) any political party that is either not represented or under-represented in the national and local governments; and (c) independent journalists and journalistic outlets.

It has been suggested by some theorists that religious organizations in non-theocratic states also belong in civil society because they operate outside of the realm of the state. This appears to be an especially apt addition to the definition, given the success of the highly organized Catholic Church to operate in Poland's public sphere. Particularly in officially Muslim states, like Egypt, where Islam plays such an important role in society, individual religious organizations may operate independently of the state: since Islamic law stipulates the superiority of Islam over government, it more difficult for the state to extend its reach into Islamic organizations than into other types of organizations.

Another important key to understanding civil society is its fractiousness. As John Keane, a British political philosopher writes, "Modern civil society is a restless battlefield where interest meets interest."[1] In other words, the variation of opinion that is absent in a pre-democratic government begins to appear in the civil society that exists under that government. In a liberal democracy, the government reflects the multi-faceted nature of civil society. However, this is not the case in illiberal states where government is so unreflective of citizen interests that civil society exists in a separate sphere entirely. In liberal democracies, disputes among citizens, within civil society, can be transposed onto the government which then resolves them civilly. Autocratic governments, on the

other hand, are so far removed from the events of civil society that resolution of conflicting interests must necessarily happen in the ungoverned civil society sphere.

It seems paradoxical that in countries where the government is the most forceful in taking away individual freedoms, individual civil society actors have the most room to maneuver and fight. Since "civil society gives freedom to despots and democrats alike," ruptures within civil society are bound to occur. When they do, the unresponsive state is not a sufficient outlet for the grievances and thus they must resolve them alone, often violently and inconclusively.
Interestingly, Keane suggests that including journalism in the civil society definition will lead to discouraging results because encouraging journalistic openness before the arrival of government openness may actually prevent an effective, non-violent civil society from forming. He reasons that a rise in journalistic openness inherently heralds a rise in violence, as:

> "sophisticated means of public and private communication ensure that images of violence are circulated more or less freely to large numbers of people. That is to say, freedom of communication within civil society ensures that violence against others can and is often turned into entertainment."[2]

However, this argument seems to assume that an understanding of increased visibility will inspire organizations to take more extreme, theatrical actions. In truth, it seems that with the ability of open journalism to make more people aware of what individual organizations do, the individual organizations would be embarrassed of the visibility and would resort to the controlled tactic of adopting more reasonable, rational methods to accomplish their goals.

Civil society is, according to some theorists, a necessary foundation for a functional democracy. It provides a non-governmental outlet for individual expression and small-scale, often local democracy which gives citizens of a pre-democratic state the chance to experience democracy at

a relatively tangible and accessible level. Given that the world's most successful democracies have robust civil societies, theorists such as Amy Hawthorne suggest that, "Under the right conditions, civil society can contribute to the democratization of authoritarian regimes and can help sustain a democratic system once it is established."[3]

This idea implies that in order to have a long-lasting democracy, it is best not to implement democracy from above, and from the outset—as the United States tried to do in Iraq—since the underlying civil structure that allows for its survival is nonexistent. Rather, it makes more sense to provide for a robust civil society so that the practice of democracy on the low level of neighborhoods, businesses, and interest groups can sustain democracy on the higher level of the national government.

Poland

Pre-Democratic Civil Society

The first image that comes to most people's minds of civil society in pre-democratic Poland is the picture of Lech Walesa standing on a podium addressing the shipyard workers on strike in Gdansk. Operating outside of the political sphere, Solidarity, the union organizing this strike, grew into a large, monolithic organization that eventually helped bring about the fall of communism. The notion of civil society, however, was not foreign to pre-Solidarity Poland. The communist government established "a dense network of organizations and movements," which, although created and controlled by the communist central government, laid the foundations for Poles' later move to embrace civil society organizations and effectively use them to achieve their own ends of democratization.[4]

As Janina Frentzel-Zagorska points out in her *Soviet Studies* article on civil society in Poland and Hungary, one reason for the success of civil society in Poland is that it did not meet the traditional definition of civil society as a fractious body, full of multi-faceted interests. In Poland, Solidarity presented itself as a "mono-organization," around which civil

society actors from across the spectrum could rally.[5] This was important for civil society growth because it allowed for group coherence in the fight against communism. However, there is a distinct disadvantage to this as well, one which Frentzel-Zagorksa fails to mention: being the sole visible civil society actor provided the communist government with an easy target, which became eminently clear when the Polish communist government declared martial law in 1981 and outlawed Solidarity.

Another important piece of the civil society picture in pre-democratic Poland was the importance of the Catholic Church. Its dominance in Polish society and its tight organizational structure allowed it to use the religious space it occupied to give room to free expression. The Church sponsored the publication of dissident ideas and public discussions of the political situation, and supported such organizations as Solidarity once the government's declaration of martial law forced them underground. Furthermore, in a survey conducted in 1984, Poles ranked the Catholic Church first in a list of "most trusted national institutions," which gave it a power to directly inject ideas of democratization into the lives of most Poles.[6]

American Support for Polish Civil Society

Under the Support for East European Democracy program (SEED), the United States gave, on average, $360 million per year between 1989 and 1994.[7] The bulk of this support went to civil society organizations, so that the money could bypass the government and be used most effectively.[8] What is more important here is to notice the starting year of this program. Only after Solidarity demonstrated its success did the United States begin to contribute to individual democracy-promoting organizations in Poland. Before 1989, support was minimal, which shows the need for the United States to more quickly identify who should receive civil society assistance so that democratization does not delay. This will become imperative when the discussion turns to Egypt later in the paper: the United States should begin investing in democracy at the ground floor so that it can play a stronger role in bringing about a functional democracy. It should not wait until a more visible civil society develops to begin supporting it.

Life after Communism

By the end of 1994, five years after the first democratic elections in Poland, there were over 29,580 registered associations, along with 12,216 regional affiliates.[9] In April 2004, Poland had nearly 46,000 registered associations and about 7,000 foundations officially registered.[10] As democracy in Poland has consolidated over the past decade, the population of the civil society range on the associational spectrum has increased as well. Poland has not reverted back to a pre-democratic government. Thus, one can assume that it is at least in part due to the significance of civil society organizations in Polish public life that this has not happened.

Egypt

Public Life as it Stands Now

As of January 2003, there were 16,000 associations registered with the Egyptian Ministry of Social Affairs.[11] This figure includes every kind of group mentioned above in the definition of civil society: business associations, NGOs, political parties, among others. Many of these officially recognized organizations embody surprisingly liberal platforms, like the Cairo Center for Human Rights Studies, the Institute for Gender and Women's Studies, and the Egyptian Green Party.

One of these organizations, the Association for Human Rights Legal Aid, based at Cairo University, engaged in the monitoring Egypt's 2005 parliamentary elections,an event that could at least be perceived as an overture to democracy. However, Egyptian National Law 84/2002 establishes penalties for participating in unregistered NGOs, a qualification that undermines the freedom of civil society. The fact that pro-democracy civil society organizations like the Association of Human Rights Legal Aids exist in the face of such hostility to NGOs should encourage increased foreign investment to support the expansion of civil society and the eventual growth of democracy.

Current American Aid

For all the failures of the Bush administration's plan for democratic assistance in Iraq, governmental efforts to spread democracy elsewhere in MENA have the potential to be more effective. These organizations include the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), an independent agency operating in cooperation with the State Department; the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), also operating under the State Department; and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), an independent organization that receives heavy government funding.

One of the central initiatives of MEPI is the small grants program, which gives grants of between $10,000 and $25,000 to "local members of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and universities, to undertake democracy and reform projects."[12] The application form explains what MEPI considers valid civil society actors: "non-governmental organizations (NGOs), women's groups, and professional associations at the grassroots level that are committed to building democracies and undertaking reform and can be expected to play a role of growing influence and importance in the future."[13]

While such a high level of support for small, grassroots organization must be recognized, it is also necessary to see what the MEPI small grants application leaves out and who it will implicitly not support. Most notable among the excluded groups are religious groups, which, as Fareed Zakaria surmises, might hold the key to democratizing the Arab world. He explains:

> "The Arab world is a political desert with no real political parties, no free press, and few pathways for dissent. As a result, the mosque became the place to discuss politics. As the only place that cannot be banned in Muslim societies, it is where all the hate and opposition toward the regimes collected and grew. The language of religion became, in these lands, the language of resistance."[14]

By failing to mention the less liberal and less free society that can result

when religious organizations are too successful at embedding themselves in a country's political space, Zakaria's assessment of the potential of religion to create a viable alternative to autocracy is overly optimistic.

However, his point can serve as a basis on which MEPI can reassess the recipients of its funds. Because religion, in the Arab world, is the only area that escapes the tentacular reach of the state, religious organizations have the power to undermine the state by giving voice to an opposition that lies within the untouchable walls of the mosque. While many religious organizations are illiberal fundamentalist organizations that, because of their traditionally anti-American tendencies, should not receive MEPI funds, there are many religious organizations that are neither fundamentalist nor overtly anti-American. It would be in MEPI's interest to find and study these organizations because supporting them might be the most effective way of encouraging the spread of democracy in Egypt.

The effectiveness of religion as a building block for democracy becomes more apparent when one considers Zakaria's explanation of the potential power of Islamic organizations:

> "Fundamentalist organizations have done more than talk. From the Muslim Brotherhood to Hamas to Hizbullah, they actively provide social services, medical assistance, counseling, and temporary housing. For those who treasure civil society, it is disturbing to see that in the Middle East these illiberal groups *are* civil society."[15]

It is natural that fundamentalist organizations, with the most funding and the most resources available to their fellow citizens, would garner the support they do. Regardless of an organization's philosophy, poor and destitute Egyptians will flock to fundamentalist organizations—just as poor Italians flocked to the Fascists and as poor New Yorkers flocked to the Tamany Hall political machine—because they can give them the social structure that the government fails to provide. Since their effectiveness at providing for citizens has been proven, MEPI should take care to assess which of these fundamentalist organizations are not dangerous to American interests, and should support these groups. In addition, as Cairo University professor Mustapha Al-Sayyid points out,

> "Those who carry out educational, medical, social and political activities in mosques and churches are not traditional clergymen, *shaykhs*, or priests, but young professionals who received their education in the country's Western-type universities and who are alienated for a variety of reasons from the country's social and political system."[16]

This suggests that the hostility of an American government organization to support an overtly religious organization can be mollified with the knowledge that many of their supporters are relatively westernized young professionals who are disenfranchised by the current situation in their country. Furthermore, many Islamic NGOs are completely apolitical, which reduces the danger in supporting them even more. One could argue that democracy could not arise from an apolitical organization, but by looking at Solidarity and the Catholic Church, which at the beginning of democratization were apolitical organizations, it appears that organizations like these can become political and effect change.

MEPI's funding policy should go deeper into the civil society of the countries it helps. One notable failure of the small grant application is that, while anyone can apply, not everyone who is worthy may know how to apply, or may not even know that this fund exists. For this reason, it is necessary for the State Department to send people in, at the grassroots level, to discover the highly local, but nevertheless highly important organizations that may fit the requirements of the grant program and yet are excluded. The program, as it stands now, is passive, such that potential grant recipients must take the initiative to apply to MEPI. In order to more effectively disburse its funds, and to efficiently encourage democracy starting at the lowest levels of civil society, the State Department needs to take a more active role and send civil society experts, fluent in Arabic, to study which organizations are the most worthy recipients of funds.

An additional failure of American policy came with the establishment of the NGO Service Center, funded by USAID and sponsored by the Egyptian Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs. To be eligible for assistance from the Service Center, an NGO must be registered with

the Ministry, under the Associations Law 153 of 1999. Unfortunately, organizations that are at political odds with the government will continue to go unrecognized, and will thus miss out on the opportunity to receive financial or operational assistance. Additionally, professional associations, which do not fall under the Associations Law, are also not eligible.[17]

Poland and Egypt: A Comparison

For purposes of comparison, I provide a table that paints a picture of pre-democratic civil society in Poland and Egypt:

POLAND	EGYPT
"several hundred large, centralized organizations"[18]	23 trade unions, according to Al-Sayyid[19]
	Approx. 16,000 registered NGOs
Approx. 90% Catholic	Approx. 90% Muslim
Declaration of martial law when Solidarity deemed to be too influential	Some limitations of state power, and more independence for civil society groups[20]
1 main, visible civil society organization	Many civil society organizations, none of which have prominence

It is apparent that Egypt today has more civil society organizations than Poland had before the collapse of communism. As such, this should come as an optimistic sign that from this dense network of civil society groups, at least some could provide the inspiration for democracy that civil society groups in Poland provided. Optimism grows when one looks at the level of religious attachment in each country, and when the role the Catholic Church played in Poland's historical example of democratization is taken into account.

According to Graham Fuller, a former vice-chairman of the CIA's

National Intelligence Council, "It would not be an exaggeration to state that Islamists are probably more focused on civil society and the creation of institutions within it than any other political force in the Muslim world."[21] The similarity between the Catholic Church's role in Polish democratization and the potential of Islamic organizations to bring about change in Egypt is striking. Given the number of people associated with Islam in Egypt, the fact that its religious organizations are promoting civil society growth should be a sign that a religion-oriented democratization may occur there, just as it did in Poland. Coupled with the relatively high number of civil society organizations (compared to Poland) that already exist in Egypt, the prospects for a political change to arise out of civil society organizations seems imminent.

Another issue that distinguishes the American contribution in Poland from that in Egypt is the level of financial support. In contrast with SEED, which provided Eastern Europe with an average of $350 million per year over the course of five years, MEPI's budget has averaged $73.2 million per year between 2002, its founding year, and 2005.[22] Additionally, an interesting and potentially damaging critique to the argument that civil society is the harbinger of democracy is revealed in surveys conducted in Poland between 1981 and 1986, an average of only 25% of Poles supported the leadership. In a 1986 survey, 53% saw Poland's "negative state of affairs" as the government's fault.[23] Similar levels of dissatisfaction with the government do not surface in contemporary Egypt, which may show that Polish civil society's ability to encroach on the communist government's political space, and ultimately destroy it from the ground up, may be the product of the uniquely low level of support that was already in existence.

Conclusion

Sean Yom provides two critiques of what he sees as the heady notion that civil society growth will allow for the appearance of Arab democracy. He states first that the difficulties in deciding what comprises civil society preclude its success as a tool for democratization, and that too much of the process of choosing which groups to support depends on

the limited number of groups that analysts decide to study. Secondly, he states that given the historical tendency of Arab governments to survive in the face of civil society's encroachments on their power, any civil society growth now merely underlines their "stubborn instinct for survival."[24]

A response to his first critique must be prefaced with a recognition of the difficulties inherent in identifying civil society actors, and the ability of those difficulties to hinder effective transmission of funds to the organizations that should receive them. However, it seems somewhat defeatist to say that the reason not to give financial assistance to civil society organizations is that it is simply too difficult to analyze which organizations are worthy of funding. Given the effectiveness of civil society in Poland, and the effectiveness of American funds in supporting civil society there (made slightly easier due to Solidarity's worldwide visibility), it seems that Yom would see that while it is difficult to analyze the recipients of funding, the task is not impossible. If the money devoted to top-down democratization efforts, such as those currently in place in Iraq, were channeled to fact-finding missions to assess which organizations should receive funding, Yom's first problem with civil society assistance might be solved.

Yom's second critique of civil society as an invalid method for government reform is more difficult to answer because it is a historically irrefutable fact that Arab governments seem to have a tenacity to survive that is unequalled elsewhere in the world. Nevertheless, we notice that in the past, every pre-democratic region of the world has had observers point to it and remark on the impossibility of democracy ever reaching there. Latin America, Iberian Europe, Southeast Asia, and, most recently, Eastern Europe, have all been regions that for various cultural or political reasons—Catholicism, Confucianism, or totalitarian communism—was seen to be innately hostile to democracy. Therefore, in response to Yom's pointing to history as grounds for the impossibility of reform, I point to history as demonstrating the potential for reform in a seemingly impossible environment.

Steven Cook sees that the failure of civil society to democratize the

Arab world lies with "flawed institutions"—institutions that "ensure the authoritarian character of the regimes."[25] Cook jumps to the conclusion that intense institutionalization of the regime and the state's reaches into society are reasons why civil society promotion is inherently ineffective. What he fails to see, however, is the historical irrelevance of this point: other societies, including Poland, with the notorious Communist bureaucracy that beset democracy across Eastern Europe, and with its apparent lack of openings for civil society space, have had deeply entrenched political institutions, but were still able to democratize. The key to effective democratization is not to let "flawed institutions" stand in the way, but to devote more resources to organizations that can dig into the holes of government institutions and scrape away at the totalitarian regime's political space. In addition, civil society assistance can be made more effective by widening the scope of assistance and deepening the levels of support where this assistance can travel.

If the United States wants to fulfill the goals of democratization, as laid forth in the 2002 National Security Strategy, then it would be best to continue the policies of supporting civil society in Egypt, and MENA in general, and to make these policies more effective by expanding and deepening the reach of American assistance funds. In this way, MENA would have a greater potential to follow in the path of Poland and other Eastern European countries and might surprise the world with democracy's ability to take root there.

Notes

1. John Keane. *Civil Society: Old Images, New Visions.* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998): 50.
2 Keane, 148-149.
3 Amy Hawthorne, "Is Civil Society the Answer?" *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East. Eds. Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway*. (Washington: Brookings Institution Press): 82.
4 Jan Kubik and Grzegorz Ekiert. "Civil Society from Abroad: the Role of Foreign Assistance in the Democratization of Poland." Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, working paper 00-01. February 2000. <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/kuj01>.
5 Janina Frentzel-Zagorska. "Civil Society in Poland and Hungary." *Soviet Studies* 42 (4): 769.
6 Ewa Moraska, "On Barriers to Pluralism in Pluralist Poland." *Slavic Review*, 47 (4): 637.
7 Steven W. Hook. "Inconsistent Efforts to Promote Democracy Abroad." *Exporting Democracy: Rhetoric vs. Reality*. Ed. Peter J. Schraeder. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 2002): 114.
8 Kubik and Ekiert.
9 Ibid.

10 "Polish Voluntary Sector," http://english.ngo.pl/strona/48315.html
11 "State-Civil Society Relations: Egypt." Programme on Governance in the Arab Region. http://www.pogar.org/countries/civil.asp?cid=5
12 "MEPI Small Grants Program Application."http://manama.usembassy.gov/bahrain/img/assets/5816/MEPI-SG-Application.pdf
13 Ibid.

14 Fareed Zakaria. *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003): 142.
15 Ibid, 142.
16 Mustapha K. Al-Sayyid, "A Civil Society in Egypt?" in *Civil Society in the Middle East*, ed. Augustus Norton. (New York: Leiden, 1995): 275.
17 Mustapha K. Al-Sayyid, "A Clash of Values" in *Civil Society Aid and Democracy Promotion,* eds. Marina Ottaway and Thomas Carothers. (Washington: Carnegie Endowment, 2000): 59-60.
18 Kubik and Ekiert.
19 Al-Sayyid, "A Civil Society in Egypt?" 274.
20 Ibid, 280.
21 "Two Theories," *Economist*, 11 September 2003.
22 Thomas Carothers. "A Better Way to Support Middle East Reform." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, policy brief 33. February 2005: 4.
23 Frentzel-Zagorska, 763.
24 Sean L. Yom, "Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World." *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 9 (4): 14-15.
25 Steven A. Cook, "The Right Way to Promote Arab Reform," *Foreign Affairs* 84 (2): 96.

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NGOs in Latin America: Successes and Limitations in Deepening Democracy

by Daniella Burgi-Palomino

Introduction

Latin America has been called one of the most unequal regions of the industrialized and the developing world. The gap between the rich and the poor has been growing consistently, while certain ethnic groups have continued to be marginalized and prohibited from the rights and obligations their citizenship offers them, to any form of participation or voice in the political process of their country. Needles to say many of the countries in Latin America are only beginning to complete their transition to democratic governments, while many are far from it, retreating backwards to anti-democratic forms of government or still remain in the process of transition. The role of non-governmental organizations in this process of deepening democracy in Latin America has received renewed interests in recent years as these countries have faced growing international pressure to have more democratic institutions and mechanisms and increase development in all sectors of their society. Not only international actors, but Latin American governments have themselves increasingly turned towards NGOs not only to fill the gap caused by cutbacks in state services, but also as a way to contribute to democratization through support for civil society.[1] Non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, not only in Latin America, but in other regions of the world have been seen and have acted as vehicles for strengthening civil society, thus increasing and creating more developed and democratic notions and institutions in the process.

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Yet the question of how exactly NGOs have helped to deepen democracy in Latin America and furthermore what their limitations in the process have been and are, remains. The NGO presence varies perhaps as greatly or more than the very distinct and unique Latin American countries. What exactly have all of these different types of NGOs done then to increase democracy? Has the fact that a majority of their funding comes from Northern international organizations and governments hindered their role in the quickening the transition to democracy at all? Why have NGOs even had to increase democracy in Latin America, what does this say about the quality of the state there, and will they ultimately be able to continue doing so in the future? This essay will seek to answer all of these questions while most importantly analyzing the ways in which NGOs have increased democracy, and the ways they have been limited in doing so.

I will argue that NGOs have helped to deepen democracy in Latin America through their role as the supplement to the state in which the programs they sought to implement and issues they advocated for were either directly related to or going against specific anti-democratic regimes, or sought to increase and develop the participation of the citizen in some way. Consequently their limitations in the process were due to the very structure of the NGO model in Latin America.

The question around which this essay revolves, that of how exactly NGOs have helped to increase democracy in Latin American countries and their limitations in the process brings us to far deeper questions of NGO-state relations, Northern funding of Southern NGOs, democracy in relation to civil society, and NGOs as vehicles of strengthening civil society. Much more than just being pertinent to Latin America, this question forces us to analyze the NGO structure and whether it is indeed conducive to democracy and whether democracy can indeed exist without actors within civil society such as NGOs.

Debates About Civil Society and Democracy

The notion that civil society is necessary for democracy to exist and flourish is not a recent one. It has existed in literature, which has highlighted

the democratic importance of civil society, which NGOs are a part of, in several major ways. Among the theories of the democratic capability of actors within civil society, the essential role of NGOs to democracy as "academies for democratic learning" the role of NGOs within civil society as foremost institutions that are separate from the state, and NGOs as channels for social movements and participation has been included in this literature.[2] It is these roles that are found in the literature discussing the intimate relationship between democracy and civil society in which it is emphasized that democracy truly cannot exist without a strong civil society, and thus why it makes sense that NGOs as a part of civil society would maintain and increase democracy.

In calling NGOs in civil society, "academies for democratic learning", Charles Reilly emphasizes their ability to serve as institutions through which people can learn about democracy, and through which democracy can then exist successfully. This particular theory of the role of civil society and especially NGOs to serve as these centers of democratic learning relates to theories of political culture. Citizens of a nation-state are said to have a weak political culture when they do not understand the importance of or do not prefer democratic institutions or governments to authoritarian ones. NGOs, and other groups within civil society, serve to educate people about democratic processes by illustrating and advocating against the mistakes and wrongs in anti-democratic institutions and governments. In relation to Latin America, not only have surveys shown that citizens of most countries have a weak political culture, and do not know how to be good "democratic citizens", but also that they have become disenchanted with democracy and more specifically democratic transition, so much so that even when there is a somewhat successful democratic state, Latin Americans would rather turn to authoritarian regimes for better immediate results in their life or political situations.[3] Latin American citizens have thus largely turned to civil society for places to learn how to become these good citizens and fully exercise their democratic citizenship.

The second group of theories, which often brings up the essential relationship of civil society, or more importantly NGOs, in relation to the existence of democracy, is that of NGOs as a separate entity to the state. These theories have been manifested in a variety of ways, all of which emphasize that

NGOs have taken up the roles of the government when there were situations that prohibited the government from carrying out or completing its duties successfully, or when government simply was weak and anti-democratic, thus failing to provide its citizens with adequate services and goods. The first part of this idea can be expressed in what is known as "government failure theory", basically meaning hat there are inherent limitations in the government as a provider of "collective goods", such as that in a democratic society, government would not be able to produce collective goods that would satisfy a segment of the population, leaving an "unsatisfied demand" for collective goods.[4] This theory reflects the nature of NGOs as complements to governments existing to fill this "unsatisfied demand" especially more so when countries have a heterogeneous population having many different needs, as exists for example in Latin America..[5] Inherent in these two theories is the ability of NGOs and civil society to carry out the democratic processes and provide goods and services the government was supposed to be providing when it cannot or simply does not. In Latin America, a main way in which NGOs, as part of civil society have added to the existence of democracy is by providing the services the government would usually provide because authoritarian or weak regimes made it impossible for the government to do so well enough.

Related to this second theory is the idea that is perhaps more related to the situation of NGOs in Latin America that of their position in civil society as an anti-governmental entity, as their name defines them. Indeed the term "non-governmental" defines NGOs as independent organizations in opposition to government.[6] The history of the presence of NGOs in Latin America has its roots in opposition to authoritarian and other anti-democratic governments and forces. Implicit in this opposition to government is the idea that a well-developed civil society aggregates and expresses the wishes of the public through a wealth of nongovernmental forms of associations and safeguards public freedom by limiting the government's ability to impose arbitrary rule by force.[7] It is not just through direct opposition to the government that NGOs promote democracy, but through directly fighting the government and attempting to limit and prevent it from going further in its anti-democratic strategies.

Finally, another very important group of theories suggest that civil society

is essential to democracy and that democracy cannot exist without a vibrant civil society, especially NGOs, because of their ability to serve as channels for social movement and social participation. According to the 1993 United Nations Development Programme HDR (Human Development Report), governments need to find new ways to give people greater influences and participation in decision making, and unless this is done, and done in time, the irresistible tide of people's rising aspirations will inevitably clash with inflexible systems, leading to anarchy and chaos. A rapid transition and strengthening of the institutions of civil society are the only appropriate responses.[8] Michael Walzer also observed that implicit in the focus of civil society is the argument that democracy requires a strong and lively society- if not for the sake of its initial formation then for the sake of its coherence and stability over time.[9] Schools of thought on social movements, which NGOs help create as parts of civil society, have emphasized and viewed social movements as actively creating alternative spaces for new democratic practices.[10] These observations refer then to the strength of civil society and in particular NGOs to serve as channels for citizen participation and social movements that would have otherwise not existed, yet which remain so much at the core of democracy.

As the previous theories mentioned have related the positive effects of civil society on democracy there are also ideas on why Latin American democracy is so weak because of a lack of vibrant civil society. These theories are fundamental to our question about how NGOs have been able to deepen democracy in Latin American and their limitations in doing so because they relate directly to how NGOs have attempted to overcome the weak quality of democracy in Latin America by strengthening civil society. The weakness of Latin American democracy is understood as not the prospect for regime survival but in terms of the failure of political systems to operate on the basis of citizen preference and to translate those preferences and needs into policy.[11] Latin American states in other words have had weak qualities of democracies because political systems, often suffered "crises of representations", meaning that they were ineffective and unable to incorporate all of their citizen's needs into policy. Indeed the weak quality of democracy in Latin American states has rested mainly on the inability of important segments of the population to gain access to democratic political institutions, and traditions of clientalism and patrimonialism within the political systems, which have further complicated

extending political citizenship to all sectors of the population.[12] Therefore, the most important root of the weakness of the quality of Latin American democracy is the weak quality of its citizenship of its people because it has been harshly constrained in a variety of ways.

To conclude this part of the essay which attempts to illustrate the various theories of the relationship between civil society and democracy, highlighting the importance of the existence of civil society for democracy to be successful and for the reason behind a weak quality of democracy being a lacking strong civil society, I will end with two quotes from authors I have already mentioned. Theories of domestic civil society's role in democratization have highlighted the importance of autonomous interaction among individuals, groups and organizations in the public sphere as a counterbalance to state-dominated action.[13]. Furthermore, for democracy to flourish, individuals must be capable of articulating their political preference, organizing collectively in civil society, and participating both individually and through civic associations in the political process.[14]

Evidence – Examples of Three Types of NGOs, Their Successes and Limitations in Deepening Democracy

The previous theories have been cited to illustrate the variety of thought there is surrounding the relationship between civil society, in particular NGOs, and democracy and to emphasize the vital need for a strong civil society with the presence of NGOs to deepen and strengthen the quality of democracy in a state. There is no better evidence to support the theories and my argument (in response to the question of how NGOs have exactly helped to deepen democracy and to view their limitations in the process) that they have done by supplanting the state, and thus advocating and seeking change in issues relating to specific anti-democratic regimes or carried out programs to widen citizen participation and access, than by analyzing the work of specific NGOs in Latin America. An example of a national women's health NGO in Nicaragua, an example of a smaller grassroots NGO in Peru, and finally the work of a big transnational Northern based NGO in Colombia will be reviewed highlighting how specifically they deepened democracy in their respective locations, the relations they held with the state and if this added to the their success, and their limitations or

any setbacks in the process. They are presented as representatives of the three types of NGOs found in Latin America, and as examples of how other NGOs within their own category have similarly deepened democracy or similarly been constrained in doing so in Latin America.

Before analyzing these specific NGOs it is important to realize what types of NGOs exist for the most part in Latin American and what categories the NGOs we will be analyzing belong to. There are Northern NGOs, which are those often international organizations based in North America or in Europe. Northern NGOs, as they are called, because of their existence in the developed world, are NGOs that usually supply funds for or implement projects in one or more than one country in the developing world, or the global South, or work through other organizations in the global South. They receive most of their funding from governments and private foundations. The second type of NGO, the one there is probably the most of in Latin America, is called a Southern NGO, which again refers to its existence, and its being based in the developing world, in this context in Latin America. Southern NGOs get most of their financial support from Northern NGOs and Northern governments or other international organizations. Middle class professionals usually staff southern NGOs as well as Northern NGOs, and Southern NGOs also act as bridges between Northern NGOs and governments, and smaller grassroots organizations. Finally the last type of NGO can be a called popular or grassroots organization, and they include neighborhood associations, agricultural cooperatives, peasant unions, and women's groups. Although we will show examples of each of these three in this essay, it is important to realize that the three are very much connected and that by looking at one of these types you are essentially looking at the other two as well at the same time.

A) Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa in Nicaragua

The first NGO that will be analyzed is that of women's health organization called "Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa". It is an example of a Southern national NGO that is based in Nicaragua, is active only in Nicaragua, and receives some international funding through the mass women's organization Centro de la Mujer IXCHEN which directs about twenty-six other

colectivos. Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa has a defined structure for decision-making and accounting purposes, and is run by middle class professional women.[15] To understand the services provided by Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa, as it is before anything a service-oriented organization, and how they came to provide those services in doing so, deepening democracy in Nicaragua, it is important to analyze a bit of the history of the women's movement in Nicaragua.

The "colectivos", like the Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa, began as a group of women from the professional workers' associations who began to see the need to organize themselves, to provide the badly needed direct services for women's health care, such as cervical cancer screenings and family planning, and also to provide a place for women to discuss issues and learn from each other. In doing so they were attempting to change the way women thought about health and themselves. These first women began the Colectivo de Masaya in 1988 out of the "Confederacion de Profesionales", a professional workers group. They became the forerunner of other colectivos such as the Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa. These women saw the need to provide direct health care services, as the public health service sector in Nicaragua was one that had been slowly deteriorating, and spending in the sector was decreasing, making existing public services more costly and less accessible to all women in the region. In 1988, under the Sandanista party, public health consisted about 5% of the GDP, but after 1990 and 1991 with the ushering in of the Chamorro administration, health spending dropped below 3% of the GDP, only slightly increasing by 1992.[16] Here we see clearly how the women recognized the need for more adequate health care services because of the inefficient manner the state was providing them in and at the same time saw that more services were needed to reach the poorer population of women. Perhaps what the Colectivo de Matagalpa would come to do best in relation to our question of how have NGOs deepened democracy was not simply to provide services, but to work with the state to create effective local health services by and after 1995.

The Colectivo de Matagalpa was able to reach an agreement with the state to run a program to train midwives and to distribute its educational feminist publications on women's health care methods, among other programs be-

cause of a variety of reasons. First, the founder of the Matagalpa Colectivo who had died by the time this program was made effective had worked as a midwife herself for the state health services for seven years before starting the Colectivo. In the time that she had worked there she had setup a small agreement in which the Colectivo would train midwives in the northern region of Nicaragua and grant state midwife certification. She had begun a relationship of cooperation that would only increase in later years. Another of the major reasons the Colectivo was able to advance its programs and suggest them to the state was because of the President Chamorro's administration's goal to decentralize the national health system into local systems, implementing the national health strategy according to the needs of the local population and their resources. Because of this decentralization it was in the state's interest to work with Colectivos, such as the Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa, and take suggestions from them to realize what the local population of women needed best. This openness of the state to work with the local health systems was also seen in the attitude of the Minister of Health, Marta Palacio, who was favorable to the many projects proposed by the women's health centers. It was not only the openness of the state to localize the health systems, the experience of past state health workers leading the NGO, and the willingness of health ministers such as Marta Palacio, however that helped the Colectivo to be so successful in influencing state women's policy. It was furthermore also direct pressure from the NGO on the state, making the state realize that the programs they were leading, training all populations of women to be health workers and educating them about themselves in different ways, were successful. One member of the Minister of Health in fact confirmed in an interview that a 1995 government policy on child and maternal health resulted directly from pressure by a Colectivo.[17]

The results of this successful cooperation with the state were seen in the following programs the Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa was able to implement. By 1995 the Nicaraguan Health Minister under President Chamorro, Marta Palacio, had sent a national health team to this particular Colectivo to learn how this women's center provided services in health care and health care training so effectively, to eventually copy the model. In later months of 1995, other members who worked at the Colectivo and had had experience working with the government, expanded the programs they

worked together to include the state contracting the Colectivo to evaluate the performance of local health systems, known as SILAIS (Sistemas Locales de Atencion Integral al Salud), and providing the state with proposals for new programs, such as suggesting to train local auxiliary nurses in basic health issues.[18]

Although it is obvious that the Colectivo de Matagalpa would not have been able to reach such agreements and work with the state so effectively had it not been for the conditions surrounding them, and that this is probably the best and perhaps somewhat rare instance of NGO-state cooperation in Nicaragua and among other Latin American countries, we can still learn much from the work this Colectivo did in deepening democracy. What began as an NGO that existed to replace the services of a weak sector of the state and to provide services to sectors of the population that the government could not and did not provide, which was greatly also because of a lack of government funds in the health sector in general, turned into an organization whose true success lay in being able to influence government health policies, provide forums for women to discuss and learn about each other, while at the same time educating and teaching women in health professions. In this manner, they provided channels for women to associate and create dialogue, served as "academies for democratic learning", in Charles Reilly's words, in more ways than one, and influenced health policy so that it could aid all groups of women in the population. There is no doubt then, that the Colectivo de Matagalpa, the women's health NGO in Nicaragua, managed to deepen democracy in these ways.

Yet, as much as the specific ways in which this NGO was able to deepen democracy, and the government policies it directly influenced serve as the best form of evidence for their doing so, it is also important to analyze their limitations in the longer-term attempts at deepening democracy. Perhaps most obviously because so much of the success this NGO had in being able to influence state policy came from the attitudes and backgrounds of the figures that were leading both the NGO itself and the government health sector at the time, we can determine that how much an NGO can accomplish in deepening democracy by influencing state policies in any sector of society is clearly dependent on the state institutions and the political views of those holding office in them. The work and success of this NGO

have made it clear that when any parts of the state are favorable to NGO goals, cooperation with it is an effective means of achieving policy goals, and that cooperation between NGOs and the state has perhaps much more democratic potential than any of the two entities working alone.

Secondly, as much as the Colectivo was successful in providing services in health care to poorer women that the state had not been able to provide, and at the same time attempting to empower women, a limitation can be seen in the NGOs attempt to be both a social movement and a health care provider. [19]It is not that the Colectivo and other similar NGOs in Nicaragua wanted to take the state away from its responsibility and duties as the sole health care provider, but more so that they were forced into this role of filling in the health care gaps left by the weakened state through international institutions who were often the sole sources of funding for these groups. Yet at the same time had they not followed in providing these services, the women would have even faced more dangerous health risks, and the movement to empower and reach all groups of women within the population would have itself not been able to succeed. This sort of double trap relating to the NGO as the provider of health care services brings up the point that as much as it is successful, the NGO health movement will never be able to replace the state and serve all those in need of public health care because it is limited in scope by dependence on international funds and lack of comprehensive national coordination.[20]

Along with this limitation that comes from the very structure of the Southern, national NGO model that the Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa belongs to, there are also other limitations. International funding not only limits the NGO in how many services it can provide but ultimately in the kinds of programs they will be able to follow, or be allowed to follow because of international donor agendas, making it very hard to become self-sufficient. Finally, the professional structure of an NGO, like Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa, itself, is not conducive to democratic action, and if it is not this raises serious doubts about its own ability to be able to deepen democracy in its surroundings.[21] There is a degree of staff hierarchy within the already middle class and sometimes upper middle class leaders in NGOs such as the Colectivo in Latin America. Questions have also been raised about the number of democratic spaces that NGOs like this one actually

raise when even though the NGO reaches out to poorer and working class women, these targeted women themselves are not given much of a chance to participate or make decisions about the NGO's goals and operations.

In conclusion, the analysis of the successes of the specific ways in which the Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa did indeed deepen democracy in Matagalpa and in Nicaragua, and the important limitations and the questions these limitations raised about their success, brings us a view of one type of NGO in Latin America, one way of answering our question.

B) Amnesty International in Colombia

Although the example of the Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa in Nicaragua displays the successes and limitations in deepening democracy that can result from working as a Southern, national NGO and one underneath Northern international NGOs with specific regard to funding, it is important to also independently analyze the work done directly by a Northern NGO in deepening democracy in Latin America through its various projects, as well as the different kinds of limitations it faces in its circumstances. These transnational NGOs, as they are sometimes also called, and which are defined as self-governing, non-profit institutions that operate outside the formal apparatus of the state and are engaged in the pursuit of public purposes across national borders, have the characteristics of being based in the developed world and of often serving as funders for more national NGOs in Latin America or as leading the implementation of projects in the developing world such as Latin America.[22] Our analysis of one such transnational or Northern NGO will reveal the different ways they were able to successfully deepen democracy and at the same time the different limitations they have than other NGOs such as the Colectivo in doing so.

One particular field in which these transnational NGOs have been prominent in their work in Latin America is that of human rights protection. In fact, the protection and promotion of human rights is a central objective for many of the transnational NGOs operating in Latin America.[23] An example of one Northern NGO operating in this field in Latin America is Amnesty International. Amnesty International was founded in 1961, is based in London,

and according to its own description of the organization is "A worldwide movement of people who campaign for internationally recognized human rights".[24] Although, this giant among international NGOs could be said to do the same protection of human rights work in different parts of the world, as it does not only operate specifically in Latin American in this field, it has however, made it a big focus of its work particularly in Latin America. As a recent Amnesty report noted about this topic in Latin America, "There exists a long tradition of repression of the brave individuals who defend human rights in Latin America…Even today, those struggling to improve the dignity and rights of others are often the first to be killed, abducted, tortured, threatened with death, detained and harassed by state agents…" thus realizing the importance of the unique circumstances that exits in relation to human right abuses in Latin America.[25]

The work that Amnesty International has done in Latin America, the ways they have deepened democracy, and the internal structure of Amnesty International is for the most part typical of Northern transnational NGO. It works in over 150 countries around the world in the field of human rights protection with an International Secretariat, leading the organization, an International Council made up of representatives from all the countries where it has groups and national sections, which then elects an International Executive Committee of volunteers who then carry out decisions and appoint the Secretary-General, also known as the International Secretariat. Amnesty International does not receive any funding from governments or political parties for its work in documentary and campaigning against human rights abuses, as it is independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion, and does not support or oppose any government, political system, nor does it necessarily support the views of the victims whose rights it seeks to protect.[26] Amnesty International, rather, depends on funding from contributions of its worldwide membership and fundraising activities in the specific countries. The main way in which Amnesty International does its work is by sending experts to talk with victims of human rights abuses, monitoring local media outlets, interviewing and working with local activists in perhaps very small and localized NGOs, publishing reports and finally putting pressure on governments and others with influence to change their human rights policies. This structure will be important in analyzing its successes and limitations in deepening

democracy.

Its work in Latin America on human rights has been centered on this investigation and exposure of these abuses. Amnesty International has collaborated with other very small human rights organizations and activists, to get at the root of the problems and interview victims. Amnesty International has even been extremely influential and persuasive in the United Nations adoption of a declaration on human rights defenders and in its creation of a special representative in the Latin America area. Amnesty International has especially been active in doing this kind of work in Colombia, of all the twelve Latin American countries in which it has national offices. They have launched a report entitled "Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Colombia" in 2000, which helped launch a nationwide campaign on their behalf, and have continued to publish reports on human rights abuses in Colombia with the latest one being just recently published on December 12th of this year, about the recent deaths of peasant farmers in the Curumani municipality of Colombia, as part of its Urgent Active Network. Amnesty International, as part of these reports on its website, also calls for letter-writing to the current president of Colombia, Alvaro Uribe Velez, and provides a written statement to use which expresses concern at the violence against human rights defenders, urging him to ensure that human rights defenders are able to carry out their work.[27]

The work of Amnesty International then has been fundamental in deepening democracy in Colombia primarily through dissemination of information to prevent human rights abuses. They have sponsored and implemented strategies through the work of their expert and specialized staff with the aid of local activists and organizations to allow the citizens of Colombia, for example, to be provided with aid and a voice in a violent and corrupt society that has taken away many of their rights. It is not so much that Amnesty International came in to Colombia as other types of NGOs have entered other Latin American countries, to fill the gaps not provided for by a weakened state, but instead it came to oppose a state that does not practice democratic actions. It is important to note however that Amnesty did not directly oppose the state, and remained and still is foremost a completely separate entity from the state, never cooperating or directly fighting states such as Colombia. Rather, groups like Amnesty International have often

been so successful because they existed as an outside actor with the financial and expert human resources available to come in and promote democratic practices. As outside independent actors they often have greater legitimacy and trust to work with both local populations and have better relationships with grassroots organizations, leading to much more local people wanting to be involved in their programs and actions.[28] The strengths of organizations such as Amnesty International, in for example the human rights work in Colombia, lie then essentially in their ability to have expertise, flexibility to apply resources where needed and to adjust to situations, and their existence as an outside actor which ultimately influenced the biggest way they were able to deepen democracy: high citizen participation and dissemination of democratic practices and information.

Yet as important as the ways in which Amnesty International, as an example of a Northern NGO, was able to deepen democracy in Colombia, there are also some limitations in the actions they took. Like the Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa, as the example of the Southern national NGO, a majority of these limitations come form the very structure of the NGO model. As much as they brought attention to human rights abuses, and were able to publicize their reports and the wrongs occurring in the community, they did not have the same degree of leverage and flexibility as do some smaller, national Southern NGOs like the Colectivo, to work with the national governments and directly influence policies. Secondly, the very nature of Amnesty International of being the large transnational, Northern based NGO that it is, poses in itself some doubts about its ability to fully deepen democracies in countries like Colombia. Amnesty is above all an international organization based in the developed world, and although it may have professional staff experienced in working against human rights abuses in specific countries and national offices, ultimately their knowledge of local conditions, culture and society will be incomplete and therefore a gap will exist between services delivered and programs accomplished, and what the local people actually want or need for better conditions. Finally, Amnesty International as do many other transnational, Northern based NGOs, often have their own grand and rigid agendas which will impede them from working with certain local NGOs and activists or which will even result in a lack of confidence from the recipient community. This results in an unequal hierarchy between Northern NGOs and localized

smaller NGOs, on which the bigger NGOs like Amnesty International often impose their agenda. Not only is this hierarchy not conducive to democracy, raising serious questions about how much organizations like Amnesty actually can do to deepen democracy through their actions against human rights abuses, but it also raises serious questions about the gap that is ever growing between the world of Northern based transnational organizations and Southern national NGOs in the developing regions of the world such as Latin America.

C) Centro de Desarollo para el Campesino y del Poblador Urbano-Marginal in Puno, Peru

To conclude the part of the essay in which I have given examples of different types of NGOs and the manner in which they have been able to deepen democracy, providing an analysis of their limitations as well, I will now present the ways in which a popular or grassroots type of NGO from Puno, Peru has done their work.

The name of this organization is the "Centro de Desarollo para el Campesino y del Poblador Urbano-Marginal", which translates to the "Center for the Development of the Peasant and the Marginalized Urban Citizen", or as it is known by its acronym in Spanish, "CEDECUM". CEDECUM began as a very different organization than it ended up being. It was originally created to accompany an irrigation project sponsored jointly by the Peruvian government and USAID (US Agency for International Development) and it worked in its beginning stages, by providing production and income-related support to small farmers who were to benefit from irrigation works. However, CEDECUM had to change its strategy and work when the Peruvian government suspended work on the irrigation project. Manuel Tejada, a former director of the National Planning Institute in Puno, became the director of CEDECUM after the government stopped the irrigation project, and was given a chance to come up with a new role for CEDECUM. Manuel Tejada became the charismatic director that would begin the project that CEDECUM is still following, that of a similar project based on the original irrigation plan but one whose strategy is to offer assistance to peasant communities, not in a planned manner, but at the recipient's request, and

to carry out specific activities in a collaborative manner. His project ended up growing from twelve communities to reaching out to and involving sixty-five.[29]

It is important to realize the environment around which the work of CEDECUM was held and how their work directly promoted democracy in the area. CEDECUM was working in the Department of Puno in Peru, which is one of the poorest departments in all of Peru. The citizens of Puno are largely Aymara and Quechua speakers living in small villages without access to adequate health, education and transportation services. Many of the people there have indigenous backgrounds and many thrive off of agriculture, working as subsistence farmers. The citizens do not receive much aid from the municipal governments, as the local governments in Puno are ones that are themselves heavily lacking in funds.[30]

The staff of CEDECUM who worked in this part of Peru was made up of a group of young, largely local, University graduate students, who were mostly social workers, veterinarians and agronomists. All of the staff members were fluent Aymara speakers and all the work they did was done in Aymara to promote active participation and discussion among the peasants in their own language. The staff divided themselves into teams, which would provide instruction and support to a specific community. The staff not only provided instruction, but also lived together within the community, to provide the utmost support and aid the people needed in daily life activities. The staff would then come together regularly in the Puno office to exchange information on the communities and figure out strategies for future problems. Unlike other organizations, CEDECUM really made its goal to reach out to the poorest of the poor citizens living in these small communities in Puno. The staff of CEDECUM, however, made sure not to provide services the state, or other local institutions, centers and local municipal governments, were already providing, but instead strived to make relationships with other informal, local organizations and groups to mobilize even more resources and to improve the services already provided by the state Finally some CEDECUM staff technicians also worked to help introduce processing activities so that crop products would not be so subject to unpredictable harsh climates and market conditions.[31]

The ways in which this organization deepened democracy in Puno, Peru as a small grassroots organization are uniquely different from the ways other types of NGOs we have analyzed worked. What is perhaps most important about this organization is its direct communication with the people in the communities it was serving. CEDECUM is in the truest sense of the word, a grassroots organization, by definition, "a civic developmental entity that provides services and, or allied support to local groups of disadvantaged rural or urban households and individuals."[32] The staff lived amongst the communities, spoke their language, and catered to their needs specifically without any intention of imposing any of their own agendas on them. The staff of CEDECUM provided them with instruction on how to improve daily tasks in their life, particularly tasks related to farming and agricultural activities, providing them technical assistance and knowledge, but also providing a space in which the community members could interact. CEDECUM not only allowed the members of the community they were specifically working with to interact with and learn from each other, but also gave this same opportunity to other local groups and organizations. The internal structure of the NGO also added to its deepening of democracy. There was not much of a sense of the staff being hierarchical or looking down upon the community members. This allowed for a sense of democracy within the NGO so that the vision the director had when the NGO first begun, of a group of Aymara communities that would actively participate in the design of and decision-making for projects affecting their own communities, became reality because of the trust and confidence the community members had in the staff.[33] The way then that the grassroots organization, CEDECUM, was best able to deepen democracy in the communities of Puno, Peru was through its direct work with the community members in a system which lacked staff hierarchy, allowing the staff members to work as partners with the poorer members of the community, and which provided the community members with a channel to learn how to make their own decisions and receive the goods and services they truly needed.

However, like the other two types of NGOs we have thus far analyzed in Nicaragua and in Colombia, CEDECUM as our example of the grassroots or popular association type of NGO, also had its limitations in the success it was able to accomplish in the process to deepen democracy. There was a clear lack of organization and resources among the staff members. CEDE-

CUM had stopped receiving major funding after the Peruvian government had stopped the irrigation project, and it did not receive major funding from any organization thereafter but was left to the planning and fundraising methods of its staff. Much of the assistance that was needed by the Aymara communities in Puno was technical crop and livestock assistance, which was hard to find on limited resources. Also, although the staff members were University graduate students and mostly all of them experts to an extent in some field, they were not experienced professionals and had to deal with not only organizing the programs and develop strategies for working with and helping these communities but also find resources, share knowledge amongst themselves and improve their program, basically leaving them with not enough time to plan all the details for the programs to be all-inclusive and very successful. Even more important, perhaps was that although they were all about the same age, they came from different backgrounds and cities, and did not always agree on issues. Furthermore although, Manuel Tejada had a grand vision for the organization and was able to get it on its feet, a charismatic leader like himself was not present later on which put more pressure on the field staff members to plan and lead new strategies, while doing their own fieldwork. The limitations CEDECUM faced reveal how the lack of resources, poor institutional organization, dependency on strong leadership which often leads to breakdown when one is missing, are the limitations so inherent to other grassroots organization similar to CEDECUM and illustrate the balance that is so difficult to reach between direct community involvement and limited resources among these types of NGOs.

Conclusions

The analysis of these three types of NGOs have provided us with answers to our question of how exactly it is that NGOs have deepened democracy in Latin America, and their limitations in doing so. The examples of the Southern, national NGO, Colectivo de Mujeres in Matagalpa; the Northern-based transnational NGO, Amnesty International; and finally the smaller grassroots and popular organization, CEDECUM, in Puno, Peru; all managed to deepen democracy in their respective locations in different yet highly similar ways. The ways in which they did so can be grouped into three categories, which will represent the answer to our questiom

First, the example of these three types of NGOs show that NGOs in Latin America deepen democracy by their role in opposition to anti-democratic policies of governments or governments that present or follow anti-democratic means of governing. By opposing anti-democratic forms of leadership and promoting democratic practices or informing the community of the wrongs of anti-democratic practices, the NGO is deepening democracies for future generations and attempting to prevent existing and future governments from being anti-democratic. This manner of deepening democracy was most clearly seen in the role of the transnational NGO, Amnesty International. Amnesty International was the perfect example of an NGO that had no relations with the government, but that in its dissemination of information about human rights abuses the government was allowing to occur was opposing a practice of the government. The Collectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa could also be said to have deepened democracy in the manner that they directly advocated for more inclusive policies than the ones the state was then providing. The health policies the state was following could have been labeled anti-democratic or not completely democratic enough in the way that they made it difficult for all sectors of the population of women to have access to them. In this way, it is not so much a direct violent opposition to the anti-democratic governments or anti-democratic practices of the state that the NGOs followed, but rather an opposition, which they displayed through dissemination of information and attempting to change the anti-democratic practices and policies.

The second most important way in which NGOs have helped to deepen democracy in Latin America is through their role as service providers. By service providers we mean not only providing the communities they worked with a tangible good, but rather that they provided some sort of service, whether it be education, agricultural crop assistance, or listening support. The types of NGOs we analyzed all provided services, whether tangible or intangible, in different ways. The Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa provided training for health professions and specific education about women's health issues to the women of the region. Amnesty International, in working with victims of human rights abuses, not only worked to change policies that would end these abuses but also provided listening and mental support to the victims, their families and relatives. Finally, CEDECUM provided a variety of services, through education and through assistance with daily

livelihood tasks. Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa was providing these services in response to a weak health sector in their society, a clear example of how NGOs in Latin America have had to provide the services the state was too weak or inefficient to do so. CEDECUM also provided services, which would have otherwise probably not existed because Puno as a department in Peru and all the local governments there already lacked sufficient funds to provide any and all services. In providing these services, tangible or not, these NGOs were able to deepen democracy both by taking the place of a weak and inefficient state who did not provide services, and by reaching out to and serving marginalized or poor community members who would have otherwise not been served and not received the benefits of the state.

Finally the third way, in which these NGOs deepened democracy in Latin America, is by serving as channels for social participation and change of social norms. The community the Colectivo de Mujeres de Matgalapa served, and the communities CEDECUM served, are two communities that are very important in our analysis of NGOs deepening democracy in Latin America. Not only are these poor women and indigenous peasants marginalized in Nicaragua and Peru but also in many other Latin American countries. In the traditional Latin American society, women's health, especially women's reproductive and sexual health is still a very taboo subject, and similarly there are many stereotypes and biases towards indigenous people, which have prevented them from getting jobs or even realizing their full rights as citizens. The Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa and CEDECUM, then serve as two examples of NGOs in Latin America that were able to provide spaces for these two groups of marginalized people to be educated, to come together and discuss issues about themselves, in doing so attempting to change societal norms. The women who were served in those regions of Nicaragua which other Colectivos like the one from Matagalpa worked in, learned to educate themselves about their own health issues, to talk to each other and empower themselves to follow health and medical professions. Similarly, in Puno, CEDECUM provided a vehicle for the impoverished peasants to learn how to be self-sufficient, to learn how to improve their own lives, and most importantly to learn how to communicate with other groups in their own community to work for creating their own change. Both of these NGOs show how NGOs are truly seen as

"an instrument of empowerment that will enable ordinary folk to take control of development decisions".[34] These two types of NGOs were directly hoping to change the weak notions of citizenship among members, such as the women and indigenous peasants in these communities. In this way these two NGOs serve as examples for the work in empowering, providing channels for social participation and changing societal norms that many other types of NGOs in Latin America do as well.

The way in which the NGOs we analyzed have deepened democracy through standing in opposition to an anti-democratic or to the anti-democratic practices of the state, through their role as service providers to marginalized members of the community, and finally in their role as channels for social participation and change of societal norms, however, is only half the answer to our question. The other half lies in the answer to what the limitations have been in the processes these NGOs took to deepen democracy.

The limitations all of these different types of NGOs faced were due to weaknesses in their specific NGO structure. In the example of the Colectivo de Mujeres de Matgalpa, we saw all the limitations that came with the structure of most Southern, national NGOs. The biggest limitations that the Colectivo faced in its full success to deepening democracy in the communities they were working with came from its staff being middle class professionals who were often hierarchical and often looked down on the women they served. The Colectivo was also limited in how much it could accomplish due to the agendas and goals of its international funders and by the attitudes and political views of the leaders who were in power in the government at the time. Finally, the Colectivo would also be limited in its work by simultaneously trying to be a social movement and a provider of goods and services. The limitations that Amnesty International faced also came from its NGO structure and from its existence of being a transnational Northern based NGO. Amnesty International was mainly limited in its existence as an outsider which led to a lack of understanding and confidence from local peoples and activists, and to not being able to fully penetrate and change government policies or norms. Finally, the limitations the CEDECUM faced were very obvious for a grassroots and popular organization such as itself. Their main limitations were due to the small and under funded nature of their organization; their lack of resources, expertise, and time to

accomplish anything substantial and sustainable. Therefore we see that each NGO type had inherent failures within its own model that prevented the specific NGOs from deepening democracy to a great extent.

In conclusion, although it is somewhat of a broad generalization to use only these three examples of NGOs in only three Latin American countries, and conclude with ways in which NGOs all over Latin America have strengthened democracy and the limitations they have experienced in doing so, the answers to our question could be said to apply to other NGOs in the area and speak directly about the state of governments and of the citizens in Latin American society. NGOs in Latin America have deepened democracy by rejecting anti-democratic practices and policies of governments and by advocating for more democratic practices, by providing services to complement and replace those provided for by a weak and inefficient state and by serving as a vehicle for social participation, mobilization and changing of societal norms and values for marginalized peoples. As was made evident in our examples, many of the limitations NGOs face in deepening democracy in Latin America comes from the internal structure of the NGOs themselves.

Implications & Recommendations for the Future

As much success as NGOs like the ones we have illustrated have had in deepening democracy in these communities in Latin America, this story would not be complete without an analysis at their successes and limitations in relation to their future potential to deepen democracy in Latin America, a region that still has a long way to go before reaching its full democratic potential.

First and foremost perhaps it is important to realize that as much as civil society strengthens democracy, and as much as these NGOs have success in replacing or complementing services of the state, NGOs simply cannot become a substitute for or a servant of the state.[35] All types of NGOs do not have it within their resources and expertise to take on both the role of the state and completely fill the gaps the state has left empty. Even if they would try doing so, true democracy cannot and will not flourish in Latin America

or anywhere else without a democratic state. Only a democratic state can give way to a true democratic civil society in which all its members have democratic citizenship and then only can democratic civil society strive to conserve a democratic state.[36] Democracy in Latin America will only continue if Latin American governments begin to accept NGO participation and other members of civil society as partners at home and abroad, so that a relationship of effective complementarity will exist.[37] As we saw in our example of the Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa, state-NGO cooperation is most conducive to democracy and sees more results, as long as the state has democratic goals and means of achieving them which are similar to that of the NGO. Other examples have also shown that democracy is much more enhanced when there is an atmosphere of NGO-state cooperation.

Secondly and perhaps most importantly, as much as NGOs similar to the ones we have provided in our example, have had success in deepening democracy, if realizing the full democratic potential of democracy in Latin American governments and among its citizens is the goal, then much more attention needs to be paid to the reasons for which all of these NGOs exist in the first place. By the reason for their existence I do not so much mean their role as the provider of services but rather much more generally, the inequalities that are so characteristic of Latin American society. To create a truly inclusionary and participatory political system and society, it will be important to reduce the vast imbalances that have long characterized the region.[38] Reducing economic inequality will require the state to provide resources to meet the basic needs of the poorest communities. The important role of education in development in providing skills for effective participation and decision-making also needs to be highlighted and strengthened. Finally, the leaders in charge of advocating for these reforms must not be interested in imposing their own agendas on other people and in being part of class hierarchy that is so existent in Latin America. Rather, the emergence of genuinely democratic systems will depend on the energy, determination, and resources of committed individuals within these nations, and on a push for change from the grassroots as well.[39]

Finally, to end this discussion of the ways in which NGOs have deepened democracy in Latin America and their limitations in doing so, further attention must be paid to the study of improving the NGO model, in particular

Northern-Southern NGO linkages. As we have seen in the examples of the NGOs we have provided, many of the limitations in their deepening democracy existed from the pressure national NGOs felt to follow the agendas of the removed international donors that funded them, and the removed nature of the international, Northern based NGOs that had the resources to create change but had difficulties communicating with the local people and creating much change due to their presence as an outsider. These limitations are ones faced not just by NGOs in Latin America, but also by Southern and Northern NGOs all over the developing world. There needs to be existing structures so that small Southern national or grassroots organizations can receive funding without feeling pressured or forced to follow an agenda they do not wish to follow. There needs to be structures and mechanisms so that NGOs who work on very local levels have a chance to interact with and share their views for practice with bigger, international NGOs. The United Nations is one international organization in which one can see this problem of North-South communication being drawn out. The UN has been working in the past years to overcome the low numbers of Southern NGOs present at their international conferences by working with state governments to create funds to bring these local NGOs to discussions. The problem of North-South communication in the world of NGOs in developing countries is not one that has an immediate solution but one that will require increasing study and attention in the future.

I have come full circle now. I began by proposing the question of how it is exactly that NGOs have deepened democracy in Latin America and what their limitations in the process have been. I analyzed the existing groups of theories surrounding civil society's relationship with democracy and more specifically the role of NGOs in the process, with relation to Latin American, its weak state, and weak notions of citizenship. To determine how exactly different types of NGOs had deepened democracy in Latin America and their limitations in doing so, I analyzed the work of the Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa in Nicaragua, the work of Amnesty International in Colombia, and the work of CEDECUM in Puno, Peru. All three served as evidence for the answer to our question and provided us with insights into what needs to be done for the future of democracy in Latin America.

We have returned to the beginning of the circle because of the importance

this essay reveals to us about the unique state of Latin American countries in relevance to democracy, the many actors involved in deepening democracy, and the greater attention that needs to be paid to NGOs as actors in democracy and development in the ever increasingly globalized world we are living in now.

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Facilitating Public Participation in South Africa: A Case Study of the Centre for Governance in Africa

by Paul D. Lemaistre

Abstract

Decreasing amounts of public participation threaten to undermine the legitimacy of democracy in South Africa. Numerous surveys, academic resources, and internet and print media indicate a general trend of disconnection and dissatisfaction is prevalent amongst citizens. As a result, the South African public has extremely low levels of public participation for a nation with such a politically charged past. It has become the objective of many civil society organizations to help with the delivery of vital developmental goals, including democracy development and capacity building, on behalf of the citizens. This paper examines the efforts of a single non-governmental organization, the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), through its Centre for Governance in Africa (CGA), to facilitate public participation. The organization engages with local partners to encourage programme ownership and civic participation programmes by civil society organizations. The research for this paper revolves around a practicum completed with the CGA in the fall of 2005. The paper concludes by contextualizing the CGA programmes within the broader scope of public participation and argues that while the CGA is effective in linking civil society to government structures, it does not play a role in helping to improve difficult socio-economic conditions. This indicates a need for an increased role by other organizations with different objectives to work in partnership with the government and other civil society organizations.

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The South African Democracy and Civil Society

South Africa held its first free and fair multiracial elections in 1994, as the African National Congress (ANC) swept to power with over 62 per cent of the vote. The ANC completed its transformation from an underground armed opposition to the dominant partner in a new Government of National Unity (GNU). What was even more remarkable was the high voter turnout of nearly 90% of the electorate in 1994.[1] This high level of public participation from all sectors of society was important in legitimising South Africa's nascent democracy. Beyond the mechanisms of electoral turnover, the democratic transition also provided the means for the majority of South African citizens to participate in the new multiracial government.

For any democratic system to flourish there must exist the means and mechanisms for public participation besides elections. Citizens must be involved in the actual decision-making process, holding their representatives accountable and involving themselves with the daily running of their nation. Political analysts agree that forms of public participation at various levels of government are necessary for democratic societies to work. These analysts assert that dropping levels of participation indicate a weakening of the democratic state.[2]

There are several alarming signs that there exist significant gaps between policy intentions and implementation. First, voter turnout in elections has decreased steadily since 1994.[3] Reports by the Afrobarometer, a political research survey unit within the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa) reveals that citizens feel disillusioned with their institutions of governance. A general sense of disconnect and a lack of responsiveness were common themes in the Afrobarometer survey as to why citizens had little conviction in institutions of governance. There is a decreasing amount of public trust in governmental institutions, with only 37 percent of South Africans trusting the president, 31 percent the parliament, 28 percent the provincial government and only 24% percent the local government.[4] Levels of participation in the legislative-making process at the provincial level are significantly low. In a 2000 Human Research Council report, 3 percent of respondents had asked local counsellors for help, and less than 1 percent of respondents had regularly

asked members of provincial legislature for assistance. 91 percent of respondents had never attended public hearings of a provincial legislature or submitted written petitions to these hearings.[5]

In this context, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play an important role as a grouping of individuals independent from government and its policies. Civil society consists of non-profit groups advocating for specific purposes, that range from faith-based organizations, women and youth groups, and democracy and governance organizations. They are voluntary groupings of citizens established in pursuit of common interests. In a three-sector model of the state involving the government, profit-seeking firms and citizens, civil society is a fourth actor that interacts with government and profit-seeking firms. CSOs also include Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) which are groups providing development goods or services when faced with the inability of the government or market to provide them.[6] NGOs and other civil society organizations help to protect and promote citizens' rights to be represented and participate in their governance. As citizen groups, they participate in government using the same avenues that individual citizens would. Low levels of public participation are often due to individuals lacking the knowledge, expertise and resources to access and engage with the relevant structures. NGOs can help to fill this gap by providing the capacity for citizens. Stefan Gilbert, manager of the Parliamentary Development project in the Centre for Governance in Africa (CGA), comments that "the gap between legislation and implementation of the legislation is where the problem lies and in a lot of cases it's just gross under capacity, so strengthening of this capacity is one of the big roles of NGOs and other organizations in civil society."[7]

Legislative frameworks for public participation

Public participation in a democratic society is a key component for good, effective governance. Reuben Masango defines public participation as:

> "…A process in which members of the public – as individuals, members of groups, or group representatives – deliberately take

> part in a goal-oriented activity. It can therefore be said that the expression 'public participation in policy-making and implementation refers to an exercise in which members of the public – as individual citizens, interest groups, or interest group representatives –deliberately take part in relevant public policy-making and implementation processes..." [8]

The framework for public participation in South Africa is evident. The Constitution adopted in 1996 makes key provisions for the establishment of public participation as a norm in daily governance. The document itself is widely considered as one of the most socially progressive and inclusive documents in the world and is lauded for its protection of individual and group rights. The Constitution itself was drafted and finalized through a process of mass public participation. It involved the largest public participation programme ever in South Africa and involved nearly two years of intensive consultations with political parties and other key political actors.[9] There was also a mass advertising campaign to educate ordinary South Africans, and 73 percent of the population responded with nearly two million suggestions.[10]

The Preamble of the South African Constitution states clearly the intention to "lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law". Other sections of the Constitution further entrench the idea of participatory and representative government for the South African state.[11]

Article 1(d) guarantees that citizens will have the right to choose their government:

> *1. The Republic of South Africa is one, sovereign, democratic state founded on the following values:*
> *(d) Universal adult suffrage, a national common voters roll, regular elections and a multi-party system of democratic government, to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness."*

Article 16 (b) provides for the freedom of expression, including that of communicating ideas:

> *16. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which*

includes –
(b) Freedom to receive or impart information or ideas;

Article 17 acknowledges the citizens' right to overtly communicate their ideas and concerns:

17. Everyone has the right, peacefully and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket and to present petitions.

Article 57 (1) pledges that the National Assembly will operate in a manner accommodating to public participation:

57. The National Assembly may –
(b) Make rules and orders concerning its business, with due regard to representative and participatory Democracy, accountability, transparency and public involvement."

The CGA is working primarily at the provincial level to link civil society organizations with the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature. In doing so they aim to strengthen the capacity of the two bodies to communicate and exchange ideas.
Section 115 (d) of the Constitution stipulates that the public can submit evidence or opinion for the provincial legislative making process. A provincial legislature or any of its committees may:

(d) Receive petitions, representations or submissions from any interested persons or institutions.

Finally, at the provincial level, Legislatures must facilitate public access and promote involvement. Section 118 Public access to and involvement in provincial legislatures

(1) A provincial legislature must -
(a) Facilitate public involvement in the legislative and other processes of the legislature and its committees; and
(b) Conduct its business in an open manner, and hold its sittings, and those of its committees, in public…
(2) A provincial legislature may not exclude the public, including the media, from a sitting of a committee unless it is reasonable and justifiable to do so in an open and democratic society.[12]

Many key pieces of legislation set out to create working processes for the ideals stated in the Constitution. The Municipal Structures Act (1998) is one such document and looks to empower local government structures to fully engage and involve its citizenry to participate in all of its affairs. [13] The Act is informed by the participatory themes of the Constitution and expects the public to take advantage of the access and agency granted to them. This access is fundamental, allowing for community visits and other forms of face-to-face interaction with governance institutions. These provisions go beyond participating in periodic elections; they include the right of the citizen to exercise influence and contribute opinions to all government decisions. Citizens are required to comply, respect and uphold the legislative and executive decisions made by the government. In doing so the people will enhance the participatory mechanisms that are available and be able to decide the process of restructuring and governing the country.[14]

The independent institutions of the South African state are in accord with the spirit of the Constitution in promoting public participation by the electorate. Among the most prominent are the rulings by the Constitutional Court – itself a new institution made by the Constitution in 1996 – that require the national, provincial and local levels of government to promote to the best of their ability the mechanisms for South African citizens to participate. Justice Albie Sachs, expressed the importance of the participatory process in a 2003 ruling: "The responsibility for serious and meaningful deliberation and decision-making rests not only on the majority, but on minority groups as well. In the end, the endeavours of both majority and minority parties should be directed not to exercising (or blocking the exercise) of power for its own sake, but at achieving a just society where, in the words of the Preamble, 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it.'"[15]

Practicum research

I was able to complete a practicum with the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa) in the Centre for Governance in Africa (CGA) programme in Cape Town. I adopted the role of a participant observer, and my research focused primarily on the CGA's initiatives

in the Eastern Cape province. I cite the CGA as a case study of good practices by an NGO – a model for intervention and facilitation. My research as a participant observer consisted of three methods. First was a range of office tasks for the CGA programmes in the Eastern Cape and neighbouring African countries. Second was a set of interviews conducted with members of the CGA staff about the CGA programme and its effectiveness. Third was independent research of academic sources, print and Internet media, Idasa briefings and reports and documents such as the *Afobarometer* survey.

Idasa is an independent non-profit NGO that promotes good democratic governance practices in South Africa and regional neighbours. It works closely with national, provincial and local governments as well as other NGOs to educate citizens about democracy and methods of achieving social justice. It has nine departments in three locations in South Africa and affiliate programmes in Zimbabwe and Nigeria.[16] The Centre for Governance in Africa (CGA), a programme of Idasa based in Cape Town, has facilitated efforts in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng provinces to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to engage with provincial legislatures. The CGA identified the Eastern Cape as having low levels of interaction between civil society and the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature. By strengthening the interaction between networks of NGOs and CBOs and government institutions in the Eastern Cape, the CGA is facilitating public participation by linking the two bodies. It has recruited local partners, including the Eastern Cape Legislature Public Participation Unit and the Eastern Cape NGO Coalition (ECNGOC) to implement its various activities. Rather than adopting an antagonistic approach, the CGA is cooperating with these local partners to facilitate interaction and by these means enhance public participation.[17]

My work with the CGA dealt mainly with the role of a single NGO in linking civil society organizations with legislative governance bodies in the Eastern Cape as a means for facilitating public participation. In light of the high level of discontent towards government as seen in media and published sources, surveys and personal focus group interviews, the role of an prominent civil society organizations like Idasa is made even more important. The body of this paper reflects these objectives – it identifies

sources of Idasa funding, the role of and interaction with local partners, and the practical methods adopted. My conclusions will place the work of this NGO within a broader context. I will seek to answer how the CGA and its specific projects are fulfilling their stated objectives and are benefiting the democratic system in South Africa.

Idasa and CGA funding and programmes

Funding

The CGA has an operational mandate to strengthen good governance practices in South Africa and its regional neighbours. It receives funding from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) to implement a programme to strengthen the capacity of NGOs and other civil society organizations in the Eastern Cape province. The funding for the programme amounts to approximately R1.9 million per annum, with a continued duration of approximately R6 million for the next three years.[18] The programme also is trying to improve civil society's understanding of institutional structures and the quality of their participation in legislative governance, specifically with the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature. The method used by the CGA is described as an inclusive, non-antagonistic approach. Rather than advocating directly to the civil society or the provincial legislature, the CGA looks first and foremost to link the two as a means of facilitating public participation. It works within the provisions of the Constitution by encouraging this interaction between civil society and government in formal, existing structures.

AusAID is the Australian government's official body for allocating foreign funding and aid. In early 2005 it began the implementation of the African Governance Facility (AGF), charged with the development and implementation of good governance efforts in Africa. The geographic focus of the AGF is in eastern and southern Africa, including the programme in South Africa. The AusAID programme comprises three separate components: Support for Democratisation; Support for Trade Liberalization and Support for Emerging Issues. Idasa applied for and received funding from AusAID under a programme in Component

1: Support for Democratisation. The purpose of this component is to strengthen democratic processes that are transparent and accountable. It focuses on strengthening electoral processes, parliamentary committee structures and anti-corruption measures. Specifically the CGA programme received its funding to establish public participation forums and local government centres. In South Africa the CGA has focused its efforts in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng provinces.[19]

The CGA currently runs two programmes in South Africa: one in the Eastern Cape province and the other in Gauteng proince. The two provincial projects were meant to serve as pilot projects from which to use reference and experience before embarking into other countries. The AusAID funding covers South Africa also, so the CGA had to begin work at the provincial level rather than just at the national level. The Eastern Cape was identified through discussions with local partners regarding considerable disjoints between civil society and government.[20] Gauteng by contrast had a sophisticated network of NGOs, but these NGOS did not interact with the Gauteng legislature on a regular basis. Because they were so well organized they chose to address the national assembly in Cape Town instead. With the choice of the two locations, programme head Lyn Chiwandimira comments that the CGA "wanted to find out in poor provinces what were the levels of interaction between parliament and civil society organizations. Gauteng is one of the richest, so we wanted to learn lessons from the rich and from the poor. We wanted to learn methods and apply them." [21]

The CGA is tasked with working with existing institutions of governance at the local and provincial levels. It is mandated to assist with the establishment of public participation forums and local government centres. The desired outcomes of the regional programme consist of: enhanced participation of citizens in policy making processes at local, provincial and national levels; improved interface between citizens and policy making processes to bridge the gap between citizens and governance processes; existence of a coordinated voice for civil society in policy making processes at local, provincial and national levels; increased knowledge amongst citizens and civil society organizations on how to analyse policies vis-a-vis service delivery; increased knowledge amongst policy makers (legislators at local and provincial

levels) on how to interact with citizens; established public participation frameworks and forums in the selected countries; strengthened capacity of civil society organisations, staff of public participation units on effective interaction with democratic legislatures at local and provincial levels.[22] AusAID assumes a role of oversight in the process. They provide funding and quality control while the CGA programme manager is responsible for a quarterly report of findings and analysis.

Cooperation with Local Partners

The CGA project proposal for AusAID funding recognizes the need for intervention into civil society's operational capacity.[23] It cites a 2001 CIVICUS study on civil society that finds that civil society in South Africa lacks the capacity for intervening in the policy making and policy enforcement arena.[24] It continues by commenting that the NGOs working with grassroots communities are those most lacking in capacity to engage with formal legislative structures. The proposal asserts that participatory legislative governance remains weak despite numerous efforts to simplify these processes.

Recognizing these divides between policy intention and policy implementation, the CGA based its operations in the Eastern Cape province. Despite its expertise and sizable funding from AusAID, the CGA acknowledged its' staff under capacity. The AusAID funding covered programs in ten countries, three of which are now concurrent (South Africa, Zambia and Lesotho). There is a consistent effort to establish links and engage with local partners for every country programme. "The general philosophy of the CGA is that its non-antagonistic, it seeks to work with partners in every case."[25] The reasons for this include, as stated above, a lack of resources in the CGA office. A more significant reason is that the CGA considers local partners to be more aware of the conditions on the ground. The CGA believes that there is a stronger chance that its methods will be more lasting and effective if it involves local partners.[26] Though the objective is the building of civil society's capacity to engage, it is also imparting capacity on all parties, including local government representatives. The communication between these partners is described as being "very

open", and occurs on a monthly basis.[27]

The two most prominent local partners of the CGA in the Eastern Cape are the Public Participation Unit of the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature and the Eastern Cape NGO Coalition (ECNGOC). In the acknowledgements for the toolkit "Bridging the Gap: Linking Civil Society to Legislative Governance", the Public Participation Unit is credited with providing information "pertaining to legislative processes, the roles and functions of parliamentary structures, and the parliamentary directories."[28] The Public Participation Unit is responsible for organizing different activities that enable civil society and citizens to participate in legislative governance processes. It is also responsible for the facilitation of public hearings as well as communication with the public on the phone andvia email.[29]

The ECNGOC is also an acknowledged partner of the toolkit, having created links between Idasa and an existing network of NGOs in the Eastern Cape. The ECNGOC is a representative structure designed to co-ordinate and promote NGO activities in the Eastern Cape. Member organizations are "voluntary, independent, not-for profit development organizations". It aims to build a stronger NGO sector to effectively advocate for increased efforts for poverty eradication and good democratic processes in the region. It also aims to improve the capacity of its members to engage with policy, fulfil their mandate and engage with other structures.[30]

Practical Measures undertaken by the CGA

Development of Toolkit

The CGA staff members have identified two pervasive issues hindering their efforts to enhance public participation in the Eastern Cape. The first is a capacity and expertise gap within civil society to engage with the Provincial Legislature. In many cases these organizations were not familiar with the exact processes and procedures to participate. The second is the low attendance of NGOs at public hearings and other forums to participate in this legislative process. This is due to logistical problems revolving around transportation and the lack of

communication about scheduled public hearings. Programme manager Lyn Chiwandimira describes the process of discovering the first issue, NGO capability:

> "…We went to the NGOs and said, "You are also purporting to represent the people. How many issues have you taken to parliament? And we found that nobody knew, the NGOs didn't know where parliament was…When we had our identification exercise, we realized that NGOs did not know how to engage with parliament, so this toolkit was designed to help NGOs interact with government."[31]

The CGA's response to the issue of capacity building was to develop a toolkit containing guidelines for these NGOs and civil society organizations. "Bridging the Gap, Linking Civil Society to Legislative Governance: A Toolkit for NGOs and CBOS in the Eastern Cape", is the end result. Published in 2005 in conjunction with the Public Participation Unit of the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature, the toolkit is a comprehensive guide to civil society participation in governance. It contains eight modules, ranging from the role of NGOs and CSOs in governance processes; involvement at the national and provincial levels; involvement in the Provincial Legislature; roles and functions of committees in the Provincial Legislature; participation in the law making process; budget processes, and finally parliamentary public education at the national and provincial levels.

The toolkit reads like a reference book for these civil society organizations. It explains the roles and functions of each level of government and the mechanisms for public participation at the different levels of government. The toolkit is not designed as an advocacy manual in that it does not explain the proper structuring of NGOs and contains only brief guidelines for communicating with the media, and other forms of advocacy and lobbying. As a reference book its strength is its ability to explain how and by what means civil society can link with government. The contact information provided of MPs, committee chairs and parliament liaison officers helps NGOs find the relevant person to communicate with. As an educational tool for the casual reader it contains handouts of important concepts such as the petition making process.

Also important are the Case Study examples outlining specific instances of public participation. "Case Study: Public Participation in the National Assembly" is one such example.

The CGA also created a partner toolkit for use by the MPs in the Provincial Legislature. After publication of the civil society edition, the Legislature indicated its desire for a similar resource for new MPs. There was a lack of knowledge amongst the MPs about proper procedure, so the CGA produced a similar version for these MPs also. The government version also contains basic guidelines of structure within the Legislature. Response for this edition was generally very positive; users from within the provincial government cited its facility of use and comprehensiveness of information.

Public Hearings

The CGA has embarked on a series of measures in response to the low attendance of NGOs at public hearings. Whereas the toolkit was a single publication that was then distributed, the facilitation of public hearings encompasses most of the CGA's daily affairs in the province. The Eastern Cape has an acknowledged low level of infrastructure. A lack of transportation deters many potential participants from attending public hearings. One proposal is the provision of public buses to transport people to public hearings. There is a plan to allocate a small amount of the AusAID funding for this activity. The CGA was informed of this need at public hearings held this year when participants mentioned that they often do not have the means to participate. This logistical issue is extremely damaging to public participation. The CGA solution is very basic yet very effective in countering socio-economic obstacles to participation.[32]

A more pressing issue is that of information for the relevant NGOs to come and participate in the hearings. This problem has consists of two strands. The first is the question of knowing which NGOs should participate. Depending on the legislation and its potential effects – by district/area, by health issue, by development plan, etc – the relevant NGOs need to be notified so that they can come be involved. Existing lists of

NGO contacts were not categorized into sectors or programme areas, so it was difficult for staff members to know whom to contact when there was a public hearing.

It was the task of this researcher to compile and organize the Eastern Cape NGO database. As noted above, the database will be used to facilitate communication between the different sectors. If there is a public hearing, the relevant NGOs that may have a stake in participating and giving their opinions will know the date and location of the hearing. Further, government representatives can use it to consult relevant experts and citizens about legislation. To create the database I used an existing list furnished by the ECNGOC, but separated it depending on different categories. The first was by organizational objective and what kind of programme they were running. The categories included: advocacy, civil rights, community arts, development, education, employment, faith based, health services, housing, income support, legal services, HIV/Aids, sports organizations, policy think tanks, and social services (disabled, family support, youth). I established contact with liaisons of the Public Participation Unit and the ECNGOC as well as the Office of the Premier of the Eastern Cape about them sending existing NGO lists that they had for compilation into the CGA list. The second category was area division – what district or town the NGO was located in. This would help for issues that affect a certain area, i.e. development or tourism related, and would require participation and input from NGOs with interest in those specific areas.

The problems encountered in this process involved communicating with the NGOs. I conducted random calls (from the list of nearly 1,600 organizations) to see if the contact details available were correct. Often I was unable to reach the organization, probably due to the low levels of communication infrastructure available. This process informed my understanding of the difficulties apparent in informing individuals about public hearings. If I was unable to randomly contact the organizations to inquire about their contact information, what kind of issues would be involved in having to contact a large list of organizations to inform them of upcoming events?

The CGA intends to use the revised list to identify relevant NGOs and

contact them for future public hearings. Further, they mean to share the list with parliamentarians and local government officials as a suggestion of a specific list of people to consult for matters outside of legislation. In doing so they would further create communication with the public.

The second issue of information revolves around the publication of public hearing schedules. Public hearings are described in the toolkit as forums for legislators to hear and consider the views of experts and citizens on public policy issues. Their location can range from committee rooms in the legislature building to district centres or community halls. These hearings are useful in soliciting civil society opinions on particular legislative issues. In this sense citizens have the means to be very active in the legislative process. One problem encountered by the CGA in the facilitation of public hearings is that they are not always planned and publicized enough in advance. Oftentimes it is up to the chairperson of a committee to determine the necessity for a public hearing. This necessity is often determined by the controversy and attention focused on that issue. Therefore the public hearing isn't a prearranged event; it is often determined by individual decision.

In its non-antagonistic approach the CGA is working closely with legislative bodies to remedy this problem. First, they are planning on working with public hearings scheduled way in advance to arrange proper publicity and information for the relevant actors. This also gives the CGA time to prepare material on those issues to distribute to participants at the hearing. When prompted about forms of advocacy to these legislative officers for a better scheduling of public hearings, the CGA respondents claimed that this would not be productive. Cooperation and trust was necessary for a healthy relationship with the different departments of provincial parliament. Not until this level of trust has been gained will any substantial recommendations be given due course and consideration. The CGA respondents identified this personal advocacy with legislative officers as the 'second stage' – an indication of the intention to keep these efforts running for a substantial amount of time.

Case Example: Public Hearings over *Ukwaluka* initiations

In late November 2005, staffers from the CGA to the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature's offices in Bisho to facilitate public hearings between provincial legislators and members of the community.[33] The public hearings addressed government initiatives to create health centres and standardize the *ukwaluka* circumcision rite of passage for young men to be initiated into Xhosa society. During the course, the young men are often left without food or water for days at a time. This poses serious health risks to some participants. Health administrators have taken into consideration numerous deaths in recent years due to these conditions. Provincial legislators drafted and passed the Health Standards of Traditional Circumcision Act in 2001, which provides for certain health standards in the traditional circumcision process. Health administrators have further created health centres (voluntary) for these participants to assess their health prior to their initiation. Further it requires that any circumcision in the province may not be conducted without the permission of a medical officer or that the initiate may participate without written permission from the medical officer.[34] This programme has caused considerable division between those supporting government actions to prevent deaths and those who reject government intervention into traditional practices.

The controversy revolves around a lack of knowledge from the public about the government initiative and creation of these centres. The CGA's role was the facilitation of a Question and Answer session. Working together with the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature and the Buffalo City Municipality office, the CGA worked to mobilize communities to take an active part in the issue of health centres. Public hearings were held in four locations: Mooiplaas, Cecilia Makiwana, Tsholominqa and Butterworth during the week of 28 November - 2 December 2005. The hearings facilitated in part by the CGA lasted four hours from 10am – 2pm in each location. The Q&A session began with a background presentation by provincial MPs on the motivation for the government initiative. The MPs outlined the details of the Health Standards of Traditional Circumcision Act, No. 6 of 2001 of the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature.[35] Members of the public were then invited to ask questions of the MPs and give suggestions and opinions regarding the legislation making process.

It was observed by a CGA staff member that those not in favour of the health clinics and who advocated a traditional approach with less government intervention, generally stayed away from the public hearings. Further, the members of public that did come to participate in the formal process were more often those that had supported the government initiative to construct health centres.

Staff members also reported that there was an increased call for more women's participation in the process. It must be noted that the common view is that circumcision is considered a masculine matter. Despite having stakes in the possible outcomes of the *ukwaluka,* women face cultural stigmas discouraging their participation. These outcomes are of great consequence to women, many of who are mothers in single-parent households and provide primary care for these initiates. The death of these initiates has real consequences, often because they become income winners of the extended family. A proposal was heard at the public hearing that came from a woman who suggested the creation of a workshop for soon-to-be initiates that clearly explained the initiation process and prepared the initiates for the process.[36]

The CGA staff members felt that there was a good level of general understanding from the public about the process of public hearings. The CGA's role in this case example was the facilitation of these hearings and the notification of the relevant NGOs to come and contribute. The CGA database of Eastern Cape NGOs was used to identify relevant organizations and notify them about the ongoing hearings. However, the issues that face the CGA in these hearings remain numerous. The CGA and local partners are looking to find solutions to the problem of these traditionalist groups not attending to voice dissent to the legislation.

Conclusions

Facilitating public participation in the South African political landscape is no easy task. With a recent history of disempowerment and disenfranchisement, South African citizens are only recently learning to embrace and exercise their rights. Currently socio-economic factors

prove a significant obstacle for South Africans. As witnessed in the focus group conversations mentioned above, some citizens do not place politics or participation as a priority and instead look to other means for aid. Civil society organizations and NGOs play an important part role in helping with these problems. Those NGOs that have a democracy advocacy agenda range in their methods. Some that work at the grassroots level mobilize citizens around certain issues and then advocate for these issues. Other organizations work to influence the upper levels of power and decision making to ensure that these institutions are following through on their objectives. Still others, like the CGA, work within legislative and governmental frameworks to strengthen the capacity of both citizens and institutions to engage with each other. All these different organizations are in their own part helping to strengthen the democratic process by encouraging accountability, transparency and participation.

The stated objective and funding for the CGA is for democracy and governance development. It is not an economic development NGO and does not play a role in helping to improve socio-economic conditions. Rather, it focuses its work on democratic governance. In practical measures, this translates into efforts to strengthen the capacity for NGOs, other civil society organizations, the general public and legislative institutions in the Eastern Cape to engage with one another. It looks to provide for and facilitate public participation *amidst* socio-economic obstacles. The CGA intervention on behalf of civil society also depends on the invitation of provincial structures to accept aid. Therefore there must be a willingness from these provincial authorities to accept help to encourage public participation.

The CGA has adopted a type of middle ground between civil society and the government by working with partners from both sides. As local partners in the Eastern Cape, the ECNGOC and the Public Participation Unit gain capacity and expertise from the CGA and Idasa. There are some doubts from among the public about the neutrality of the CGA because it has joined the Public Participation Unit, seen as a 'government' structure. Regardless of this, this cooperation is seen by the CGA as a measure that has proven effective in closing the gap between community and the legislature. The above example of public

hearings helps to show the necessity of this partnership. By facilitating the hearings, the CGA proved itself as an organization committed to democratisation in politics despite strong traditionalist sentiments against government intervention. There must be a commitment to making sure that the opinions of all groups, including women, disabled persons, children and youth, are heard amongst traditional, anti-democratic, patriarchal structures.

The research scope of this paper was the facilitation of public participation by the CGA in the Eastern Cape. Specifically, it was looking at the methods that the CGA was using, and whether these were effective. The development of the toolkit was determined to be a worthwhile and successful venture. It serves as a reference book for civil society organizations, as does its partner edition for legislature MPs. The toolkit is very efficient and important for those that are enthusiastic about participation but not familiar with formal structures. The facilitation of public hearings by the CGA appears to be a work in progress. There are issues of logistics and capacity that must first be overcome. The CGA plans on advocating legislators to better manage the publication of public hearing schedules. Further, the proposal to arrange transportation for public hearing participants is another action amidst difficult socio-economic conditions. The status of public hearings as a forum for participation is equally important – it is the means by which they can contribute to the democratic process at the provincial level. Ensuring that participants arrive and engage with parliament is of utmost importance. Even if the participants show strong dissent to government initiatives – as in the case of the traditional leaders' opposition to the health centres – they must be present at the hearings to voice this opposition and possibly influence the process. Such is the strength of the democratic system; it acknowledges both dissent and support to formulate its policies.

The CGA is helping strengthen South African democracy at the provincial scale by adopting practical measures to address specified needs. Despite low levels of participation amongst South African citizenry, the democratic state is not yet at peril. Idasa and other like-minded organizations are active and instrumental in ensuring the continuation of this participatory system. There must be a continued

effort at reaching out to the people and building a grassroots culture of citizenship. By doing so these organizations remind people of their investment in the health of a participatory democratic system.

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Photographic Exploration: *The Role of Civil Society in Domestic and International Politics*

Benjamin Fillipo, Benjamin Sacks and Helaina Stein

Civil society is visible in many different aspects of life and society, playing an enormous role worldwide in linking the government and its citizens. The impact of civil society is exhibited in the work of a variety of individuals and groups, from protestors and environmental activists to radio DJs and social entrepreneurs. In this issue of Hemispheres, we explore the great variety of civil society in its manifestations across the globe.

In the past few years, civil society has helped to garner peace and stability in regions experiencing domestic turmoil. While the relationship between the United States and communist Cuba has long been the source of volatile instability, civil society has recently proven to be a tremendous tool in encouraging dialogue and cooperation amongst people and governments. The photograph of a college-run Cuban radio program visualizes this relatively new forum for dialogue.

Individuals have played a key role in organizing and implementing civil society, and some of these individuals have been exceptional in encouraging people to become involved in their own society. Among these, we have specifically highlighted two examples to portray the varying ideals and applications of civil society on the global landscape. Many successful civil society activists have been able to use their prestige and reputation to accelerate their objectives.

Organizing people into a cohesive group protest is no diminutive task, and many of them would go unnoticed without the strength of the group's voice. Groups of protestors have always existed, and have often played a key role in influencing their government and vocalizing their fellow citizens' wants and needs. Even children have acquired the tools and the knowledge that every citizen has the power to change his

or her society for the better.

Civil society groups and organizations do not always have to be shouting in protest in order to be heard, but often voice their concerns in more subtle arenas. In recent years, the number of grassroots organizations that has come into existence has become overwhelming. Citizens in geographically and politically disparate regions of the World have begun to realize their potential in making a difference when 'banding together.'

Organizations focus on a wide range of issues ranging from the environment to politics to social conditions within their societies and abroad. Furthermore, many of these groups and organizations work together across national boundaries to affect an even greater impact on global society. Myriad religious groups worldwide have long existed across many national boundaries, and are strengthened by the knowledge that their message can transcend national identities.

Grassroots organizations, whose very infrastructure is designed around a core of local understandings, beliefs, and concerned local citizenry, provide a unique outlet for change and social activism. With the ever-increasing expansion of globalization and its accompanying values and trends into previously isolated regions and geographic-social entities, the principle of locality has become crucial to the continued prevalence and development of civil society operations. These images exhibit the emotional zeal behind many civil society efforts and their importance for people across the entirety of the socio-economic spectrum at the individual, local, and regional levels. Consequently, the inherent conviction in democracy and inherent human rights and liberties is articulated through broadcasting, protest, activism across an array of fields, and the symbiosis of local cultural priorities with global issues.

While some civil society groups have had negative impacts, the international arena has fostered the growth of many organizations that exist to better their societies by providing a voice for individuals on any subject they feel to be important. The following images were chosen to provide a visual exploration of the breadth and diverse nature of civil society.

Marcibel Loo, left, and Rene Caraballo speak during a radio show called "Entre Jovenes" or "Between Youth", Monday, July 25, 2006, in Miami. The half-hour show addresses issues such as Internet access and alcohol abuse. Aired on shortwave radio to Cuba, it's unclear how many people it reaches. As they await news of Fidel Castro's condition, a new flock of young activists are seeking to raise awareness about human rights abuses in Cuba. These mostly second- and even third-generation Cuban-American college students and young professionals are less overtly political than their parents but are passionate for a homeland many have never even visited. (AP Photo/Alan Diaz)

Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Muhammad Yunus holds the Nobel medal and diploma during the award ceremony at Oslo Town Hall Sunday, Dec. 10, 2006. Yunus, often called the banker to the poor, received the Nobel Peace Prize on Sunday for his efforts to relieve poverty as a cornerstone for building peace. (AP Photo/Bjoern Sigurdsoen / SCANPIX / POOL)

Former President Bill Clinton looks on as dancers perform during dedication ceremonies for Heifer International's world headquarters building Thursday, March 16, 2006, in Little Rock, Ark. The charity provides animals such as water buffaloes, goats and bees to poor families around the world. (AP Photo/David Quinn)

Pakistani women stage a rally before the tomb of Pakistan's founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah for their rights in Karachi, Pakistan, Wednesday, March. 8, 2006. Thousands of women demonstrated in nation-wide rallies on International Women's Day, demanding freedom, equal rights and an end to discriminatory laws in this Muslim nation. Banner in center reads, "March 8 is International Women's Day."(AP Photo/Shakil Adil)

Children shout slogans during a protest, organized by Campaign Against Child Trafficking (CACT) in,Bangalore, India, Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2006. Child trafficking is one of the worst forms of child labour affecting 1.2 million children worldwide.It is the movement of children from place to place through force, coercion or deception into situations involving their economic and sexual exploitation. (AP Photo/Aijaz Rahi)

Protesters carry red roses to offer to the Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban and 7 members of the Supreme Court Thursday, Oct. 26, 2006 in Manila for voting against the petition for a People's Initiative to amend the 1987 constitution. The protesters alleged that the proposed amendment, the shift from the unicameral to the bicameral system of government is an effort by the traditional politicians to perpetuate themselves in power. (AP Photo/Pat Roque)

Civil Society Organization members wear masks with the words "No Voice" printed on them and t-shirts which say "Stand up against poverty, we must have a voice" during a silent protest Friday, Sept. 15, 2006 in Singapore at the allocated protest area in the venue of the IMF-World Bank annual meetings. About 40 activists from the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) gathered in a confined space to highlight poor countries lack of a voice at the International Monetary Fund and World Bank which are currently holding meetings in the city-state. (AP Photo/Wong Maye-E)

Greenhouse manager Kathy Ward holds an Eastern White Pine seedling, one of 80,000 conifer seedlings being grown in an Arbor Day greenhouse in Nebraska City, Neb., Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2007. The Nebraska-based National Arbor Day Foundation has turned to corporate America to stymie one of this century's greatest ecological threats: global warming. The cornerstone of the organization's effort is a $50 million pledge over the next half century from Enterprise Rent-a-Car Co. to help the U.S. Forest Service plant 50 million trees to combat deforestation, driven most recently by devastating wildfires in the west. (AP Photo/ Nati Harnik)

A Kashmiri Shiite Muslim mourner shouts religious slogans as Indian police detain him during a Muharam procession in Srinagar, India, Tuesday, Jan, 30, 2007. Police used tear gas and batons to break up a religious procession in India's portion of Kashmir, where large public gatherings have been banned, on Sunday, injuring 10 people, one of them seriously, officials said. Security forces also detained 40 of the near-400 strong crowd that had gathered in Srinagar, the main city in Jammu-Kashmir state, to mark the Muslim month of Muharram. (AP Photo/ Mukhtar Khan)

A man leaves a voting cabin at a polling station during local elections in Minsk, Belarus, Sunday, Jan. 14, 2007. The poster at right reads: "Happy New Year!" Belarus voters cast ballots Sunday in local elections that are seen as a test for the ex-Soviet nation's isolated regime after a bitter oil dispute with neighboring Russia that could have economically painful effects. (AP Photo/Sergei Grits)

Nation Shall Speak Peace Unto Nation: International Broadcasting in the Context of Civil Society

by Benjamin J. Sacks

The rise of the radio as an instrument for influencing social opinion and change has its origins in the earliest years of international broadcasting. However, the use of international radio as a means to convey the desires and facilitating the interactions of civil society has often been marginalized. Civil society refers to the often collective force of organizations, groups, and individuals who act as advocates for change and as arbitrators between government and the masses at the grassroots level. Thus, civil society encompasses a broad interest groups, non-governmental organizations, community groups, and women's-rights organizations.

The development of transmitters capable of broadcasting beyond the confines of regional, disparate cultural groups and national boundaries in the years leading up to the Second World War presented an innovative medium for the conveyance of socio-economic and political perspectives of nation-state actors on the global stage. Radio was effectively used as a voice of social and political pressure during World War II, initiating a rapid escalation and proliferation of shortwave radio during the Cold War between members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact powers. The American government created international broadcasting stations, including most notably the Voice of America (VOA) that transmitted American policies and values throughout the Cold War, propagating the American system of economic and ideological beliefs. Under the guise of George F. Kennan's policy of active intervention and

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containment of Communist expansion, combined with a similar policy in the Soviet Union, international radio became largely an instrument of the dissemination of government instruction and influence. Although the BBC is widely respected as being impartial, at times it too was advised that fighting the Cold War was a priority over impartial news broadcasting. Due to the centrality of the Cold War in directing the nature of international broadcasting throughout much of the Twentieth Century, little attention has been focused upon the expansion of international radio in the context of civil society.

The inclusion of NGOs, community grassroots organizations, and socially centered partnerships and movements in the characterization of civil society in recent years, has come to include such non-state actors as local and regional stations who have the capability to create and transmit transnational broadcasts. Due to the considerable geographic dimensions of many nations, these stations use the international (shortwave) radio spectrum to broadcast across the entirety of their nation. Although some political organization and partiality are usually present, the primary focus of these groups is to initiate social and economic change, including the increased diffusion of independent societal organizations and unions, as well as to enhance and diversify the interactions between these non-state, grassroots actors and government.

Why is international radio part of civil society? Shortwave radio acts an arbitrator between government and its citizenry; it has become an ideal form of communication as it easily accessible to a broad audience. Anyone who can afford a cheap, analogue receiver with several shortwave bands can be reached across borders. The recent development of such basic and inexpensive, yet comprehensive sets as the *Freeplay* radio has maintained this direction. Civil society-driven shortwave radio sustains its effectiveness through strategic use of the breadth of the frequency range. Jamming is often ineffectual as HF transmitters can jump rapidly across frequency spectrum, a range that extends from roughly two thousand kilohertz to nearly thirty thousand kilohertz. Although some major international broadcasters as the BBC have traditionally catered towards a highly educated audience, transmissions that are principally concerned with advocacy movements, women's issues, and other civil society concerns can be easily and effectively aired in the local dialect, relying upon

the local levels of education to reach the widest possible audience.

International, regional, and local non-governmental organizations as watchdogs facilitate transparent and accountable practices between government authority and the people, as well as between disparate ethnic or cultural groups. In this manner, international radio is an effective medium. The United Nations has promulgated this idea through the creation of United Nations Radio (UNR). As an influential branch of the world's principal arbiter, the UNR acts as a channel for reports, analyses, and debate over largely social, universal dilemmas, avoiding political bias and partiality towards particular state-actors. Today, its reach is extensive, and can be heard on shortwave radio and the internet. It provides vocal support to those individuals or groups who are attempting to change their communities and livelihoods in politically tumultuous and often violent situations.

In the politically charged atmosphere of Democratic People's Republic of Korea-Republic of Korea (DPRK-ROK) relations, considerable financial and political backing has been afforded to government radio transmissions across both sides of the Demilitarized Zone. In particular, Pyongyang's broadcasts are almost purely political, and serve only to attempt to sway public opinion in the ROK in favor of DPRK domestic and foreign policies. However, even in this acutely hostile environment, individuals amongst the civilian population have grouped together to form international radio stations that are primarily concerned with civil societal issues. Open Radio for North Korea is a cooperative, civilian effort to broadcast messages from the ROK to the DPRK. Within its mission statement, it stresses universality of participation, regardless of societal standing or career, and is not obstructed by "any political, economic, social, cultural or religious sphere." A grassroots-based organization that is "owned by participants", its primary objective is to utilize advocacy groups and individuals concerned about the state of the DPRK across the expanse of the socio-economic, legal, political, and humanistic elements that formulate North Korean society, from the ground to the Politburo. Accordingly, it seeks to bridge a gap of information and cultural knowledge between the two Korean societies.
When a nation experiences political upheaval that changes the attitudes

and behavior of society, such as in periods of foreign intervention or internal revolution, international broadcasting can be employed as an ideal medium in which to exploit the vacuum of stability with societal movements and community progressivism as well as a national and international tool of pressure. The rise of the Karzai Government in Kabul has created such an environment. In this fertile atmosphere, communication and discussion of many controversial issues has advanced rapidly in the face of little or no governmental censorship and regulation. Indeed, the ability for individuals to broadcast their ideas freely was unknown for much of the recorded Afghan history; a nation that has been subjected to numerous invasion in the past two centuries alone. However, as Kabul gradually extends long-term control over disparate regions of the country, civil society-based shortwave radio must be allowed continuous freedom in order to promote women's rights, NGOs, and the opinions and resources of advocacy groups as legitimate voices that should be broadcasted to the nation and abroad as prominently as their government-supported counterparts, such as in this situation, Radio Afghanistan.

The global dissemination of the concerns and aspirations of collective non-state actors that represent both individuals and groups must be allowed to expand to accelerate more comprehensive and accurate presentations of both grassroots movements and national governments. They are instrumental in effecting social movement and reform, while maintaining a level of respect in zones of contention (such as the Korean peninsula) that would be exceptionally mistrustful of state broadcasting. As such, civil society radio is able to use its independent status to convey reform and to focus its talent on the welfare of the people.

Microfinance: The Future of Civil Society

by Arun Yang

In recent years, microfinance has received an unprecedented amount of publicity whilst emerging as an effective solution to extreme poverty in developing states. Microfinance is now seen as a viable design, especially with major success stories like 2006 Nobel Prize Winner Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank. The work of small banks like Grameen and non-government organizations (NGOs) in the field of microfinance are vital actors within global civil society.

A pioneer in the field of international economics, Muhammad Yunus created a model for microfinance as a form of civil society. In 1976, Yunus created the Grameen Bank, a system of solidarity groups which stipulated that several individuals apply together as co-sponsors for loans. In addition to microcredit, the Grameen Bank served the Bangladeshi community in other ways by offering education loans and providing financing for fisheries and irrigation projects along the coastal regions. Over the course of its 31-year history, the Grameen Bank has issued more than $5.1 billion to 5.3 million borrowers. There are now more than 7,000 microfinance institutions across the world that serve 16 million people. This suggests that the microfinance model may be emerging as the most effective form of civil society for the 21st century. Yunus and the Grameen Bank are one of the best examples of effective microfinancing and have become the standard model for emerging institutions.

At economic conferences worldwide, microfinance strategies seem to be at the forefront of many discussions. At the 35th Annual Economic Forecast conference in Washington, Matthew Bishop, the moderator of the conference said, "[philanthropy] is one of the greatest megatrends

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in the world today." Keynote speaker Cheryl Scott said that philanthropy could barely keep up with its own pace of growth. High re-payment rates on micro-credit loans has made large banks more interested in investing in microfinance institutions according to CEO of Citicorp Charles Prince. Accion International, a large microfinance firm based in Latin America, reports a historical repayment rate of 97%. Microfinance is becoming a serious business model as well as an act of philanthropy. As more large corporations such as Citigroup are being held accountable for their contributions to society, there is a new trend linking domestic corporate institutions to civil society endeavors worldwide.

Even at college campuses such as Tufts, microfinance has made an impact on the priorities of the institution. Pierre Omidyar, a Tufts alum and the founder of eBay, donated $100 million to create a fund that would invest in microfinance initiatives. Omidyar, who has been one of the most vocal activists of microfinance said, "It's a fundamentally different way of looking at how to make a social impact. It's using business as a tool to make that happen."

Political organizations and researchers are starting to look past solely the economic effects of microfinance to see the social effects it can have. In her novel *The Microfinance Revolution*, Marguerite Robinson presents in-depth case studies of microfinance organizations in Indonesia. By using the Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) as her chief case study, Robinson shows that microfinance has captured the imagination of policy-makers and development practitioners in a unique way. More NGOs have started financing microfinance programs through their health, education or gender equity programs. Robinson draws lessons from what she feels are the best practices of microfinance institutions and shows the impact they can have as actors in civil society.

Since microfinance efforts have been successful throughout the world, more institutions and leaders are seeing what kind of effect microfinance can have on civil society. Policy-makers see microfinance as a way to empower the people not just economically but also socially and psychologically. Microfinance gives those who are poor a chance to gain material goods which give them confidence and greater access to society. For many of these individuals, with money, comes a newfound status, which

brings the opportunity to actively participate in society. It gives them an opportunity to participate more freely in political procedures and other parts of society that low status might have blocked them from. Microfinance has a unique way of building self-esteem, because individuals can see that they are helping themselves through their own talents.

Recently microfinance institutions have been devoting more attention to work that empowers women in particular, furthering their work as actors in civil society. Organizations have started supporting women who work diligently, but because of lower status or initial debt, can barely make enough to survive. Hard-working women who already have a talent such as making jewelry or knitting seem to benefit from the very small loans, which provide them enough money to buy starting materials without going into debt. From an economic standpoint, these women are better off and can make a small business out of their respective craft. Socially, these women are empowered and can gain immense amounts of self-confidence, especially in cultures that actively seek to suppress women. Added income helps these women gain more confidence and speak more freely in their families. As they become more vocal in their families, eventually they will become more active in their communities. Microfinance can have a profound impact as a civil society actor on the lives of women because it gives them the satisfaction of knowing that they are solely responsible for this added income.

Microfinance institutions have arguably been more effective in building communities than conventional civil society institutions have, because of the group-oriented nature of most microfinance models. There is a large society building aspect of Yunus' repayment structure and subsequent microfinance arrangements that have followed his model. To ensure a higher repayment rate and an incentive to make repayment more of a transparent process, Yunus thought it would be wise to make it a group effort. In this way, members of the group would keep each other accountable and build up trust. These groups become metaphoric family circles that are closely tied together by economic interest.

The nature of microfinance creates a system where there is a large economic incentive for the institutions. These institutions are investing

their own capital in terms of loans and would be more personally involved. Another benefit is that progress is easier to quantitatively measure than other political and social civil society institutions. Political and social civil society institutions often are less committed to a region than microfinance institutions simply because they are more personally invested. As large corporations start funding microfinance institutions, they will only become more active in the communities.

The group-first mentality of microfinance structures has led to an increasing level of trust in the poor and even greater social accountability. These groups that banks set up are meant to hold each other economically accountable, but the individual families tend to get closer and look out for one another socially. Microfinance, by linking families economically, has a unique way of bringing communities together socially; thus having a profound impact on civil society.

Microfinance works effectively on multiple levels and has become the most effective form of civil society for the economically driven and highly competitive 21st century. Beyond microfinance's obvious economic benefits, it has a remarkable way of altering the way people think about themselves and their own capabilities. It is empowering and effective in providing social development for the poor. Microfinance also has an incredible way of drawing interest from large banks and corporations, who like Mr. Omidyar, see microfinance as a business tool that can make a social impact. It is a unique type of philanthropy that as a humanitarian business model excites can anyone involved with international business. Furthermore, microfinance creates more transparency and a new level of trust between institutions and the poor. Through stable structures that are created by NGOs and banks, microfinance gives the poor an advantage, while guiding them through small repayment processes. Microfinance is an incredibly unique form of civil society that transcends cultural barriers to link social and economic interests together to benefit the poor. Microfinance has already helped millions; because of its profound economic and social impact, there are countless more that it can and will assist in the next decade.

Feminist Methodologies of International Relations. Edited by Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern, and Jacqui True. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 332 pages. $29.99

Review by Chris Giliberti

Published in July of 2006, *Feminist Methodologies of International Relations* is the first collection of scholarly essays to address systems of inquiry in the emerging international relations subfield of feminism, a thought group that got its start in the late 1980s. Edited by feminist scholars Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern, and Jacqui True, the compendium draws from an international and theoretically varied body of contributors.

Feminist Methodologies purportedly seeks to provoke fresh thought in feminism and to provide guidance to those who wish to conduct research in the developing field. More specifically, the volume's editors undertake an exploration on the relationships existing between ontology, epistemology, methodology and method as they pertain to analysis processes in feminism.

Prerequisite to a discussion of such power relationships in feminist research is an understanding of feminism's distinguishing postulates. Feminism regards the international system as inherently anarchic, as does realism, the theory with which it is most commonly juxtaposed. Offering disparate explanations for the existence of anarchy, realism and feminism henceforth deviate drastically. While realism provides an all-encompassing lens through which to interpret all actions of and interactions between states, feminism specifically seeks to ac-

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complish an ontological correlation between the character of international politics, both applied and academic, and predisposed gender-biases.

Feminism values the role that gender bears in the personality of a leader's policy; perpetrating intrinsic masculine tendencies, apparently inclined towards belligerence, for the international system's anarchic nature and an unnecessarily active state of conflict and war. With leadership posts in both the applied and academic realms of politics dominated by men, feminists assert that masculine tendencies inextricably influence the general perception and holistic nature of international politics. To support such claims, feminists explain power in terms of gender-exclusive traits. Where realism defines power relationships as a zero-sum race driven by self-interest, feminism insists that relationships of mutual ability and cooperation are possible, though under the sole condition of dominant feminine influence in the international system.

Its theories summarized, it is important to note feminism's shortcomings as they relate to research methodologies. Because all feminist postulations address gender-biases, it is impossible to employ feminism in the same way one might realism, as an exhaustive resource through which to view all behaviors in the international system; in light of this, feminism may be more accurately defined as an assemblage of compelling, "what if" queries. Though innovative in its inquiries, feminism's heavy reliance on hypotheticals, such as the existence of an international system dominated by feminine influence, translates to a considerable deficiency of empirical evidence to support its postulations, inviting an immense deal of criticism. Additionally damaging, the insufficiency of empirical evidence excludes feminist researchers from utilizing standard methodologies for research, hindering feminists' ability to confront often-convincing critiques.

Feminist researchers, a small and insular group characterized by a steadfast commitment to their field, have overcome circumstantial restrictions by inventively crafting research processes of their own. Though *Feminist Methodologies* avoids an explanation of the numerous obstacles that field research has been dealt, the work's editors applaud the creativity of contributors and earnestly inform readers that feminist research is often inconsistent and not easily endeavored upon. Perspectives exhibited in

the volume are deliberately diverse so as to showcase feminism's sweeping scope; however, the compilation is admittedly far from exhaustive. Three general discussions are presented, with several essays detailing each – "Methodological Conversations Between Feminist and Non-Feminist International Relations; Methods for Feminist International Relations; and Methodologies for Feminist International Relations."

At the volume's onset, essays relating to "Methodological Conversations Between Feminist and Non-Feminist International Relations" seek to characterize the relationships existing between ontology and epistemology and those between epistemology and methodology. An important finding drawn in this section is the ability of epistemology itself to act as a methodology for research in feminist international relations. Detailed second are "Methods for Feminist International Relations". Comprised of 5 case studies, this section explores the few existing empirical outlets available to feminism. Essays explain the character of relationships between method and methodology, ontology and method, and ethics and method. Newly presented research questions are a highlight of this section. Concluding the volume is a discussion of "Methodologies for Feminist International Relations". Contributions characterize interactions between epistemologies, ontologies, and method, mentioning also 'tools of inquiry' that are of use to a feminist researcher in examining the research of other feminist scholars. In this section, an emphasis is placed on the development of feminist international relations and the discovery of new methodological frameworks.

Adversities aside, reflection on the contributions presented in *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations* validates the devout dedication and truly artistic insight of feminist researchers. The volume's three discussions cohesively aim to open a dialogue, the first of its kind, for the evolution and betterment of feminist IR theory. In compiling so impressive a volume, editors Ackerly, Stern, and True have realized their stated goal - a brilliant resource perfectly suited to inspire and counsel feminist researchers.

Interview with L. David Brown

Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Conducted by Paul Lemaistre and Anita Gardeva at the Hauser Center, with additional reporting by Benjamin J. Sacks

L. David Brown is Lecturer in Public Policy and Director of International Programs at the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations. Prior to coming to Harvard he was President of the Institute for Development Research, a nonprofit center for development research and consultation, and Professor of Organizational Behavior at Boston University. His research and consulting has focused on institutional development, particularly involving civil society organizations, that fosters sustainable development and social transformation. He has written or edited Transnational Civil Society: An Introduction (with Srilatha Batliwala), Practice-Research Engagement for Civil Society in a Globalizing World, The Struggle for Accountability: NGOs, Social Movements and the World Bank (with Jonathan Fox),and Managing Conflict at Organizational Interfaces. He has been a Fulbright Lecturer in India and a Peace Corps community organizer in Ethiopia.

Hemispheres: We'd like to begin with the first question, which is how you would define civil society, because in getting acquainted with the literature, we decided that that's a question that's difficult to answer. So we would like your opinion on that.

L. David Brown: There are a lot of different definitions, and that's one of the problems. It's one of those concepts that is evolving over time, I think. The definition I use most commonly is the one that Mike Edwards articulated which basically says there are really three aspects to

civil society: one is a bunch of organizations, voluntary associations of one sort or another, and that includes non-profit organizations, and non-governmental organizations, and unions and lots of other animals that are not business and not government. And then a second aspect of civil society is a set of aspirations about society itself – it really refers to societies that follow norms of reciprocity and tolerance and civil engagement for solving problems, as opposed to doing it by force or by imperial fiat, and so on. The third aspect is the civil society as a public sphere for discussion and an arena in which the public can gauge its questions and grapples with how to respond to them. So that's a sort of a tripartite definition that captures the discourse aspect, the aspirations aspect, and the organizational aspect, which is interesting.

Hemispheres: As we see there are different levels of civil society organizations in terms of actual formations and institutions that they have. One is those with an international presence, who conduct work at a transnational level. Another is international organizations that have worked with local partners, and another is the local partners' domestic partners who work primarily at the grassroots level. That leads up to the second level of question that we have: are domestic civil society institutions, those really working at the grassroots level, capable of affecting the character of their state at an international level? If so, how are they able to do so?

L. David Brown: So let me just see if I understand the levels. There are local organizations and national organizations and transnational organizations, right? The question is can local and national organizations shape the way their governments behave in the international arena? Well, do you think that the US has behaved differently in the international arena since the civil rights movement?

Hemispheres: Yes, definitely.

L. David Brown: Because I think that the civil rights movement is a classic case of grassroots organizations and national civil rights organizations that influence the government and influence the way that the society understands what the issues are. I guess the answer is Yes to the question.

Hemispheres: How about organizations like the Nuclear Freeze Movement of the eighties? It was a very strong, vocal call against increased military buildup that ran counter to the Reagan Administration's policy of massive militarization, but hasn't necessarily seemed to have changed much. Is there that lasting character change? Is that always the case?

L. David Brown: Well, it's certainly not always the case. But I think the general…at least the literature as I understand it suggests that the general disarmament movement can really make a difference in whether the West and the Soviet Union signed disarmament treaties. In that line you can argue that they, that the US has been backing out of some of those things and when the Soviet Union dissolved some question as to how much they're under control in some of those states. But, I think that there was some lasting impact of the peace movement, I think is, I think is hard to argue against.

Hemispheres: Would you say that civil society organizations, because of the fact that they stem from the bottom up, and their ability to influence a nation's actions in the international arena, would be more legitimate and more influential than traditional international organizations such as the UN whose purpose is to direct relations between nations. This connects with their legitimacy and what brings them to life and the motivation behind them. Could they actually be more capable of influencing society as opposed to a top-down approaches?

L. David Brown: Are you assuming that most legitimacy is grounded in their relations with grassroots?

Hemispheres: Yes.

L. David Brown: Because I'm not sure that I buy that assumption.

Hemispheres: Alright.

LDB: So let me give you an example.

Hemispheres: Okay.

L. David Brown: Transparency International is not an organization that grew out of a grassroots. It's an organization that was founded by a man who'd been a senior official of the World Bank who had tried to get the World Bank to do something about corruption. He had actually been the director of the East Africa programs for the World Bank. And the leadership of the World Bank at that time said "no, no, we're not going to try to take on corruption. That's a political issue. That's the way the world works, etc." So, this guy took early retirement from the World Bank and built a network of sort of elite leaders in lots of different countries who were concerned about the impact of corruption on development. And one of the things they did was get a treaty signed by the OECD countries that basically declared corruption illegal. Up until that time the US corporations had to follow their corrupt practices act, which meant they couldn't...it was illegal for them to pay bribes, but lots of European corporations had no such strictures. They could take tax breaks from the bribes that they paid. So a lot of American businesses were very eager to have Transparency International succeed in getting corruption declared illegal by the European countries. But to come back to Transparency International I think based its legitimacy in two sources that didn't necessarily have to do with grassroots support. One was expertise. They became a resource on how do you manage corruption and do you keep it from happening. And the second is values. Lot's of people agree that it's a bad thing to buy Senators or to in various ways have lots of the monies that were set aside for development projects go to the personal aggrandizement of leaders of various countries. So I think Transparency International gets its legitimacy through values and from expertise rather than from representing some grassroots population, even though they would also argue that the work they do is for the good of everybody in the world except the corrupt folks.

Hemispheres: So that seems to tie into the four types of legitimacy that you outlined in the chapter on civil society legitimacy, you outlined moral legitimacy, which I think were the values that you were talking about before, and finally the expertise, political, and legal legitimacy. And do you think you could elaborate on these issues and how do groups gain legitimacy? Is it something that they claim? Or is it something that

gradually accrues over time?

L. David Brown: Well I think that you can claim it and not have it. Right? I mean what I say does not determine what my legitimacy is. I think legitimacy has to do with how I am seen or how my organization is seen by lots of other constituencies in the world. And they I think reasonably would want to ask "well, if you say you represent lots of grassroots people, show me the evidence." Or if you say "you have technical expertise, let's see the evidence; you are technically expert." In terms of the claiming versus accruing I think that legitimacy is first of all In the eyes of outsiders not in the, although we organizations will say this is what we think the basis of our legitimacy is, but they can't establish that without having other say, "yes, we agree with that"... Also, another question that might be related is there, if a group can claim or prove that they have more types or all four types, is there a way to categorize or prioritize the different types of legitimacy. Is one organization inherently better or more effective based upon…

Hemispheres: Can groups claim multiple types of legitimacy? Is it even possible to have more than one because in the way, if its important to be an expert or if it's important to be a representative they're just so different that then you start to specialize in one type of legitimacy order to be in.

L. David Brown: Well, I think it depends a little bit on what you try to do as an organization. I would say most civil society organizations, for instance at least operating in the international arena, would argue that they have legal legitimacy; they followed the rules in constituting themselves. They have some national base and they have followed the, in the US for instance, the rules for establishing a 501C3. And that gives you some legal base for existence. But that, that legal base sort of makes it a legitimate place to give money, for instance. Take a tax deduction – it doesn't say very much about whom you represent or what your expertise is, etc. I think most civil society ruled organizations use several kinds of legitimacy. So they will, they will be legally constituted and they will follow the rules about audited accounts and annual reports and so on. But I think that it's probably not common for organizations to claim all

four bases of legitimacy. Which legitimacy is important may turn a lot on what you're trying to do, so for instance if you're an advocacy organization; you're trying to influence national policy, you could do that on the basis of expertise, say we understand these issues in a way that not many people do, so for instance a lot of the child-sponsorship organizations campaigned for the, to get the rights of the child treaty passed. And they did that on the basis of the being in the business of trying to foster child survival and child thriving so they had expertise on that. I think that Jubilee 2000, for instance, was trying to influence the policies of the World Bank and the OECD countries around indebtedness. Did in part by saying 'we have thousands of people who agree with us?' So, when there was a meeting of the, I think it was the European heads of state in Birmingham they, they ringed the meeting with seventy thousand demonstrators, which made Tony Blair come out and talk to them directly because seventy thousand demonstrators are a whole lot of demonstrators in Birmingham. So, that was a case where they represented the significant political voice among the voters. So, I think again the legitimacy base is that you claim may turn a lot of what kind of influence you want to have, and if you're trying to say we deliver good service in health and welfare, then it may be key for you to demonstrate a capacity to deliver those kinds of services in performance and legitimacy, for instance.

Hemispheres: Okay. Maybe in regards to political legitimacy, we posited some hypothetical situations: how legitimate would be the claims of an organization advocating for democratic governance accountability in a theocratic state, or, or even those of an anti-women's group in a progressive state. Even those organizations with a stated mission or agenda, maybe they're not representative of the people. Is it contingent on the political system in which they operate?

L. David Brown: Are these countries in which there is some sort of assurance of freedom of speech? If so, then you ought to be able to say what you believe. Now that doesn't mean it's going to become the law of the land in a big hurry. In China, for instance, you have to be pretty careful about what you advocate. You may ask for instance, what the green movement in China represents as an environmental organization that has advocated against things like the Three Gorges Dam. This is tricky busi-

ness in China. Do you say that an organization has no legitimacy if the state doesn't like it? I'd be nervous about that claim. Green China may have more legitimacy outside China than it has inside, at least with the government.

Hemispheres: In a state like Iran, which is a theocracy, but there are some progressive elements of society within it, and there are some limited freedoms of speech and media that exist to a degree. If an organization working in that context were to be calling for democratic transparency and accountability, isn't there a tension between that and the aims of the state?

L. David Brown: Where does legitimacy come from? Can a state declare an organization illegitimate? And if so, what if its seen as legitimate by the populace? In East Europe, the civil society movement was seen as alive and well during the Communist regimes, and Solidarity, for instance, was a labor union that basically emerged as a major player in the political situation in Poland. I don't think the government was particularly ready to say that it was a legitimate situation, but the workers were ready to say that. So one of the questions here was that legitimacy was not just declared by one stakeholder or another; it has to do with multiple stakeholders. And particularly if you have a government whose legitimacy is question by its own population, than you might have the populace say that some organization is legitimacy even if the government says that it is not. I think one of the key questions here is legitimate with who?

Hemispheres: You mentioned stakeholders before, which is interesting. This takes on added importance for organizations operating in a number of countries, maybe one based in the US that has operations oversees. There are critics of foreign development and aid, amongst them South African president Thabo Mbeki, who have spoken very vocally about they claim is an African dependence on this foreign intervention. How do these organizations respond to the characterization of their work as propagating Western standards? How do these organizations deal with the tension that they have between directing their mission based on the demands of their funders and what is expected of the recipients of their

programs?

L. David Brown: Part of the dilemma is that there are a lot of different animals that you are talking about. There is no sort of easy answer for all these organizations. When you say those organizations, you are thinking about international development or advocacy NGOs. Let me start with talking about an organization like OXFAM, which doesn't take US government money, so it can claim to not be an agent of US imperialism but it may still be an agent of cultural imperialism. I think the way that OXFAM typically operates in most countries is that does both relief and development work. But in both those cases it usually works with local partners, maybe Indian organizations or Zimbabwean organizations, etcetera. I think it would be very careful about getting involved in advocacy activities on behalf of national partners as opposed to supporting advocacy activities. I think it recognizes that its not at risk at the same way that national partners are if they go up against the government, so making the decision to go forward with an advocacy program that might get a local partner in trouble is not responsible behavior for an American or British organization. Further, these organizations recognize that it is a national responsibility. For instance, Mugabe or Mbeki might say that these organizations are advocating a kind of human rights that is not 'Africa', or that the challenge to authority is not 'African'. It seems to me that it is less credible if the people who are making the argument are Zimbabweans. The Movement for Democratic Change, for instance, is not a bunch of Americans; it's a bunch of Zimbabweans. I think there are some questions to be asked with what human rights really are universal. But I'm not sure Mugabe's in a good position to claim he knows more about what rights are others are. It seems to me that it's pretty demonstrable that he's suppressing dissent in his own country.

I think it's very easy for civil society organizations and international NGOs of the sort you were talking about to end up being more accountable to donors than they are to their beneficiaries, because with their donors accountability upward is always got more teeth in it than accountability downward. I think some international NGOs are being very active about trying to change the balance of that and to make sure that they pay attention to their accountabilities to multiple constituencies. One of the

things that I've argued and that my colleagues have argued in a number of places is that civil society organizations ought to be accountable in particular to their missions. And that one thing they ought to do is take a look at their stakeholders, and think about how to align their accountabilities to those stakeholders so it supports their mission achievement and not get caught in the bind of just paying attention to powerful stakeholder like government regulators or donors. Because if they do that end up being donor-driven rather than be responsive to the beneficiaries and the missions that they say they're focused on. So, I would argue in favor of trying to get clear about how do we be accountable to the missions we say we're doing, the values we claim to be implementing, and making sure that the pressures on us from various constituencies moves in that direction, in the direction of the interests of the donors, for instance. Okay, is that clear?

Hemispheres: What do you perceive as some possible threats to civil society? What problems could civil society encounter, what would render it incapable of influencing policy-making?

L. David Brown: Besides a lack of funding?

Hemispheres: Yes.

L. David Brown: I think that one of the important threats to civil society, that a lot of civil society organizations are grappling with now, is the question of legitimacy and accountability. And because the nature of civil society means that accountability is a lot more ambiguous than it is for your public sector organizations at least in democracies, where the primary constituency that you have to be accountable to is the voters. And business organizations that have to be accountable to their owners, there's no similar primary contingency that civil society organizations have to be accountable to. In fact they have to be accountable to multiple constituencies. And so I think around the world there's a lot of interest in how can civil society organizations articulate standards of accountability and then live up to them, so that they don't lose what is a really critical part of their capacity to influence the world which is their reputation for being trustworthy and credible.

You may be familiar with the Globespan assessments of trust in major institutions. Have you run across this? Well, there's an international polling institution that has for the last five years asked a sample of the population in twenty different countries, both northern and southern, developing and industrialized countries, about their trust in transnational corporations, major national corporations, national governments, or NGOs, or the Church, etcetera. Across those five years the NGOs have always had more trust than national governments or transnational corporations or national corporations or the UN, etcetera. Although all the lines for all of them are declining, so trust in all of those institutions is going down over five years although civil society organizations still rank higher than the average. I think that civil society's reputation that makes it an increasingly important player in the world, particularly on advocacy issues, but also in delivering services. One of the things that has happened during the last five or six years are increasing attacks on civil society, especially by governments, and corporations. These are organizations that had been to civil society pressure to be more accountable. That has led civil society organizations to become increasingly concerned about how to defend their legitimacy, and about how to respond to these questions about their accountability.

In fact, the CIVICUS study has something called the Civil Society Index, which has been developed with teams in developing countries to do assessments of civil society and how it has been evolving, and so on. One of the things that they have done as part of this assessment is ask people 'what are the major problems that civil society faces in that country'. One of the problems that has come up most frequently is legitimacy and accountability. This is a hot issue globally, as well as a hot issue among international NGOs. I would say that's more important than the financing, in terms of the future impact. I think another ongoing question for civil society is where the next generation of leaders is going to come from. In many countries, civil society is staffed by leaders that came out of the social activism movement of the sixties and seventies. They have greyed, to put it mildly, if they have hair left at all. Where is the next generation going to come from? There is a period when the people from the sixties and seventies, in the eighties and nineties they were likely to

say that 'its time to get rich.' The fact that levels of interest amongst college students now are going up, I think that is a good sign.

Hemispheres: For many African countries that gained independence in the sixties and seventies have for the most part transitioned to democratic regimes, whether they are free and fair, is debatable. One example is South Africa, where civil society was very strong during apartheid, but since then there have been concerns of declining levels of public participation and engagement with government.

L. David Brown: This is a pattern that you can see in many other democratizing countries. You can see it in India; you can see it in Chile, as well as in South Africa. In India for instance, after 1947, the people who were in the independence movement became part of the state. In the case of South Africa, the ANC became the government. A lot of the NGOs that had been supporting the anti-apartheid movement suddenly found their funds sent to the government. Many of the European sources of their funds began funding the government instead of individual civil society organizations. These civil society organizations were in a financial crisis and found themselves in a position of having to convert from anti-government organizations to development organizations which is a whole new game. Many of their leaders also went into the government. The same thing happened in India in the seventies, where their was a movement to 'reinvent' civil society because what was considered a repressive bureaucracy. So there was a rebirth of NGOs during the seventies and eighties. So I think that one of the interesting things to look at is the tectonics of state power when there is that kind of shift, what happens to civil society, and what does it take to reconstitute it in a transitional era?

Hemispheres: Can there be ever be too many civil society organizations, so as to limit their effectiveness? I'm thinking about the example of Bangladesh, which people to consider having one of the most vibrant civil society networks in the world. The state is still mired in deep economic and governance crisis. How well have civil society organizations been working? Do they step on each others' toes by competing for funding?

L. David Brown: One of the reasons that civil society is so strong in

Bangladesh is because the government is weak. They have this situation that is democracy on paper, but these two parties basically paralyze each other a fair amount of the time. One of the reasons that the NGO community gets so strong is that the donors recognized that giving money to the government would be a waste, so they gave it to the NGOs who at least did good work. I'm not sure that you can blame the poor governance on the NGOs as opposed to saying that if you have a strong NGO sector without having a strong government that can work together; you end up having some serious problems.

Hemispheres: You mentioned the tensions inherent between corporations and civil society and how they compete for legitimacy and accuse each other of impeding on their respective spheres. How about the trend towards socially responsible business, wherein corporations and civil society organizations are fostering partnerships? It seems that that in this case, both actors are responsible to different groups, either shareholders or stakeholders. How do you reconcile these issues of accountability and transparency in the case of corporate- civil society partnerships?

L. David Brown: I think there are several reconciliations. There are two basic models: socially responsible business models; and business at the bottom of the pyramid. I think that in corporate social responsibility, a lot of corporations have begun to recognize that the theory of the business is business, and that they shouldn't worry about anything else, is probably unwise in the developing world. It is not good for business to have continuing revolutions going on, nor is it good to have no government or a failed state. You want to do business with a type of stable regime that allows people to make contracts and fulfill them and get paid, etcetera. There is a significant business stake in social responsibility and viable governance. A number of corporations are recognizing that they have a stake in not running away from responsibilities from the populace. In Brazil, you find a very big discrepancy between the rich and the poor, and a lot of businesses recognize that they have to work with civil society to address poverty. Otherwise that place is going to blow up and they won't have any type of market. Similar events occurred in the Philippines. I don't think there is necessarily a contradiction between businesses collaborating with civil society on socially responsible things,

unless you have a very narrow view of what 'shareholder value'.

In the 'business at the bottom of the pyramid', most transnational business is organized to produce goods and services for the part of the world's population that makes more than $2,000 a year. That is about 400 million people. The other 6 billion people don't make that much. What has happened in the last decade is that last some businesses, such as Hindustan Lever in India, have found that they can make profits selling individual packets of soap for washing to very poor people, who can't buy an entire pack's worth. They have now have a $100 million per year business selling these packets, but to do it they had to reorganize their business systems and had to collaborate NGOs who had contacts with the grassroots to get this stuff out there and to understand what businesses might be profitable.

CK Prahalad is one of the people who first publicized and theorized this model. He and a colleague wrote a paper seven years ago that they couldn't get published because it was such a radical notion. Last December there was a conference at the [Harvard] Business School that brought together 120 people who were doing research on business at the bottom of the pyramid because it is absolutely exploding. Prahalad gave a speech at this conference where he said that the future of business is in alliances with NGOs to develop services that will work for these six billion people who are ready to buy. It's all a matter of figuring out how to get goods and services to them. So this is a case where its absolutely in the strategic interest of business to collaborate with NGOs in order to produce these goods and services. Its not a matter of corporate social responsibility or having a long-term view of society, but rather a matter of how to get to these markets. You can't do it without collaborating with civil society. Milton Friedman would approve of this motivation of NGOs.

Hemispheres: We are really interested in the ways that emerging technologies can be used to benefit civil society. The internet or the radio can be used as mediums and space for organizations to publicize themselves and network with similar organizations. Can you comment on the ways that civil society can effectively use emerging technologies towards dif-

ferent corporate partnerships in the developing world?

L. David Brown: I think there is a tremendous amount of stuff going on in terms of using technology as a resource. I had a student last year who wrote his second year policy analysis about a project in India that is building computer kiosks that will allow access to the internet in 100,000 villages in India. If farmers in 100,000 villages get access to market information about their products, its going to make a difference. I think it's clear already that a lot of the international work of NGOs is usually facilitated by access to the internet. I am anything but an expert on this set of issues…Another example is the World Computer Exchange, which was started by a Kennedy School graduate, who basically works with businesses to take outdated computers and move them into schools in the developing world. They are moving thousands of computers every year to places where people would otherwise not have computers. At the same time they are mobilizing students and corporations to help people use these computers. I think there are lots of possibilities there, lots of things going on. There's a lot of partnership going on between businesses and civil society and state agencies about problems that none of them can solve by themselves. We used to think of governance as primarily an arena for government, but increasingly it is an arena in which all three sectors need to be involved, particularly around problems that any single sector can't solve by themselves…Clearly one of the ways that civil society is getting access to new technologies is by working with international NGOs, or with government agencies, or with for-profit organizations.

CONGRATULATIONS…

to the staff of

Hemispheres

for another fine issue

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