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**NGO PARTNERSHIPS AND SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRATIC
DEVELOPMENT
WITH LESSONS FROM A CANADIAN-ZIMBABWEAN CASE STUDY**

by

Sandra Jean MacLean

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

at

**Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
April, 1997**

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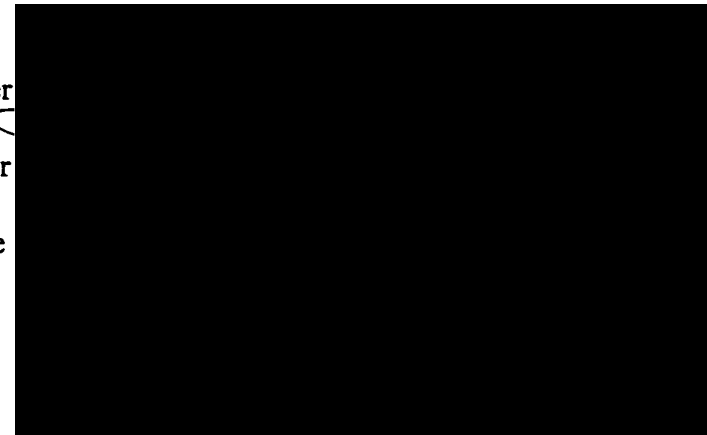
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For my mother, Elizabeth Jean Morrison,
with love

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Abstract

The increased importance of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in development theory and practice over the last quarter of the twentieth century has significant implications for the promotion of sustainable democratic development. However, there are alternative perspectives on how the latter might be achieved and what roles civil societies (and NGOs within) may play in the process.

Part I of the dissertation argues that the global neoliberal order which currently dominates the development policy agenda holds a narrow instrumentalist view of democracy and a market-oriented approach to decision-making which is unlikely to promote sustainable political or economic development. Instead, the current conjuncture requires reconceptualisations, policy revisions and institutional changes that take account of the inter-relatedness of development, democracy (“participatory” or “developmentalist” as opposed to “protective” versions) and security (“human” as opposed merely to “national” or military”). Further, the emergence of a “transnational civil society” is contributing to this reformulation, and while the pluralist community of NGOs plays no fixed or consistent role in the process, the *idea* of partnership, and the formation of *certain* networks among *some* NGOs contributes to a new global politics which could lead to a more humane governance.

In Part II, a case study of the developmental propensities of Canadian-Zimbabwean NGO “partnerships” explores the possibilities and problems which exist in national, regional and transnational contexts. It concludes that the neoliberal and state-centric ideologies which currently dominate in bi-lateral programmes of the international aid regime tend to impede the formation of system-transforming North-South partnerships. However, the establishment of various forms of connections among NGOs at local, regional and transnational levels and their advocacy in global fora have some potential to alter prevailing conceptions and relations of citizenship, community and governance into the twenty-first century.

List of Abbreviations

AEA- Africa Emergency Assistance
ASEAN - Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BHN - Basic Human Needs
CBO - Community-membership Based Organisation
CCIC - Canadian Council for International Cooperation
CIDA- Canadian International Development Agency
DAC - Development Assistance Committee (of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development)
DFI - Direct Foreign Investment
DONGO - Donor Organised Non-Governmental Organisation
ECOSOC - Economic and Social Council (UN)
EU - European Community
FLS - Front Line States
G-7 - Group of Seven (OECD countries)
GAD - Gender and Development
GONGO - Government Organised Non-Governmental Organisation
GSCO- Global Social Change Organisation
IBRD - International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
ICVA - International Council of Voluntary Associations
IFI - International Financial Institution
IGO - International Governmental Organisation
ILO - International Labour Organisation
IMF - International Monetary Fund
LDC - Less Developed Country
LLDC - Least Development Country
MNC- multinational corporation
MSO - Membership Service Organisation
NAFTA - North American Free Trade Association
NIC - Newly Industrialising Country
NIEO - New International Economic Order
NGO- Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA - Official Development Assistance
OECD - Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAC - Partnership Africa Canada
PO - Popular Organisation
PSO - Public Service Organisation

QUANGO - Quasi Non-Governmental Organisation
RF - Rhodesia Front (political party)
RSA - Republic of South Africa
SADC - Southern African Development Conference
SADCC - Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SAP - Structural Adjustment Programme
TANGO- Transnational Advocacy Non-Governmental Organisation
TNC - Transnational Corporation
UDI - Unilateral Declaration of Independence (of Rhodesia from Great Britain)
UN - United Nations
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
**UNPAAERD - UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and
Development**
UNRISD - United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
USAID - United States Agency for International Development
VDO - Voluntary Development Organisation
WID - Women in Development
WAD- Women and Development
WTO - World Trade Organisation
ZANU-PF - Zimbabwean African National Union - Patriotic Front
ZAPU-PF Zimbabwean African People's Union - Patriotic Front

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Chapter 1: NGOs, Civil Society and Globalisation

....it seems as though we are witnessing on a global level what Boorstin (1987) has termed a fertile verge - the point of encounter between the limitations of our past and the potentialities of our future. At the point of convergence lie the efforts of the thousands of transnational organizations which have emerged since World War II to address various aspects of these global challenges.

- Cooperrider & Pasmore, 1991: 764

All in all, citizens' movements and NGOs now make important contributions in many fields, both nationally and internationally. They can offer knowledge, skills, enthusiasm, a non-bureaucratic approach, and grassroots perspectives, attributes that complement the resources of official agencies.

- The Commission on Global Governance, 1995: 33

It is important to recognize the limitations of NGO initiatives while also assessing the possible germs of systemic transformations.

- Macdonald, 1994: 281

Introduction

In referring to the period in which he lived, Gramsci remarked that “the old is dying, the new is being born, and in the interregnum there are many morbid symptoms” (quoted in Gill, 1994a: 7). That characterisation of an earlier time and specific country might well be applied to the global situation today. Clearly, the ‘old’ world order is being replaced and although the ‘new’ one is not yet explicitly conceived, it is widely anticipated and debated. Moreover, while the symptoms may appear to be more or less ‘morbid’ depending upon one’s viewpoint, undeniably the world is experiencing significant change - from the reported decline of the state to the growing importance of non-state actors, the advancement of

regionalism, and the increasing salience of 'new' security issues such as environment, development, identity, gender and human rights.

The globalisation of capitalism has replaced the Cold War as the central organising force in international relations and studies and neoliberalism¹ has replaced international Keynesianism as the dominant ideology. As a result, liberalisation and democratisation have emerged as major issues and policy objectives and civil societies are assuming larger and/or more prominent positions in development theory and practice.² Moreover, there has been greater 'coherence' or 'convergence' in development policy recently at least to the extent that there is an emerging consensus among mainstream and radical development scholars and agencies that sustainable development is "economically viable, socially just and ecologically sound" (Plewes, *et al*, 1996: 218; Black & Thérien, 1996; Gills & Philip, 1996).

NGOs are dominant in and crucial to current development debate as they are viewed

¹ The term 'neoliberalism' is used here to denote a recent change in the liberal order which has been dominant in world politics at least since the end of the Second World War. A justification for the use the 'neo' prefix is provided by Beckman (1993: 21-22):

Why 'neo?' Why not just 'liberal?' While the project is clearly liberalisation, the prefix is justified in order to distinguish current liberal strategies from those which have dominated the agenda of international development institutions since the decolonisation phase...The new strategy is...neo-liberal, not because it promotes capitalism, commercialisation and markets, which all liberal strategies do, but because of the redefinition of the role of the state in the process".

² Blair (1997) notes for example that "(t)he Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) adopted a consensus statement of donor support for democratization in 1993 (DAC 1995), and various members of DAC have put together their own approaches to provide material assistance to democratization (eg Norway 1994). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has also put together a program to support democratization".

both as units of and proponents for the (re)vitalisation of ‘civil society’³. Indeed, with respect to many of the new, resurrected or revised issues and analytical approaches, civil societies and/or NGOs, however defined, are central actors. And, increasingly, *‘partnerships’ between NGOs are promoted as a means for enhancing the latter’s democratising and developmentalist properties*. It is often assumed that partnerships and networks among indigenous NGOs may represent the development of pluralist and/or ‘democratic’ civil societies at the national level while international NGOs may be involved in facilitative efforts to assist such indigenous processes of democratisation. Moreover, arguably, North-South linkages between and among NGOs and/or ‘new’ social movements may also indicate early stages in the establishment of a so-called ‘transnational civil society’, developing in conjunction with or as a potential counter-hegemonic response to the current globalisation of the capitalist economy and its associated neoliberal ideology.

While the present environment and dominant ideologies support the recent surge in NGOs’ activities, the latter’s recent prominence is due also, at least to some extent, to their past ‘development’ successes. For instance, in the 1980s, it became common to assume that NGOs possess a comparative advantage in the area of micro- or local development which enables them to service poor and/or rural people more efficiently and effectively than governments (Fowler, 1988; Uphoff, 1986; Esman & Uphoff, 1984). And, since many

³ ‘Civil society’ is defined here as the “sphere of social interaction between economy and state.” This definition, which was provided by Cohen & Arato (1992: ix), is one of several contemporary conceptualisations. The debate surrounding the latter and reasons for adopting Cohen’s and Arato’s version will be treated in greater depth below - more generally in this chapter and with specific regard to the notion of a ‘transnational civil society’ in chapter four.

NGOs, by nature and inclination, are involved in promoting the participation and empowerment of ordinary people and local communities - projects now widely acclaimed within the development agenda and discourse as necessary phases or factors of democratisation - they have frequently been extolled as necessary, even 'natural', promoters of sustainable development (Clark, 1991; Gorman, 1984; OECD, 1988). Furthermore, it has become widely accepted that any functional limitations relating to NGOs' small-scale can be minimised by cooperation. In particular, it is frequently assumed that partnerships and networks can provide systems through which local and external knowledges can be dispersed and exchanged thereby promoting the replication of successful interventions and projects (eg. see discussions in Annis, 1988; Edwards & Hulme, 1992).

While such assumptions became widely accepted during the 1980s, they are still unproved. Moreover, despite an apparent 'convergence in development policy' in support of sustainable democratic development (Gills & Philip, 1996), there are alternate viewpoints on how the latter can be achieved and, consequently, different assessments of NGOs' roles in the process (see following chapter). *Yet, there has been little critical analysis to date questioning the validity either of NGOs' inherent democratising and/or developmentalist potential or the positive contributions of partnerships - especially those involving North-South liaisons.* Neither their current popularity nor the increasing plurality of the community constitute evidence that NGOs, especially when taken as an undifferentiated group, have contributed, are contributing, or will contribute significantly in the future to 'sustainable democratic development', however it is defined. In short, the developmentalist potential of NGOs still needs to be ascertained and the claim that possible gains will accrue through

‘partnership’ deserves further critical examination.

To that end, this thesis focuses on North-South NGO partnerships as *potential contributors to the promotion of sustainable and democratic development. In particular, it questions the validity of current widespread assumptions about NGOs’ ability to simultaneously extend democratisation at both national and transnational levels.* In order to catalogue and assess the performance of NGOs in the promotion of sustainable democratic development, this project involves first defining and/or redefining the interrelated concepts of development, sustainability and democracy as well as assessing the respective roles of official development agencies and civil societies in these processes. Then, NGOs, as dominant elements in emerging civil societies, are evaluated - through consideration of their functional and ideological differences - in terms of their ability to effect developmentalist change at both national and global levels. Finally, the thesis includes a case study of Canadian - Zimbabwean NGO partnerships and linkages to provide empirical evidence to assist in comparing and evaluating theoretical perspectives and insights.

This introductory chapter provides the analytical framework for the thesis and advances preliminary exegeses for the concepts and associations that are relevant to the analysis of NGOs and which are more fully elaborated in the subsequent chapters. First, it identifies various definitions and typologies which have emerged as attempts to account for the wide range and changing nature of NGOs’ developmentalist activities. Second, it compares the treatments by different analytical perspectives of cause and effect relations between the globalising forces and the recent proliferations of NGOs and NGO partnerships, concluding that the most compelling explanations are provided by a ‘new’ political economy

approach⁴ which draws on insights from Gramscian historical materialism and aspects (particularly with reference to discourse) of post-structuralist scholarship. Third, it seeks to situate NGOs within a 'new' political economy discourse on democracy/civil society, which takes account of the transnational and global as well as national processes and relations which inform contemporary debates. Finally, the chapter describes how the analytical content of the thesis is structured.

Developmental NGOs: definitions, contexts and typologies

Defining Terms

NGOs' recent and rather sudden rise to prominence in political cultures and economies has generated some analytical confusion and debate. One problem faced by scholars involves defining terms and establishing convenient and appropriate typologies by which NGOs and their multiple forms and relations can be catalogued and compared. As a general definition, a non-governmental organisation is :

any social organization or socio-economic formation of a non profit nature, which is not legally or organizationally part of the official structure of the state, and whose creation has been motivated by needs experienced by certain physical or moral persons who feel the imperious urge and necessity to unite

⁴ Murphy and Tooze (1991) suggest using this inclusive term for recent theories of international relations which eschew both the positivism and the separation of political and economy which characterises 'orthodox' realist and liberal theories. The term 'critical theory' is used by some scholars to denote the 'new' political economy approach to which Murphy and Tooze refer. Used in this inclusive sense, 'critical theory' is comprised of post-Marxist, poststructural, postmodernist, some feminist and Frankfurt Critical Theory approaches.

in order to satisfy these needs (PAC, 1989: 4).

However, especially, it seems, when expressed in acronymal form, the term 'NGO' has become closely associated with the field of development and therefore is often used in reference to 'voluntary *development* organisations' (VDOs).

Limited to 'development' actors, the term NGO applies obviously to large Northern-based inter- or transnational organisations such as OXFAM and CARE as well as to smaller, single-issue organisations from the North or South whose volunteer members are committed to development activities in other countries. It refers also to nationally-situated voluntary organisations which are formed to support development activities within their own countries, but for the benefit of individuals or groups outside their membership. Finally, the term includes small, indigenous or 'popular organisations' (POs) set up by people to meet their own material or social needs.

Some scholars consider the latter to be distinct from NGOs. For example, Schmitz and Gillies (1992: 62) claim that:

NGOs are...those non-profit organizations that raise funds from the public but that are either not initiated or controlled by the intended beneficiaries of their activities, or provide development services as sub-contractors in the aid system. POs, on the other hand, are institutions set up and controlled by poor people themselves to serve their material interests.⁵

⁵ Scholars occasionally further qualify the distinctions among NGOs. Alan Fowler (1994), for instance, distinguishes among PSOs ("international and African non-profit organisations providing development services in or on behalf of the people of the South"); CBOs ("community membership-based people's organisations formed by individuals in the South for their own advancement and controlled by them"); and MSOs ("membership organisations [which grow to the extent that they] are staffed to provide services to members [and on occasion to others]").

According to this view, the difference between NGOs and POs is largely one of motivating principles. Formation of the former is usually assumed to be motivated by ‘value-goals’; that is, “[members]...are normally united around a vision of more economically equitable, socially just and globally sustainable societies than we have at present” (Fowler, 1994: 2). Members of POs, on the other hand, tend to be motivated by parochial and/or basic needs issues rather than by cosmopolitan interests. Yet, regardless of whether NGOs are of the external or indigenous (PO) variety, they belong to the non-state, voluntary sector of society. Therefore, while it may be useful in some instances to make a conceptual distinction between organisations which work to benefit their members from those which are intended to serve others, the designation of NGO may appropriately be applied to both groups. In this study, POs are assumed to be a particular type of NGO.

NGOs’ Evolving Roles and Relations

Although most of the concerns about their definition and classification have emerged only recently, NGOs are not new to the ‘development scene’. Long before the ‘development of the Third World’ became a feature of official international political and economic relations⁶, Northern NGOs were involved in trying to help less fortunate peoples and/or communities in countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America through efforts to promote

⁶ A detailed summary of the establishment of the official development assistance (ODA) structure of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) of industrialised Northern countries is provided in chapter two.

economic, cultural or spiritual ‘growth’.⁷ Many if not most of these NGOs were affiliated with religious orders or movements and usually had proselytising missions as well as charity as motivating purposes (Clark, 1991).

Following the end of the First World War, some of these small religious charities, often together with members of a growing number of secular welfare agencies, began to amalgamate to form large international relief organisations. By the end of the Second World War the latter, including such NGOs as CARE, World Vision, and Save the Children dominated the voluntary sector (Korten, 1987: 147; Clark, 1991: 34). In the 1970's, this ‘first generation’ of welfare NGOs was supplemented or, in some instances, replaced by a ‘second generation’ of NGOs which shifted the focus from relief to the promotion of ‘small-scale, self-reliant local development’ (Korten, 1987: 148). In the 1980's, within the greater NGO community an emerging ‘third generation’ was identified. The organisations in this group include those which focus on “facilitating sustainable changes” on “a regional or even national basis” in order to alleviate the “dysfunctional aspects of the policy and institutional setting of the villages and sectors within which they work” (*ibid.*, 148). Finally, in addition to a possible ‘fourth generation’ of NGOs which have recently emerged to facilitate changes at transnational or global levels (see chapters four and seven, below), Bebbington and Farrington (1993: 202) refer to a “new type (of ‘yuppie’, ‘technocratic’, NGO) rooted in the economic displacement of middle class professionals...”.

In the early post-war years, when the first ‘welfare’ generation of NGOs dominated

⁷ In short, assumptions concerning Northern achievement and superiority predate their incorporation in the post-Second World War foreign aid agenda.

the voluntary development structure, they were funded almost exclusively by private donations (*ibid.*). Furthermore, they tended to work outside the official bilateral and multilateral aid structures, although some, such as the International Red Cross, worked parallel to and in relative harmony with governments in events of war or natural disaster (McAllister, 1993). Closer relations between governments and NGOs ensued in the 1970's when the 'second generation' NGOs emerged at approximately the same time that offices dealing specifically with Southern 'development' were being created within the government ministries of OECD countries.⁸ These new government agencies began to rely upon (and increasingly to fund) NGOs not only because the latter's objectives were clearly compatible with the Basic Human Needs (BHN) approach which official agencies had embraced at the time (see chapter two, below), but also because they frequently had more experience and expertise than government did in 'development' areas.⁹

Over the past fifteen years, the incorporation of Northern NGOs into the official development structure has continued to increase, at least partly as a result of the 'third generation' NGOs' strategy of working more closely with (or, in some instances, against) governments or international organisations (Korten, 1987: 149). As well, of the numerous

⁸ The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was formed in 1968 and soon thereafter an NGO division was established within it, the main purpose of which was to fund NGOs' international development projects (Pratt, 1994: 16).

⁹ In Canada, for instance, as Cranford Pratt (1994: 16) notes, "There were forceful reasons for CIDA [Canadian International Development Agency] greatly to increase its responsive program with these NGOs. They had, far more than CIDA, the capacity to identify and to assist small, local projects that directly aided poor people to increase their productivity and to improve their welfare. Moreover, as CIDA itself commented in 1980, their development work was 'flexible, fast, low-cost and grass-roots'".

Southern NGOs which have recently emerged, some are being funded directly by official development agencies of the North as part of the latter's attempts to by-pass the state in the recipient country (see chapter two). Moreover, even when their Northern contacts are NGOs, as is more often the case, Southern organisations are brought into closer proximity with the official, Northern-controlled development agenda because of the growing incorporation of their Northern counterparts in that enterprise.

Entering the Era of Partnership

Almost invariably these recently developed liaisons are referred to as 'partnerships', whether they are between NGOs and governments or multilateral agencies or between Northern and Southern NGOs. This broad use of the term 'partnership' might seem to imply that control of the development agenda has been diffused and that various participants in development - local POs, other Southern NGOs, Northern NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors - are cooperating to achieve mutually agreed upon objectives. Instead, however, *the idea of partnership introduces at least as many questions as it answers about the degree to which NGOs may promote change in the development agenda in which they have become increasingly prominent members*. On the one hand, the concept induces the optimistic hypothesis that the greater involvement of NGOs in the official agenda as representatives and/or constituents of civil society increases the opportunities for establishing more sustainable development practices (Clark, 1991: 39). In particular, the higher profile and growing competence and confidence of Southern NGOs fosters the hope that development is becoming more indigenously-directed, grass-roots-oriented, and participatory - in short,

more democratic and more sustainable (Fowler & James, 1994).

On the other hand, these more positive forecasts and assumptions are countered by at least four major problems associated with claims for NGOs as potential reforming agents of the development enterprise. First, *generalisations about NGOs' democratising or developmental attributes are difficult to make because of both the heterogeneity of the NGO community and the particularities of political economy contexts*. Moreover, not only do the specific natures of individual NGOs affect their performances, but the latter are conditioned by "changes in either external (global and/or international) contexts or internal (national and/or sub-national) structures" (Shaw & MacLean, 1996: 252).

Second, *it is necessary to recognise the possibility of cooptation and thus disempowerment of those NGOs which become assimilated in official development structures*. As the following chapter will show, the history of the latter is distinguished by the implementation of strategies designed more to further Northern (and some elite Southern) interests - both material and ideological - than to support development (or radical development approaches). The issue is further complicated by the growing complexity of the NGO-official institutional nexus. Not only have many, if not most, developmental NGOs become increasingly obliged to accept funds and direction from official agencies, but the latter have moved into the NGOs' domain, forming what are known as QUANGOs, DONGOs and GONGOs (quasi-NGOs, donor-organised NGOs & government-organised NGOs, respectively).

A third related problem concerning NGOs is that, *as they assume a higher profile and more responsibility in official development circles, questions about their performance*

effectiveness and their accountability become more salient (Edwards & Hulme, 1994; Brett, 1993). In short, the claim that NGOs, by virtue of their civil society roots and preoccupations, are democratic (or even developmentalist) by nature needs to be challenged; and the assumption that most or many NGOs are likely to be directly representative of or accountable to popular interests has yet to be proved (see chapter three).

Finally, *it is questionable whether North - South NGO linkages constitute a base or a potential base for the formation of a "broad (transnational) social transformation coalition", as is sometimes claimed* (Korten, 1990: 200) and which seems to be required for any meaningful, positive, developmentalist change to occur. This is especially true if, as Schuurman (1993) argues, grass-root pressures for social transformation in the North tend to be post-modern; in other words, they are manifesting disenchantment with the Enlightenment projects of individualism, rationality and/or scientism, while, in direct opposition, pressures in the South often appear to be for greater access to the trappings of modernity; that is, acquisition of material goods and protection of individual rights. As chapter four argues, it is uncertain that these projects are compatible but, even if they are, it is not clearly evident, especially given the questions surrounding issues of competence and legitimacy, how (or which) NGOs are appropriate or capable to link them.

NGO Typologies

The issues surrounding NGOs' developmentalist capabilities and the diversity within the NGO community have provoked several recent attempts by scholars to devise typologies by which various groups of voluntary associations may be compared and evaluated. Korten,

as noted above, refers to NGO 'generations' in a typology that fits organisations into one of three or possibly four evolutionary groups according to their functional role and related developmental ideology (Korten, 1989, 1990). Others break down the functional differences more finely (eg. Brodhead's [1987] service delivery, education, and public policy) or classify organisations by their association with a particular issue or sector such as the environment (eg. Yap, 1989-90; Rowlands, 1992) or agriculture (Bebbington & Farrington, 1993; Cohen & Uphoff, 1980). Other scholars tend to distinguish among NGOs not so much because of their generic differences, but on the basis of their relations with other actors, particularly the state but also various international organisations. Hence, James Riker (1993), focusing on Southeast Asian organisations, separates NGOs according to their ability to influence national public policy, while Michael Bratton (1989a&b, 1990) and Laura Macdonald (1997) use similar frameworks for their respective analyses of African and Central American NGOs. And, recent contributions to analyses on NGOs' relations with international organisations include Nelson's (1995) work on the World Bank and Weiss and Gordenker's edited volume (1996) on NGOs and the UN. Finally, an approach for distinguishing among NGOs which is currently attracting widespread attention involves the degrees of efficiency (performance ability) and/or accountability which they display (to members, funding agents and/or the people they are designed to serve)(cf. Edwards & Hulme, 1994; Brett, 1993; Clark, 1991).

Each of the various typologies make valuable contributions to understanding NGOs and their social relations, but none are completely comprehensive by themselves. Moreover, just as NGOs reflect particular development ideologies, perspectives and periods, so also do the analytical frameworks by which they are assessed and compared. How efficiency is

the analytical frameworks by which they are assessed and compared. How efficiency is evaluated, for instance, may differ significantly among analysts from different perspectives as well as among the different groups to whom NGOs are accountable (Brett, 1993; Fowler, 1996; Schmitz, 1996). As well, current debates on NGO relations with other societal actors reflect alternative perspectives on theories of development and of state and civil society. Therefore, the following section surveys the various methodologies by which NGOs may be analysed concluding with the 'new' political economy approach which this thesis adopts.

Approaches to Analysis of NGOs

Liberal Approaches

One question on which political theories may divide is whether **agency** or **structure** is the primary determining or transformative force in society. Those who privilege the former assume "that human beings are free agents with the power to maintain or transform the social systems in which they operate" (Buzan, *et al.* 1993: 103). Those who take the latter to be society's primary determining force believe that impersonal social forces which arise as unintended consequences of human interaction constrain individuals' behaviour thereby ultimately controlling social events and processes (*ibid.*).

Analyses of voluntary associations which begin with the **agent** as the unit of analysis are characteristic of **liberal** theory, in both its rational choice and pluralist strains. To explain the motivation for forming voluntary associations, **rational choice** theorists tend to use a

rationale which is similar to one they employ in describing a need for government; that is, just as the latter is necessary for providing public goods in cases of market failure, voluntary organisations are formed to satisfy their members' needs when the latter are not met by government (Brown & Korten, 1989: 2-3). This explanation applies particularly to indigenous organisations (POs); in the case of external NGOs, their formation might be explained within the rational choice framework in terms of utility maximization; that is, as an individual choice, community interest or philanthropy may be more highly valued than personal material gain.

While rational choice theorists hold the view that voluntary organisations are private responses to market or institutional failure or the pursuit of utilitarian objectives, **liberal pluralists** are interested in voluntary associations as agents for curtailing the state's arbitrary power. As with many of the early versions of liberal democratic theory, "the rejection of absolute, unified and uncontrolled state power remains the hallmark of pluralism" (Dunleavy & O'Leary, 1987: 13). Its advocates believe that voluntary organisations, by dispersing "moral and social authority" and counteracting a "uniformity of outlook", promote democratic freedom in society (*ibid.*, 16).

Functionalism is a variant of liberal pluralism which views society as "...a grouping made up of specific associations and institutions performing definite purposes and interacting with one another" (Hirst, 1989: 31). The view that social groups, including NGOs, are linked primarily by functional interests holds particular relevance for the study of international relations theory, especially as an alternative to the realist perspective which has dominated the field during most of the post-Second World War period. Whereas the latter assumes that

the state is the basic unit of analysis, functionalists focus on civil society and, indeed, some scholars such as Mitrany (1976) postulated a much reduced role for states as citizen networks, connected and interrelated by function, spread across borders.¹⁰

In liberal analysis, voluntary associations are seen as composites of individual members' similar but individualistic interests. Therefore, in accepting voluntary organisations as basic units of democracy, pluralists and functionalists are not repudiating the principle of methodological individualism.¹¹ "(This) doctrine, which unites all liberals, asserts that all hypotheses about human collectivities can and should ultimately be reduced to statements about individual agents...(whose) interests can be discerned by seeing which policy options they choose: their behaviour reveals their policy preferences" (Dunleavy & O'Leary, 1987: 19).

¹⁰ The main project of early functionalists such as Mitrany and Angell was a quest for peace; they postulated that interdependence based on functional social interaction would tend to diminish the propensity to go to war. The issue of interdependence has continued to preoccupy many scholars, some of the most noteworthy being John Burton whose 'cobweb' model of international relations challenged the prevailing realist 'billiard-ball' view, Michael Doyle who has recently presented empirical evidence which suggests that liberal regimes are more peaceful, and neo-liberals, Keohane and Nye, who have furthered the argument, albeit from a rather state-centric perspective, that increased interdependence has occurred in the international system.

¹¹ For instance Hirst (1989: 31) writes of early functionalist, G.D.H Cole: "(he) is the relentless opponent of any narrowly reductive and utilitarian individualism, but the whole ethical and analytical basis of his social theory is an exalted conception of the individual." Associations are necessary specific to certain purposes, but "[e]very individual is in his nature universal..."

Structural Approaches

The doctrine of methodological individualism is refuted by scholars who take structure to be more salient than agency for social reproduction or transformation. In structural analyses, the collective actions of individuals produce an unanticipated system which controls or constrains the individuals' behaviour.¹² Thus, in the **neorealist** theory of international relations, the self-interested actions of individual states produce an international balance of power which constrains the actions of each and all states (Waltz, 1979).¹³ And, in **structural Marxism**, the social interaction which is involved in meeting people's materialist needs creates a system (the economic base) which determines or constrains all other aspects of human behaviour.

Structural analyses, particularly those toward the right of the Left-Right ideological continuum, have been criticised for their tendency to emphasise stability and permanence in social systems rather than social transformation (Gouldner, 1970: 352). Where social change is taken into consideration, explanation of the mechanism by which it occurs tends to be missing or obscure. For instance, **structural-functionalist** analyses of societal differentiation

¹² Liberal views of the market - such as Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' or Frederick Hayek's 'catallexy' - do incorporate a concept of structure which informs or constrains individual behaviour, but whereas structuralist analyses tend to argue or imply that such constructions contribute to social stasis, the former regard them as the products of the interactions of individuals who possess socially transformative possibilities.

¹³ Alexander Wendt (1987) defines neo-realism as a systemic rather than structural theory and situates it at the agent end of the agent-structure continuum. However, while it is the self-interested behaviour of states which determines the nature of the international system, ultimately, in neo-realism that behaviour is determined by the structure which is thus created.

such as those developed by Talcott Parsons and his followers postulate that society progresses by means of culture-changing alterations in consciousness which occur as “developmental ‘breakthroughs’...(within)...the variegated population of society” (Parsons, 1966: 23). However, such analyses do not explain why or when such alterations occur and, therefore, cannot provide answers as to why NGOs (as a possible “culture-changing alteration”) are formed or how they may influence social change; nor can they account for the rapid rise in NGOs’ prominence and authority in recent years.

Structural realism (**neorealism**), has not succeeded (nor seriously attempted) to incorporate the array of non-state actors which now obviously influence international relations. As Lawrence Woods (1993: 9) points out, there is a tendency within the state-centric approach to the study of international relations to discuss NGOs within the epistemic community literature, but such analysis tends to view these organisations simply as domestic pressures on selective government policies. Yet, this inability or unwillingness to accept NGOs as agents and/or products of a changing world social order prevents neorealism from providing an adequate explanation for the recent and rather sudden increase in their numbers and/or the intensity and variety of pressures they are mounting.

‘New’ Political Economy Approaches

Unlike positivist structural analysis, the **historical materialist** methodology associated with the Marxist tradition does provide a means for explaining social phenomena such as the recent proliferation of NGOs: it postulates a dialectical process by which the contradictions that are inherent in capitalism are revealed and by which various actors are

brought into political prominence at different times. In other words, historical materialism accounts for the rapid increase in voluntary organisations by deeming it to be a response to the globalisation of production.

However, most contemporary analysts who take the latter to be the starting point for analysis avoid explanations which rely on the overly deterministic economism which has been associated with structural Marxism. For instance, several **post-Marxist critical theorists** follow Robert Cox in adapting **Gramscian historical materialism** for application to the analysis of the changing world order under the forces of globalisation. According to Cox (1994a: 103), the capitalist base of society has taken on different historical forms, each of which has “projected a [particular] conception of world order” and which has been associated with a “distinct set of values, pattern of consumption, social structure and form of state” (*ibid.*). The incorporation of values in Cox's formulation recalls the Gramscian notion of **hegemony**¹⁴ which brings ideas and culture into materialist explanations of social order and social change - and, incidentally, thereby reduces the agent-structure divide¹⁵ (Gill & Law, 1988: 77).

¹⁴ Hegemony, in Gramscian analysis, refers to an ideological form of dominance which allows for the reproduction and/or maintenance of a particular order in society. In hegemonic orders, the dominance of the more powerful class is based on the consent of subordinate classes rather than on coercion (Cox, 1987: 7).

¹⁵ There is some debate among scholars of Marxism about the extent to which Marx himself was devoted to an economically-deterministic structuralism. Some, for example, have suggested that Marx's aphorism that “(h)uman beings make their own history, but not in circumstances of their own choosing” (Marx, 1963: 15) shows his acceptance of a socially-transforming human agency; others believe it is an confirmation of his structural determinism.

Reducing the Agency/Structure Divide

While 'new' political economy/critical theory approaches of Cox and others (see footnote 4, this chapter) accept the compelling and/or constraining attributes of structure - of the globalist capitalist economy certainly, but also of other structural hierarchies within society such as those associated with gender, culture, race or discourse - they also tend to accept that social transformation may be the result of human agency. In short, human consciousness, choice and action may be strongly influenced but it is not ordained by systemic forces (Gill & Law, 1988: 21).

Humans may take for granted or be unaware of the structural boundaries which circumscribe their ideas and their actions. Yet, the voluntarist decisions of individuals in association with others may extend or dismantle boundaries, even as an unintended consequence. Hence, numerous associational forms may spring up within civil societies seeking to satisfy a variety of interests, but their very existence, not to mention their interactions with other actors, may alter the nature of state-societal or international relations. **Therefore, as this thesis argues, NGOs are important to analysis not only as statistically or functionally interesting responses to changes in contemporary society, but as developmentally important potential agents - whether voluntary or involuntary - of such change.**

The Current 'Crisis of Hegemony'

In attempting to comprehend the extent and nature of the changes which may be involved, Gramsci's insights are useful here as well. Just as his concept of hegemony provides one means of interpreting the current period of neoliberal dominance, so also does

his understanding of the instability which may emerge over time. Terming the breakdown in consensus a 'crisis of hegemony', Gramsci described a period when the old order has broken down or is seriously threatened, but in which the exact nature of a superseding order is not yet apparent (Carnoy, 1984).

It appears that the world has recently arrived at such a conjuncture. As the end of the millennium approaches, apparent hegemonic 'crisis' is reflected in the political and economic uncertainties which attend "the increasing importance of transnational identities, connections and organisations within the global economy, and the undermining of older forms of political organisation and legitimacy" (Gamble, *et al*, 1996: 7). Moreover, as various scholars (Cox, Gill, Mittelman) observe, just as the worldwide wave of democratisation is an apparent response to the **new forms of insecurity and new perceptions of insecurity** associated with the new international divisions of labour and power, so are **new forms of authoritarianism** responses to the pressures for democratisation (Shaw, 1995).

Some liberal scholars have argued that recent democratisation movements, and especially those which emerged at the end the Cold War with the collapse of Communism and the widespread disillusionment with central-control of economies, are evidence of the triumph of the Western model of liberal democracy, even "the end of history" (Fukuyama, 1992). However, such analyses tend to ignore the growing tensions and uncertainties that infuse state-societal relations everywhere, including in the West. And, scholars from more radical, 'new' political economy/critical perspectives are unconvinced that the universalist liberal doctrine is indeed unfolding in such uncomplicated unilinear fashion (eg. Brown,

1994). Instead, many view the proliferation of the various forms of voluntary associations and social movements within civil society as being indicative of a veritable “sea change in contemporary political culture” (Cohen & Arato, 1992: 18).

Civil Society in ‘New’ Political Economy Approaches to Analysis

Definitions

In neoliberal analysis, civil societies have gained prominence recently largely because they are considered to encompass the state-replacing/reducing market forces. In contrast, for many critical theorists, reconsideration of the issue of agency versus structure in social change/maintenance, mounting empirical evidence of a global ‘crisis of hegemony’, and the recent emergence of various popular forces has encouraged a redirection in analytical focus away from an exclusionary concern with states or markets and toward the increased emphasis on civil societies (eg. Cohen & Arato, 1992; Heyzer, *et al*, 1995; King, 1991; Macdonald, 1994; Wignaraja, 1993). In general terms, *civil society is conceived as the web of voluntary associations comprised of the various non-governmental organizations, human rights groups, cooperatives, unions, media, religious assemblages, professional associations, et cetera through which individuals collectively and voluntarily carry out their social enterprises*. And since such associations usually exist in dynamic tension with the state, conceptualisations of civil society have tended to vary in accord with its perceived

opposition or apposition to the state.¹⁶ However, the recent reassertion of civil society at the centre of analysis and of social change has generated considerable debate, including on definitions based on this simple duality.

One widely discussed attempt to provide a more nuanced definition of civil society is the recent effort of Cohen and Arato (1992: x). In their view, the organisations of civil society constitute the “structures of socialization, association, and organized forms of communication of the lifeworld to the extent that these are institutionalized or are in the process of being institutionalized”; that is, civil society is formed of the institutional structures which reflect and interpret the values and interests of the general society.

Moreover, and more contentiously, they claim that civil society exists apart from both political society and the narrow interests of material accumulation. As they explain, while political and economic society both arise from civil society, the actors in these sectors are involved directly with the control and management of state power and production. In short, civil society exists in tension with the forces of materialist production as well as the state and therefore is:

a sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above

¹⁶ *Liberals* have tended to see the two sectors as distinct and oppositional with the state mediating among competing interests in civil society and with the plurality of the latter providing a limit to the state’s power . By contrast, in *Marxist* tradition, the state arises from and is therefore subordinate to civil society which is considered to be the realm of economic relations (Marx & Engels 1976: 98). *Gramscian* analysis denies the same degree of determinism to the materialist base and argues instead that the “consciousness and actions of individuals and groups” are also primary forces for social change. In short, ideas and material forces are not separable and it is the particular conjuncture or “*ensemble* of social relations configured by social structure” which explains the nature of the relationship between state and civil society in any given situation (Gill, 1994a: 22,24; Cox, 1994).

all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication (*ibid.*, ix).

This definition of civil society is controversial for at least two reasons. First, the family is included as a component of civil society whereas the latter is frequently defined as the space of social interaction *between the family and the state*. However, as several feminist scholars have pointed out, not only is the private never entirely separable from the public sphere, but it is impossible to speak of democratisation while ignoring the inequitable gender relations which exist within families across societies (eg. Siltanen & Stanworth, 1984; Mendus, 1992).¹⁷

The second controversial aspect of Cohen and Arato's definition concerns the separation of civil society from the economy. However, the distinction draws attention to the possibility that communitarian interests may be the dominant motivating force within the voluntary sector and therefore a primary social force which exists in potential opposition to the individualist interests upon which the economic sector rests. Or, to use Cohen and Arato's (1992: 172) own words, the definition allows scholars "to distinguish spheres whose internal logic facilitates radical democratization (civil society) from spheres whose

¹⁷ One problem in general with definitions of civil society (or of state or market) is the lack of a clear empirical division between sectors of state, business and voluntary association. If, as is argued here, the boundaries between civil society and the private sphere are obscure, the divisions between civil society and the state and business sectors are no more clearly demarked. The lack of clear distinctions is evident for instance in discussions of NGOs where QUANGOs, DONGOs, and GONGOs illustrate overlaps between state and civil society. With respect to the business sector, the division lines are perhaps even more controversial since both liberal and Marxist theory traditionally situated the business sector within civil society, either as the basic sphere of operations for self-interested rational individuals or as part of the manifested social structure of the materialist base.

reproduction is consistent only with subsidiary forms of democratic participation (the economy)”¹⁸.

Cohen and Arato’s complex definition of civil society has important implications for the interpretation and understanding of contemporary social processes structure.¹⁹ In particular, it indicates the need to revisit long-held assumptions about such issues as the motivation for/nature of social organisation and the sequence of processes in the development of civil societies. As well, it introduces questions about the affects of materialist change on the formation of social structure.

Challenges to Dominant Theoretical Assumptions

The need to revisit traditional assumptions has become manifest not only because of abstract conceptualisations of scholars such as Cohen and Arato but also because of recent responses by various actors and groups in civil society to pressures of globalisation. In particular, the variety of forms of social action they take - both socially progressive and regressive, directed sometimes toward the state, sometimes through it and sometimes circumventing it - refute neoliberal claims that social process is unilinearly progressive and that there is a *necessary* separation and/or antagonism between state and civil society.

¹⁸ See discussion in following chapter regarding these different conceptualisations of democracy.

¹⁹ However, Cohen and Arato do not address the affects of current materialist change (ie. globalisation) on nation-centric concepts of democracy and civil society. Chapter four, below, argues that the concept of ‘transnational civil society’ exposes a limitation in definitions, including Cohen and Arato’s, which associate civil society only with national institutions of governance.

Moreover, they confront prevailing liberal pluralist assumptions about the nature of relations between the new associational forms and existing formal institutions. In particular, they question whether the ‘capture’ of state institutions (at least as they are presently constituted) is a necessary or optimum strategy for civil societal actors bent on democratic reform.²⁰

Critical theorists’ interpretations of changing transnational social relations confront certain realist assumptions as well. In particular, they challenge “the classic Westphalian conception of the state as the exclusive unit of world affairs, and especially of world economic, social and cultural affairs” (Cox, 1997: 248). Neorealist claims about the essential nature (and naturalness) of state sovereignty, the system-determined quality of inter-state relations and the primacy of national (as opposed to human) security in the international arena are undermined by critical theorists’ assertion that the state is an historically contingent construction existing in dynamic and dialectical interaction with its internal and external political economies (Murphy & Tooze, 1991). Peterson (1992: 5) argues that in taking the sovereign state to be the basic ontological unit of international relations, realism ignores processes of “legitimation, hegemony, cultural resistance, or social reproduction”. Yet the inclusion of such processes is integral to understanding and explaining the various sub- and trans-national phenomena which have become an important feature of contemporary world politics; in short, their inclusion exposes the limitations of analysis that maintains an arbitrary ‘inside-outside’ division between national and international politics (Walker, 1993).

Reducing these boundaries disturbs traditional theories in two ways. First, bringing

²⁰ Alain Touraine (1985: 780), for instance, observes that “the continuity from social movement to political party is disappearing” (See also, Mouffe, 1988; Falk, 1987).

social forces into analysis allows that different complexes of state-societal relations may produce variations in state form which will tend to affect the way the state behaves in the international arena. As Robert Cox (1987: 148) notes:

...class conflict in the formation of new historic blocs can lead either toward states that are autonomous in relation to civil society or toward states that are mere instruments of divergent social forces; with regard to the former, the autonomous state may rest on a hegemonic society, or it may bind together a society in which no hegemony has been achieved.

In short, the international behaviour of states is a function of their internal class struggles and political cultures as well as their external environment. However, the degree of social hegemony that exists is not the result of national conditions alone, but also of inter- and transnational political and economic processes and relations. Therefore, the second observation to emerge from dismantling the inside/outside barrier is that state-societal relations are inseparable from the state's position in international and global political economies.

In short, theories of democracy which are concerned with the relations between states and civil societies only within circumscribed national boundaries are unlikely to account for the various external pressures and processes that also partially determine their nature. Therefore, particularly when applied to contemporary democratisation forces, such theories are less informative than those which merge the study of (inside) state-societal and (outside) inter-state relations. Furthermore, in treating the problem of establishing civil societies and promoting democracy at national and transnational levels within the contexts of global neoliberalism and the reduction of the state under pressure by international financial institutions (IFIs), theories which view the 'inside' and 'outside' aspects of world

politics as integrated terrains are increasingly relevant to understanding the interrelatedness of the components that comprise sustainable democratic development. Finally, such theories provide opportunities for exploring an hypothesis that is gaining significant currency: that the various networks of organisations within and among civil societies constitute the emergence of a global or transnational civil society.

Alternative Views on an Emerging 'Global Civil Society'

Certainly, the notion of a single global society is not a new idea. Following the Second World War, even certain realists such as Hedley Bull (1977: 152)²¹ never totally rejected the idea that the development of a 'cosmopolitan society' of individuals was possible, while **liberal functionalists** such as Mitrany (1966) postulated that a single global society united by common functional interests and practices was in fact developing.

Early functionalists, like liberals generally, assumed that politics and economics are separable. Moreover, they tended to accept that social connections arising out of technical issues can be dissociated from power relations in society. Theory based on these assumptions was remedied to some extent by **neofunctionalists** who included states, international organisations and various non-state actors in their theories of international integration and complex interdependence (eg. Lindberg, 1970; Keohane & Nye, 1989; Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, Jr. 1990: 459). However, as Ernst Haas (himself a leading member of the school)

²¹ It is important to note that Bull did, however, believe that the development of such a community would be counterproductive to the development of a society of states and therefore contributive of social disorder (See, Bull, 1977: 152).

observes, “[neofunctionalism’s] ‘sense of orderly process and...the assumption that states manage to cope collectively according to the rationality of disjointed incrementalism’...is inadequate in light of the ‘turbulent field’ of international relations, with its numerous global issues in the late twentieth century” (cited in Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, Jr, 1990: 459).

Hence, it is the need to explain and/or cope with the various integrations (political, economic, cultural, social) of globalisation and the issues which reverberate around them which inspire contemporary liberal, as well as other, theories of global civil society. Liberal scholars, as well as those from other perspectives, recognise a variety of interconnected factors which contribute to the recent increase in the establishment of cross-border relationships and identities among non-state actors. In particular, it is increasingly acknowledged that the proliferation of the latter and the concomitant decline of the state have created new opportunities and requirements for greater NGO-IGO (intergovernmental organisation) communication and/or cooperation (Weiss & Gordenker, 1996).

The increased prominence and higher levels of participation of NGOs in various international conferences - from Rio to Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing²² - attest to their achievements in networking, their expanded proficiency in advocacy and their growing influence on official policy (Weiss & Gordenker, 1996). At the same time, as international and regional organisations assume enhanced roles in a post-Cold War world caught up in the exigencies of globalisation, they enlist the services of various NGOs: to provide information

²² These cities are the sites of recent UN conferences: the UN Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (1992), the UN Conference on Population in Cairo (1994), the UN Social Summit in Copenhagen (1995) and the Beijing Conference on Women's Issues (1996).

in areas or on issues where the latter are presumed to have a comparative advantage; to lend voices of experience or expertise in setting policy; and to function, usually on a contractual basis, as policy-implementing agents. Therefore, IFIs, and the World Bank in particular, but also several UN agencies, are making serious efforts to improve the levels and quality of cooperation with NGOs, in various development initiatives as well as in peace-making/keeping operations (Boutros-Ghali 1992; Korten & Quizon, 1995; Nelson, 1996; Quadir & Shaw, 1996; Stiles, 1996; Weiss & Gordenker, 1996).

While alternate analytical approaches may agree that these new developments and relationships are signs of profound change in processes of international relations, critical theorists reject liberals' tendency to treat them as features of an *ineluctably* homogenising globalisation. Moreover, unlike liberal internationalists, critical theorists do not “*celebrate* (my emphasis) globalization as a triumph of self-interest matched with rationality” (Chang and Ling 1996: 4), nor do they preach “untrammelled international competition, celebration of the market, of wealth and self, anti-communism and anti-unionism” (Overbeek & van der Pijl, 1993: 1, cited in *ibid.*).

Critical theorists take issue with liberal internationalist theories (and preceding functionalist and neofunctionalist schools) on the latter's acceptance of the unilinear progression and universalising form which the process of establishing a global or 'cosmopolitan' society would take. Instead, as Cox (1991) and Gill (1994a) argue, the actual forms of social reaction to globalisation will tend to vary considerably among as well as within countries and/or regions. And, as with the concept of national civil society, critical theorists see transnational civil society as “a terrain of exploitation, discrimination and

oppression” (Macdonald, 1994: 214) which therefore, with sets of relations which are beneficial to some individuals, groups, countries and/or regions, but which contribute to conditions of marginalisation, poverty and insecurity for others (Chang & Ling, 1996).

NGOs: Linking National and Transnational Civil Societies

The proliferation in numbers and variety of transnational NGOs and social movements may be partly in reaction to the *opportunities* presented by the increased ‘space’ created by neoliberal policies designed to contract the state. However, it seems also that the various networks of organisations within and among civil societies which constitute the possible emergence of a global or transnational civil society are largely a response to *perceptions of insecurities and identity crises* caused by processes of globalisation.

Yet, while the recent growth of this heterogenous transnational complex of voluntary associations appears to be indicative of profound world order changes, it is unrealistic to conceive of NGOs as incipient units in or promotional agents for the international system of Western-style democracy that some US liberals have envisaged (Fukuyama, 1989; Diamond, 1994). However, it is argued in subsequent chapters that it is equally idealistic to assume that a unified, transnational counter-hegemonic resistance to the dominant neoliberal order is consolidating around the various transnational linkages among NGOs. Neither, as some scholars suggest, do NGOs’ connections with the ‘new’ transnational social movements which have arisen especially around issues of environment, gender, human rights, security

and/or peace necessarily promote the consolidation of a counter-hegemonic project or sustainable, democratic development (cf. Thiele, 1993).

These 'new' social movements have been distinguished from the 'old' by being concerned with issues of ecology, peace, human rights and identity ("gender, culture, ethnicity, lifestyle") (M. Shaw, 1994: 652) as opposed to 'official' politics and with changing ideas and structures in the greater society rather than merely in government or political parties (*ibid.*). However, whether 'old' or 'new', social movements are amorphous social formations, consisting of varying combinations of informal and formal organisations as well as individuals, united by their commitment to a single principle or cause. Like NGOs, they are part of civil society, but they differ from the former, as well as from other collective actors such as political parties, "...in that they have mass political mobilisation, or the threat of mobilisation, as their prime source of sanction, and hence of power" (Scott, 1990: 6). NGOs may support or be part of social movements and indeed, according to Martin Shaw (1994: 663), especially those which try to change power structures which they believe are impeding development in the South, "operate in a social movement mode". But, continues Shaw (p. 663), since the "primary relationship [of most NGOs- Northern as well as Southern] to their supporters is a passive financial one..., they fail the participatory or mobilizing test of a social movement".

As with NGOs, it is impossible to generalise about the developmentalist and/or democratising propensities of social movements. Chantal Mouffe (1988: 98) observes, for instance, that the new social movements "are not necessarily socialist or even progressive". In Mouffe's view, the recent proliferation of organisations, groups and movements is a

response to the insecurities associated with the breakdown of the hegemonic social formation which existed since the Second World War and was characterised by a Fordist production structure and the Keynesian state. This, together with a growing dissatisfaction in the West with rampant consumerism - the so-called 'commodification of social life' - gave rise to various antagonisms and social conflicts. Therefore, while various movements and organisations have emerged from the Left, the New Right has mounted extremely effective resistance, both through counter-organisation and assimilation (*ibid.*).

According to some analysts, examples of the latter are clearly evident in the regulating features which characterise the present 'development' agenda. As Judith Marshall argues (1994: 11):

The rough textured, fast-changing world of social movements, grass-roots groups and labour organizations in the South has had to be honed into a sequence of activities and budget lines that meet or reject criteria in order to fit in with the North. While the language of solidarity may prevail in the education and action face of the development agency, the highly asymmetrical power relations of a 'funding partnership' and 'donor beneficiary' relationship continue to be the most powerful operational forces.

In short, rather than being agents for democratic change, at least some NGOs and social movements may become incorporated into the very system which many of them are trying to change, thus neutralising the potency of any developing counterhegemony.

And aside from the constraining effects of dominant actors and power structures on the building of counter-hegemonic solidarity in civil societies, there are potential problems as well with the articulation of Northern and Southern agendas. For example, while international NGOs may reinforce the democratising effect of local organisations and/or social movements in some instances (Fox & Hernandez, 1992), in others, the objectives or

allegiances of Northern NGOs or social movements may be incompatible with local, indigenous needs or interests in the South. In some areas, for instance, Northern groups may have an international or transnational agenda, perhaps on issues of environment or human rights, while their Southern counterparts might be focusing on local, national or regional issues. And, although increasingly, the interconnectedness of the latter issues with international and/or global events, policies, and studies are being recognised, problems ranging from competition for dwindling funds to confusion over domains of accountability create frictions and potential sources of division which limit the extent to which various non-state actors may form effective North-South partnerships for system reform.

Clearly, the issue of NGO partnerships' contributions to the promotion of sustainable democratic development involves a range and complexity of factors. In particular, it implies the democratisation of political institutions from local to national, regional and global levels and of social institutions from families to NGOs and social movements. Therefore, **a central objective of this thesis is to distinguish instances in which the formation of partnerships and networks between and among NGOs may help to extend democracy at multiple levels of governance and society.**

Thesis Structure

To complete this analysis, the thesis is separated into two parts. The first, theoretical section treats major themes, issues and debates associated with the role of North-South

NGOs partnerships in the promotion of sustainable democratic development within the contemporary context of globalisation. The second section relates the preceding argument(s) to an analysis of Canadian-Zimbabwean NGO partnerships, as an attempt to discern the latter's impact on the promotion of national and/or transnational democratisation forces within Zimbabwe and the Southern African region.

Three broad analytical themes and sets of literature are united in the thesis. They include:

- (1) the present condition and future prospects of the official 'development' agenda in connection with the promotion of sustainable democratic development;**
- (2) the increasing social and political roles for NGOs and their potential in promoting democracy and 'development'; and**
- (3) the nature and extent of democratisation at transnational and local as well as national levels.**

Part 1

One of the central arguments of this first chapter has been that practically, the themes listed above are inseparable; that is, the discussion of any one necessarily involves inclusion of the others. However, for heuristic purposes, the themes will be treated separately in the next three chapters as the main subjects of each of the latter successively.

Therefore, **chapter two examines concepts of development as they relate to the practices and policies of the official (OECD) aid structure** (following the observation in this chapter that NGOs have become increasingly incorporated into the latter and that NGO partnerships are commonly established as ODA policy conditions). It begins with a brief summary of the evolution in thinking and policy that has occurred within the official

development structure since its origins following the Second World War. It notes that the recent ideological shift away from Keynesian internationalism to neoliberalism has contributed to the adoption of a discourse that supports the promotion of democracy and 'participatory' development.

However, it argues that the policies of the multi- and bi-lateral agencies that implement the ODA agenda are based on a limited, *institutional* version of democracy, whereas a more 'people-centred', *participatory* and *developmentalist*, and therefore more sustainable version, is promoted by some scholars and 'enlightened' international agencies such as the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This version is based on the understanding that development, democracy and security are an integrated complex and that sustainable development privileges humans over economic efficiency and human security over national interest. The chapter concludes by arguing that, *in theory*, the notion of North-South 'partnership', supports the democratisation of the ODA structure and hence the promotion of a more sustainable, people-centred development agenda.

The following chapter provides a more detailed discussion of the issue introduced in this first chapter of the recent promotion of NGOs as important constituents and agents of developing civil societies. In particular, **chapter three examines the strengths and weaknesses that NGOs possess for contributing to democracy, development security and improved systems of governance.** This chapter traces NGOs' evolutionary rise to prominence in both development practice and theory. It concludes with an analysis of NGO partnerships and the possibilities and problems they present for enhancing the developmental

attributes of the participants as well as improved and more equitable North-South relations.

Chapter four explores the phenomenon of a transnational civil society and its possible contribution to sustainable democratic development, as the latter is understood here to have sub- and transnational as well as national, international and global dimensions. It considers the functional and constitutional limitations of NGOs' roles in the establishment of a transnational civil society, especially given the theoretical and practical contradictions that exist in attempting to find complementarity in simultaneous processes of national and transnational democratisation.

Part 2

The second part of the thesis is centred upon a case study of Canadian-Zimbabwean NGO 'partnerships'. **Chapter five provides an analysis of Zimbabwe's political economy as a base to understanding the *particular* context in which NGOs operate in that country.** It argues that the implementation of a structural adjustment programme in 1990 - introduced for internal reasons as well as because of external pressure - has contributed to an increase in democratisation forces in civil society, but also to a more authoritarian state counterforce. It proceeds to a discussion of possible roles for external NGOs in supporting popular forms of democratisation in Zimbabwe and concludes with alternative scenarios regarding Zimbabwe's future policy economy.

While the role of external NGOs in Zimbabwe's democratisation was introduced in chapter five, it is the main focus of **chapter six which examines the contributions of Canadian NGOs to democratic development in Zimbabwe.** In particular, this chapter

seeks to determine how or if the present practice of establishing 'partnerships' between Northern and Southern NGOs has improved relations between or enhanced the performance of Canadian NGOs and their Zimbabwean associates. It is noted that aspects of national and transnational political economies determine the nature of Canada's national development agenda and significantly affect the behaviour of developmental NGOs from this country. As a consequence, Canadian NGOs' practices and projects to promote democracy and or development through the formation of NGO 'partnerships' with Zimbabwean organisations tend to support the hegemonic neoliberal order rather than to contribute significantly to the 'people-centred' agenda based on concepts of human security, human development and participatory democracy.

Chapter seven extends the analysis beyond the national contexts of the preceding two chapters and examines empirical evidence regarding the effect of transnational and global factors on NGOs' contributions to sustainable democratic development in Zimbabwe and the Southern African region. It argues that while national political economies/cultures and bilateral relations between Northern donor countries/NGOs and Southern aid recipients/'partners' affect prospects for sustainable democratic development, it is also necessary to include regional, transnational and global factors in the deliberations. It argues further that in general the bi-lateral nature of the programs and projects in which most Canadian (and other Northern) NGOs are involved supports nation-centric concepts of democracy and development which are too limited/ing to contend with the current pressures of globalisation. Nevertheless, there are interstices in which a 'people-centred agenda' is being promoted; that is, openings and opportunities in national, regional

and international arenas that certain NGOs are utilising to build transnational solidarity forces that may yet contribute to democratisation of the development structure and the globalisation of democracy.

Finally, **chapter eight presents an interpretation of the implications of NGO partner formation for the promotion of sustainable democratic development.** It concludes that ‘partnerships’ between Canadian and Zimbabwean NGOs - formed largely as concessions to current funding conditionalities of official donors - may contribute to the efficiency and/or performance outcomes of particular projects or programmes. Furthermore, the discourse of ‘partnership’ provides a strategy and arena for the advancement of Southern agents’ power vis-a-vis their Northern counterparts. However, the practice of partnership tends to be conceptualised within and therefore to support a development paradigm that reinforces a North-South dichotomy, “the Westphalian normative order” and, hence, “the structure of global apartheid that underlies the world political economy” (Sakamoto, 1994: 13).

In short, the practice of establishing formal contractual ‘partnerships’ between NGOs engaged in donor-initiated programs/projects tends to support the dominant development paradigm and therefore, as a policy in itself, is not likely to promote the type and extent of structural changes that are necessary for the promotion of sustainable democratic development. However, the growing transnational interconnectedness of NGOs, and an emerging sense of ‘global citizenship identity’ which exists among some of the more ‘enlightened’ linking agents, present challenges to the dominant theories and practices which maintain the hegemony or near-hegemony of the present neoliberal world order. In

particular, revisionist pressures - features of the contradictions of globalisation as well as the deliberate actions of some NGOs - have the potential to alter prevailing conceptions of citizenship, community and governance into the twenty-first century.

A Note on Methodology

A significant amount of the research for chapters five through seven was done in Zimbabwe. In particular, much of the information on Zimbabwean NGOs and their Canadian 'partners' was gained through semi-structured, key-informant interviews in Harare with representatives from these organisations. In advance of the research period in Zimbabwe, the Canadian NGOs that were working there at the time were identified through NGO directories (Canadian Council for International Cooperation (1992), Partnership Africa Canada (various years) and personal contacts with NGO representatives and CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) personnel. As far as possible, through these same information sources I identified Zimbabwean NGOs which were working in 'partnership' or in some form of association with the Canadian organisations. Upon arrival in Zimbabwe, I received more information regarding Canadian-Zimbabwean NGO (and CIDA-NGO) linkages from the Canadian High Commission as well as CIDA and NGO representatives. In addition to the Zimbabwean NGOs which were recognised as partners by Canadian sources, I also interviewed some members of prominent Zimbabwean NGOs which had been 'partners' or had some other linkage with Canadian NGOs and/or CIDA in the past and/or which had no direct links with Canada but had associations with other organisations which did have Canadian connections. Where possible, I arranged personal interviews; on four occasions,

where the latter was impossible, I interviewed individuals by telephone.

Besides the above interviews related directly to Canadian and Zimbabwean NGOs, I also interviewed members of NGOs and development agencies from other countries (Scandinavian, in particular) as sources of more general information on North-South NGO relations in Zimbabwe, several local scholars on issues of Zimbabwean political economy, especially SAPs, democratisation, civil society, and (more or less formally) several consultants and visiting scholars involved in various issues of Zimbabwean 'development' (eg. education, agriculture, renewable energy and rural development experts).

In addition to the interviews, another important sources of research information was the development library of the University of Zimbabwe's Institute of Development. Research institutes (especially, the Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre and the Southern Africa Association of Political Science) provided invaluable material as did the document collections of the UNICEF and World Bank headquarters in Harare. As well, NANGO (National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations) gave me unlimited access to its small but useful library containing detailed information on its NGO members.

Chapter 2: Partnerships: towards a new paradigm for development?

What sort of society exactly do I want? Waiter! May I have the menu please? Ah yes, I'll take Luncheon Special #4, the Switzerland Club: decent, prosperous, peaceful, strong foundations, a mixed salad of public services on the side, a bit bland.

Sorry, there are obstacles, problems. The waiter is surly, you can't catch his eye. The cook is drunk, certain items aren't in the larder. And the price isn't listed. Are you sure you won't take the Thatcherburger with Cheese? That's what everyone else is having.

-Galbraith, 1995: 55

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the concept of 'partnership', particularly as it is applied to relations between developmental NGOs (and between NGOs and official donor agencies) as a strategy or practice to alleviate conditions of inequality and inequity between the North and South. Although NGOs are frequently portrayed as autonomous actors and/or representatives of popular forces, the analysis is set within the context of the official development structure¹ because, as noted in the previous chapter, NGOs have

¹ Beyond the Southern recipients of aid (usually states, but also institutions and NGOs) and the bi- and multi-lateral donors which dominate the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a multiplicity of other international actors influence the agenda of the 'international development' nexus - more or less directly and with varying degrees of potency. These include: UN organisations such as the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), the ILO (International Labour Organisation) and ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council); financial groups such as the G-7 (Group of 7) and the Trilateral Commission respectively representing national and private interests of the wealthiest members of the OECD; multiple

increasingly become incorporated into the ODA system. Moreover, even POs or other NGOs which do not receive direct funding from official sources tend to have some connections - often with officially-engaged NGOs - which brings them into contact and (at least to some extent, under the influence of) the official development structure. Finally, although the trend recently toward 'partnership' appears to have been encouraged by radical critiques of the development enterprise,² it has become a feature of relations primarily of actors operating within the international aid structure.

Following from the analysis of the first chapter which situates NGOs' growing importance in developmental theory and practice within the context of globalisation, *this chapter focuses on the changes which have occurred within the ODA structure as the ideologies and policies have shifted under pressures of globalisation from international Keynesianism to neoliberalism.* It begins by discussing revisions and continuities in the international aid regime since its origin in 1949 and argues that despite an emphasis on Southern 'development' needs, the aid regime has been designed largely to further the political and/or economic interests of dominant Northern actors. Changes in policy direction

regional organisations from the EU (European Union) to NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), SADC (Southern African Development Community) or ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations); and a variety of NGOs, NGO consortia, 'development' institutes, crown corporations, academics and consultants.

² Although the multiple recent efforts within the development community to establish 'partnerships' appear to be at least partly in response to analyses that expose a 'crisis of development' (see below), the language of partnership has been used within the ODA structure in the past. For example, the Canadian Development Assistance Agency (CIDA) was created in 1968 following the publication of the Pearson Report entitled *Partners in Development: commission on international development* (New York: Praeger, 1969).

in the past that appeared to be in response to Southern criticism or need have tended to assimilate and/or coopt radical ideas without substantively altering the structure of the aid regime. Furthermore, while a recent change in policy direction has been informed by a significant shift in ideology from international Keynesianism to neoliberalism, some of the basic attitudes which have conditioned North-South relations in the past remain largely unaltered. In short, Northern conditions and experiences continue to be privileged and development policies still tend to reflect the opinions and values of the Northern 'expert'.

According to several recent analyses, this situation in which the programs, processes and terminologies of 'development' are initiated, controlled and/or dominated by Northern agencies and ideology has created a state of 'crisis' in the development policy regime and an accompanying 'impasse' in development studies (eg. Escobar, 1984-5; Dubois, 1991; Moore, 1991; Moore & Schmitz, 1995; Sachs, 1992; Schmitz, 1993). In particular, policies based upon universalising and teleological doctrines, articulated and dominated by the North, have tended to exacerbate rather than mitigate inequalities and differences among and within countries and between peoples.³

To a large extent, the problem might be described as a 'deficit' in democratic practices, meaning that vast numbers of people, for a variety of interconnected reasons, are unable to participate in processes (including the construction of knowledge) which control their situations or their destinies. Such asymmetries of power, reflected in the formation of discourse as well as in the maintenance of political and/or economic dominance, characterise

³ See, for example, Escobar, 1995a&b; Johnston, 1991; Sachs, 1992; Schuurman, 1993.

not only North-South relations, generally, but also relations between people and various national and international institutions and between the “overconsumers” and the “marginals”⁴ throughout the world. Therefore, as an effort to lessen the developmental gaps, including the ‘democratic deficit’, the predominant trend within development circles now advocates the sharing of power among the various “stakeholders” through the establishment of ‘partnerships’.

‘Partnership’ as a Development Objective and Practice

In the current development agenda, ‘partnership’ has become both a stated objective and the generally preferred mode of operation. In the first instance, especially when used in reference to North-South partnerships, the term reflects the increased self-assurance of many Southern development organisations and agencies as well as the recognition that the Northern-controlled, welfare-oriented development projects which have dominated the agenda have been neither sustainable nor just. In short, *‘partnership’ as an objective conveys the impression that participants in the development enterprise are self-consciously engaged in promoting more egalitarian and democratic processes within the system itself.*

As mode of operation, the term ‘partnership’ is now used to refer to a variety of

⁴ These terms, followed by “sustainables”, were used by Alan Durning (cited in Korten, 1995: 171) to describe, respectively, those people who benefit from the global neoliberal order, those who are being left further and further behind and those who, despite having sufficient material resources, are consciously “living lightly” and hopefully in a more ecologically sustainable and “people-centred” fashion.

linkages which have been formalised between and among a range of development organisations. Hence, governments form ‘partnerships’ with private industry or with NGOs to support or implement their bilateral aid programs. Likewise, the World Bank claims to be “a partner with numerous United Nations organizations and a variety of other international and bilateral agencies, as well as with major NGOs” (World Bank, 1994: 39). Similarly, Northern NGOs almost invariably seek out indigenous ‘partners’ before embarking on development enterprises in the South. And both Northern and Southern developmentalist NGOs have become partner-members of a growing and often confusing array of consortia, networks and coordinating organisations.

However, partnership as a development objective or ideal is not always or necessarily consistent or compatible with partnership as a mode of operation. Indeed, it is questionable, given the history of the construction of the present development enterprise, whether the latter can be transformed into the more effective and ultimately more democratic system which the recent commitment to ‘partnership’ implies. Not only do entrenched structures of power tend to resist pressures for change, especially if the proposed changes are intended to alter existing power imbalances, but there are functional constraints as well. And ultimately, proclaiming the formation of formal ‘partnerships’ between actors that possess very different levels of power, influence and material advantage may merely obscure rather than reduce existing disparities. Yet, despite obvious obstacles, I argue in this chapter that the current discourse of partnership may offer an opportunity to strengthen the position of proponents of an agenda that favours principles of ‘developmental democracy’ and ‘human security’ as well as more humane systems of governance and ‘people-centred development’.

While noting that the development agencies which make up the international aid regime almost universally support an objective of ‘sustainable democratic development’, I argue, however, that neoliberalism is associated with ideologies and policies that support a limited ‘instrumental’ or ‘protective’ version of democracy and an overly economic and consequently non-sustainable view of development. An alternative approach to achieving more ‘sustainable democratic development’ involves confronting the current ‘crisis’ by “(re)shaping global economic policy on behalf of human interests (rather than on behalf of private capital or national interests)” (Falk, 1995b: 35). In terms of revising the development agenda, clearly this means advancing Southern voices in international fora and decision-making processes. It also means attempting to find ways to distinguish, accommodate and mediate among the myriad and often seemingly incompatible or incommensurable, demands for security and for human and/or cultural rights, which are embedded in the diverse identity claims currently being made. In short, it means extending to the global level moral principles of equity and justice and interest-mediating practices of governance: the globalisation of democracy.

I argue that a participatory/developmental version of democracy rather than a ‘protective’ liberal version is more suitable for extension beyond traditional national roots to global and societal levels and also, therefore, more supportive of sustainable, democratic development. And, while many NGOs and NGO partnerships may have positively influential roles to play in such democratising projects, other, more reactionary, organisations and alliances may impede the process. Moreover, the increasing incorporation of NGOs into official aid structures is likely to expose contradictory pressures and trajectories. In

particular, while many NGOs which represent interests from 'below' may be concerned with 'democratising' the agenda, other more 'elitist' NGOs as well as dominant actors within the development structures such as states and IFIs are likely to seek mediating pathways; ie., forms of cooptation/corporatism which minimise change and/or allow for new patterns of control.

Given such contradictions and diversity, it is difficult to generalise about the prospects for democratising the development enterprise through revisionist measures which adhere in practice and principle to the ideals of 'partnership'. Although some NGOs and NGO partnerships may contribute to revisionist theory and practice that supports a 'people-centred development', many do not, and of those which do, many are constrained by their interactions with the dominant - often state-related - actors within the 'development enterprise'. Hence, **the following analysis identifies the problems and possibilities presented by the introduction of the notion of 'partnership'**. However, prior to the discussion of 'partnership', I turn first to analyses of the OECD development structure and the 'crisis of development'.

The Development Agenda in Historical Context

Origin and Motives

On 20 January 1949, in his inaugural address, President Harry Truman of the United States introduced the idea of 'development' as a problem for international management as

well as for national domestic policy. On that occasion he announced that the US government would “...embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our (ie. US) scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas” (Truman, 1967). The declaration that international ‘development’ was to be a major concern of US foreign policy not only set the stage for the future institutionalisation of the OECD’s development enterprise, it established a discourse which decreed that developmental standards would be based on a polarity between the privileged, ‘developed’, North and a disadvantaged, ‘un(der)developed’ South.

Since 1949, official ‘development’ agencies have tended to proclaim that their primary objective is the humanitarian one of meeting the perceived needs of poor people in poor countries. Clearly, however, a more salient, if often un(der)stated, consideration behind Truman's announcement and subsequent development strategy has been the issue of international (in)stability, particularly as it has affected Northern security (Gendzier, 1985). At least until the end of the Cold War, political considerations and the dominance of the realist paradigm in international relations theory and policy have privileged the bipolar interests of powerful states to the detriment of humanitarian concerns. Furthermore, realism has not only theorised but also helped to justify the precedence of state interest by proclaiming it to be a natural and inevitable consequence of the anarchical condition of the inter-state system (Peterson, 1992b: 5).

Promoting economic growth in the South has also been an important goal of official ‘development’ policy and since the 1990s has tended to overshadow geopolitical concerns. Again, however, while it has frequently been suggested that humanitarianism has been the

motivating factor behind various economic initiatives, critics of the system have suggested that the possibility of economic benefits for donor governments, agencies or businesses in the North has often been a prior consideration.⁵ Furthermore, according to several analysts, the 'development discourse' which evolved in association with official policy over the years has helped not only to obscure these discrepancies between declared objective and actual intent but it has served also as a means by which dominant Northern interests have retained a superior, privileged position in North-South relations (Escobar, 1984-5; Dubois, 1991; Moore, 1991; Moore & Schmitz, 1995; Sachs, 1992; Schmitz, 1993).⁶

These scholars argue that the concepts advanced for comparing Northern and Southern development attributes have tended to confirm that the former's are universally desirable, normal, and even natural while those of the latter are lamentable, abnormal or pathological. Correspondingly, the language of development has been replete with binary oppositions or dichotomies such as modern/traditional, progressive/backward, scientific/primitive which are used to signify and amplify the differences between a developed North and an underdeveloped Southern 'other'. Emerging from this discourse is the idea that inevitable and sustainable progress is achievable for 'underdeveloped' countries only if they adopt 'correct' policies and attitudes. And, despite frequent failures and

⁵ For example, see analyses of Canadian aid by Carty & Smith (1981), Pratt (1984), Tomlinson (1991).

⁶ The term 'discourse' encompasses the idea that language is not an objective descriptive mechanism for facilitating human communication, but rather its construction and usage reflects and helps to reproduce the power relations which exist in society (Foucault, 1982; Trigg, 1985).

unintended consequences of Northern-inspired development policies and projects, it has largely been taken for granted that the prescriptions and/or injunctions of Northern experts and policy-makers are likely to be more 'correct' than those of Southern aid recipients.

Such representations have disregarded or undervalued indigenous knowledges and local inscriptions of meaning. Moreover, both the assumption of homogeneity in each of the discursively constructed domains of North and South as well as the implication that the condition of Northern 'development' is a teleological end-point have tended to obscure the diverse experiences of countries and peoples, in the South particularly, but also in the North. Much of the recent critical analysis on this so-called 'crisis of development' points out that such oversights are not only morally insupportable, but they have contributed to many developmental failures. Therefore, it is argued, more effective policy will, at the very least, incorporate and preferably privilege indigenous voices and knowledges.

The insights gained from such analysis has encouraged the advancement of participatory action research (PAR)⁷ and of efforts to encourage local 'ownership' of projects. In recent years, mainstream development agencies have frequently incorporated these ideas and approaches into their official policy guidelines and projects. Yet, it is unlikely that such inclusions represent the beginnings of fundamental change in the power relations which characterise the official development enterprise. Arguably, they may

⁷ Participatory action research (PAR) which is designed to not only include, but privilege the knowledge of indigenous people in initiating, designing, carrying-out and evaluating development projects/programmes "emerged out of experiences in popular education and grass-roots activism in a number of countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa during the seventies"(Escobar, 1984-5: 391).

represent incremental advancements in policy evolution, although in many instances they appear to be cooptive gestures designed to defuse the radical intent of these innovative approaches. As the following section indicates, past development policy innovations have not significantly altered the material distribution between North and South or the nature of power relations between Northern and Southern actors.

Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose

Assumptions associated with the idea that development means emulating Northern conditions and values have persisted throughout successive 'development decades', despite various trends (and fads) which have altered both the outward appearance of the policy agenda and the terminology of the discourse. To the extent that revisions have occurred, they appear to have been the result of manoeuvres to incorporate, and thereby minimise the effects of challenges to the dominant power structures from alternative discourses.

One example was the adoption, advocacy and/or popularisation by Western-dominated international development agencies such as the World Bank of the Basic Human Needs discourse in the 1970s.⁸ While this approach gave the promise and appearance of being a major redirection in policy (and, indeed, did encourage donors to channel more aid to the "poorest of the poor"), it did not result in significant change either in the institutional

⁸ The Basic Needs Approach (BNA) was introduced by the International Labour Organisation. A good summary of this approach and events surrounding its introduction is provided by Hoogvelt (1982). According to the latter, the adoption of the BHNs approach by Northern development agencies was part of an effort to appear conciliatory and hence to moderate the impact of demands in the early 1970s from a large group of countries in the South for a New International Economic Order (NIEO).

structures or programming strategies of official aid agencies (Nelson, 1995).

A related example was the prevalence given in mainstream development agencies in the 1970s to the ideas associated with the initiative of the Southern countries' Group of 77⁹ to achieve a new international economic order (NIEO). In spite of official endorsement by the UN General Assembly of the basic principles of the NIEO, few of the agreed measures were ever (or fully) carried out. Moreover, at least one scholar (Hoogvelt, 1982) has argued that Henry Kissinger, the American Secretary of States at the time, devised a policy of "embourgeoisement" to bring some Southern governments into the Northern 'camp' and out of the sphere of influence of the Southern group which was advocating such radical change.

A Substantive Change

Actual or more pronounced alterations in development trends have been evident recently. However, in this case, the changes have been associated with shifts in the dominant production (and related ideological) structures of the global political economy rather than as concessions to Southern pressure or need.

Initially, the development enterprise was associated with the political economy practice and philosophy which Ruggie (1982) has termed 'embedded liberalism'. The latter emerged as the new hegemonic order in the West following the Second World War.¹⁰ It was

⁹ The Group of 77 countries was comprised of Southern members of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

¹⁰ According to Gill and Law (1988: 79), Ruggie's neo-realist description of "embedded liberalism (as a) 'fusion' of power, interests, and 'legitimate social purpose' (resembles) a Gramscian, hegemonic congruence of social forces." It is in this sense that the idea of hegemonic order is being used here.

characterized by the merger of interests between capital and labour within a Fordist production structure and by the legitimization of the Keynesian welfare state (Gill & Law, 1988, especially pp. 79-80; Liepitz, 1993).

The statist ideology which was associated with the period of Fordism and Keynesianism in the industrialized world was advanced to developing countries through the theories and projects of 'modernisation'. The latter were based on the assumption that "massive financial and technical assistance would transform the agricultural subsistence societies into modern industrial societies" (Chilcote, 1981: 279). And, as state sovereignty has been the primary principle upon which international relations have been conducted, the assistance was granted only on a state-to-state basis, thereby, indirectly at least, reinforcing the developing state's central position.

During the 1950s and 60s, state-centric development agendas were reinforced by Cold War political strategies. First and Second World competition for supporters and/or proxies in the 'Third World' encouraged ideological as well as military and material rivalries. Therefore, while state capitalism was promoted by First World donors, in some cases, state socialism was fostered and/or accepted as a viable alternative to the philosophy and practice of Western liberalism. Moreover, the statist models advocated by external actors were compatible with and strongly reinforced by the interests of regimes/elites in the newly independent countries in the South. A 'strong' state was assumed to be necessary for consolidating the recently gained, and therefore often tentative, power of the political elites. Also, it was widely accepted that only an interventionist state could meet urgent post-colonial demands for rapid material redistribution in societies. In short, whether it was of the

liberal or socialist variety, the trend throughout the developing world during the 1950s and 60s was towards statist systems of governance.

Early in the 1970s, however, the Keynesian era of legitimate state interventionism began to break down in the West and by the end of the 1980s the former Soviet Union had collapsed. The decline of the 'welfare state' in the West together with the abrupt and dramatic Eastern European events prompted a precipitous reduction in confidence in the state's ability to be an effective economic manager. Furthermore, throughout the Third World, crises of state (mis)management, excesses of authoritarianism and crippling national debts have contributed to a loss of faith in the state as manager and/or provider. Consequently, *in the past two decades, a notable shift has occurred in development ideology and policy away from statist and nationalist capitalisms and socialisms towards market-oriented transnationalist capitalism and/or civil society* (Schuurman, 1993: 10-11).¹¹

Clearly, over the past fifteen years, a neoliberal 'counter-revolution'¹² first assumed and then has maintained a dominant position in development theory and practice. Along with a renewed faith in market-led growth, one of the most notable effects of the hegemony or near-hegemony of neoliberalism has been the greater prominence of various actors. Outstanding among the latter are multinational corporations (MNCs) which have been the

¹¹ Although, generally, confidence in the state has declined, many scholars have argued that it is a mistake to underestimate the important social role that the state continues (and *should* continue) to play. One of the most forceful proponents of this view is Manfred Bienefeld (1994). See also, Richard Falk (1996) for a recent article portraying the state as a still dominant institutional actor.

¹² The term 'counter-revolution' is borrowed from Toye's (1987) account of the transition.

main vehicles through which the transnationalisation of production has occurred, non-state actors such as NGOs and 'new' social movements which have emerged often in reaction to the insecurities associated with new production and labour practices¹³, and the World Bank (IBRD) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) which have dominated the redirections in state management practices. These IFIs have assumed central roles, not only as suppliers of crucially needed loan capital for seriously indebted Third World countries, but also, increasingly, as promoters and supervisors (or, as some have argued, enforcers!) on issues of governance and human rights (eg. see Stubbs & Underhill, 1994).

The World Bank's 1991 *World Development Report* clearly expresses the IFI's disillusionment with state-led economic development strategies:

Many countries have suffered a vicious circle of harmful interventions that entrench special interests and lead to rent-seeking and the 'capture' of the state. Governments sometimes intervene in the market to address political instability and other political constraints. But the result is that all too often, the combination of pervasive distortions and predatory states leads to development disasters. Reversing this process requires political will and a political commitment to development. Implementing the economic reforms considered in this Report is one way to confront the political constraints on development (p. 10).

¹³ In particular, production and labour have been altered by the practices of 'flexibilisation' and 'feminisation'. The former term, coined by French Regulationist theorists, Pione, *et al* (1984) refers to the change from 'Fordist' mass production to a system which is dependent upon capital equipment and labour being sufficiently 'flexible' in a period of varied and rapidly fluctuating market demands to allow for small and easily transformable production runs. The term is sometimes used as well to refer to the greater elasticity of wages and benefits that has resulted from an increasing deregulation of labour markets. The latter has contributed to the 'feminisation of production' - an increase in female labour but often in poorly paid and un(der)regulated jobs.

The economic reforms to which the report refers are, of course, the controversial structural adjustment programs (SAPs) which include measures to liberalize and privatize economies.¹⁴ Since SAPs were first introduced in the early 1980s, the majority of countries in the South have adopted, often after considerable external pressure, either an IFI-sponsored or a 'home-grown' version.¹⁵

Despite confident projections by IFIs in the early stages of structural adjustment, it became clear within a decade of SAPs' introduction, however, that they were not producing the beneficial results that their proponents anticipated (Dia, 1993; Parfitt, 1993). Bank officials concluded that the disappointing results were due to lapses in the performance of governments and, as a consequence, veered from strictly economic matters to a concern with the question of 'governance' (World Bank, 1992b). In Bank terminology, governance is "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social forces for development" (*ibid.*, 1992: 1). To promote better management, the Bank advocates political- restructuring measures which are intended to create 'well-functioning' institutions. It has been an unstated axiom of the Bank that such institutions should be supportive of liberalism - that is, the protection of individual liberties and structures of a market economy (Helleiner, 1995: 285).

¹⁴ SAPs include such measures as currency devaluations, removal of subsidies, elimination of trade barriers, sale of public enterprises to private interests and reduction in civil services.

¹⁵ For example, 30 of the 45 sub-Saharan countries of Africa had adopted an IMF-sponsored SAP by 1993 (Black & Thérien, 1996: 268). Moreover, many bilateral donors require an IMF 'stamp of approval' before lending to an indebted country; therefore, even if the latter does not negotiate an official agreement with IFIs, it must abide by their guidelines.

Some Continuities

According to some scholars, the IFI's proliferating conditionalities - from adoption of neoliberal economics to Western-style governing structures and, most recently, to 'poverty alleviation' measures - have not primarily been about establishing a new agenda of democracy and sustainable development in the South despite a discourse that would appear to support these objectives. Rather, they are designed more to support the traditional agenda of meeting the needs of the predominant political and economic forces in the North. Furthermore, as they are now conceived these programmes, which have little empirical and less moral justification, are not likely to encourage the (re)building of developmentalist states or growth in economies (Schatz, 1994) or to promote sustainable development or human security (Shaw, 1996). According to Gerald Schmitz (1993), for example, the Bank's 'governance' project is not based on sound empirical evidence, but instead is an ideologically-driven manifestation of the current hegemony of global neoliberalism. As a result, claims Schmitz, is it unlikely to create an environment in which SAPs can achieve economic success and, worse, it ignores the social hardship that the latter inflict.¹⁶

Schmitz's analysis underscores that development policy is as much (or more) to maintain the international structure of power relations, than because of human need or humanitarian interests. Since their origin, international organisations like the World Bank

¹⁶ Callaghy (1993: 107) presents a similarly cynical view of the Bank's 'governance' project and its growing list of conditionalities for Africa. However, unlike Schmitz, Callaghy emphasises that state-interest rather than or as well as liberal economics may be a salient factor. He argues that "...political liberalization may be partly driven by the need for a new post-Cold War foreign policy that sounds nice but does not cost much, in short, one suited to Africa's continued marginalization and dependence."

have reflected and promoted the interests of their most influential members¹⁷ and therefore have supported the prevailing development orthodoxies of Northern donors. Hence, while the World Bank supported policies which favoured state capitalism in the 1960s, it endorses the hegemony of the market in the neoliberal 1990s.

Indeed, despite the major shift in the international aid regime from Keynesian to a market-favouring ideology and policy, SAPs provide further evidence that policy-makers in industrialized countries and IFIs continue to adhere to two of the main principles upon which modernisation theories were premised. These are: (1) the notion that development is a process of unilinear growth and progress toward Northern-achieved/inspired norms; and (2) the belief that international order (and/or well-being) is promoted by Northern control of Southern development.

Recent neoliberal revisions in official policy do not undermine these basic assumptions, but instead reveal attempts by the dominant players to maintain the traditional structures of power during a period of rapidly changing global political economic processes and relations. The Bank's focus on governance as well as its increased attention to democracy and civil society may represent an important restatement of policy, following the incorporation of neoliberal ideas and terminology, but *underlying the changes is a philosophy which continues to uphold the persistence of a development agenda that is supportive of and dominated by elite interests, particularly in the North.* Therefore, in

¹⁷ As Gill and Law (1988: 90-1) point out, IFIs wield considerable power internationally because of their links with transnational capital and networks of business, governmental and bureaucratic elites in industrialized countries.

concentrating exclusively on SAPs and ‘governance’ as *new* directions in development policy and discourse, there is a tendency to overlook that the current crisis of development rests at least partly in the patterns of continuity which attend the Bank’s persistent promotion of the existing structures of power. Or, as Schmitz (1993: 2) remarks: “The emperor’s new wardrobe camouflages what ought to be contested.”

Civil Society Responses to the ‘Crisis of Development’

Civil societies are likely to play important roles in any such contestation. According to Edwards (1989), the development “impass” and apparent “irrelevance” of development studies derives largely from ignoring or underestimating the contributions that disadvantaged groups in civil societies can make to their own development. Instead, the knowledge of a physically or culturally remote ‘expert’ and/or researcher (often, but not only Northern) tends to be favoured over the experience, indigenous wisdom and knowledges of the subjects of the investigation or policy. As a consequence, he argues, conventional approaches to development tend to separate “theory from practice, understanding from action, subject from object, and researcher from ‘researched’” (Edwards, 1993: 78).

The movement in recent years to promote a closer integration of development theory and practice through the adoption of the PAR approach has been furthered by such concerns and frustrations from members of the development enterprise (Kottak, 1991; Uphoff, 1988; Wilcox, 1994). However, the impetus for PAR did not come only or even primarily from

scholars and international NGOs, but rather from activist grass-root groups in Latin America (Borda, 1993). In short, this significant innovation in development practice with the potential to correct some of the problems associated with the 'crisis in development' emerged from the agency of Southern POs assisted by their association (informal 'partnership'?) with Northern development 'experts' (see discussion on agency and structure in preceding chapter).

Attempts to revise the development agenda from below appear to have been given added impetus by current changes in the international political economy. Both the general loss of faith in the state (see preceding section) and the heightened level of assertiveness demonstrated by people around the world (see chapter 1) have fostered an increased awareness of civil societies within official development circles and generated support for programs and for strategies like PAR in which 'people come first'.

Beyond Policy Choice

However, while efforts to support/revitalise/create civil societies have become key components of the recent 'poverty alleviation efforts' of development agencies, there is an inherent contradiction between these objectives and the continuing advancement of SAPs which reduce the state's ability to provide essential public services. As Plewes, *et al* (1996: 224) argue:

development strategies must make explicit efforts to strengthen participation in civil society, to enable marginalized groups to organize and articulate their needs before government and the public, and to participate in decision-making that effects them.

In short, the development of civil society requires economic distribution policies that will ensure the possibility for social, economic and political participation by members of all levels of society. Yet, given the intensity of global pressure towards increased economic liberalisation, it is unlikely that the IFI's latest 'added-on' prescription for 'poverty alleviation' will encourage any significant redistributions of - nor in fact have SAPs yet generated significant increases in - wealth.

Furthermore, not only are there major structural impediments to development policies that 'put people first', there are problems at the operational level as well. Despite the incorporation of PAR principles in many ODA projects, actions tend still to fall far short of stated intentions with respect to encouraging popular participation and giving credence to local voices and knowledges¹⁸. Moreover, this is true not only for mainstream development agencies, but also applies at least occasionally to less orthodox, more critical organisations such as Oxfam and within programmes that have follow alternative approaches to development such as the Women and Development (WAD) movement (Parpart, 1995)¹⁹.

This observation suggests that revising the system of development to make it more responsible and accountable to the people it is intended to serve is not merely an issue of

¹⁸ Not only are prevailing assumptions about development slow to change, but there are various practical problems related to the implementation of PAR. These include: lack of training in or misunderstandings about the methodology; miscommunications deriving from cultural differences; difficulties in measuring outcomes; and frequent disjuncture between the research/development need for long-term involvement and the definite, often two- or three-year time frame set by donor agencies (eg. see James, 1994).

¹⁹ Parpart (1995: 351-2) notes examples in Oxfam and WAD publications which "betray neocolonial leanings" and which "represent Third World women as (a) hapless and vulnerable (monolithic group)."

policy choice. Despite a distinction between the market-oriented policies of the dominant agencies and the more 'people-centred' strategies of radical development agencies, the possibility of democratising the development structure is impeded by the tendency of the latter, like the former, to continue to view development in 'self-other'/ 'donor-recipient terms'. In short, the 'crisis' of development is not related only to the fact that the system as it is now constructed designs policies that are determined (and defined) by the needs of dominant interests in the North and, to a lesser extent, of elites in the South. Instead, it seems that notions and practices which support the unequal power relations of 'development', once established, have tended to become entrenched and 'taken for granted' even in some cases by critics of the system.

The Issue of Discourse

Therefore, one of the major difficulties in reconstructing the development agenda on lines which are more democratic and/or sustainable lies in redefining 'development' and the terms and concepts which are associated with it. The problem consists of more than the challenge to provide precise terms to elaborate the meaning of elusive concepts. Instead, as some poststructuralists - particularly Michel Foucault - have instructed, language reflects and helps to reproduce power relations in society. To redefine development, then, it is necessary not only to conceptualise a substantively altered process but to identify a praxis by which the necessary changes to existing power relations may be achieved.

Given that discourse is an important means by which power relations are maintained, it is also an area in which such a praxis may begin. Therefore, the following sections

examine alternative discourses of democracy, as the latter are crucial to current conceptualisations - both orthodox and radical - of sustainable development.

Definitions and Discourses of Democracy

As noted in chapter one, 'democracy' is currently in vogue. Clearly, revived interest in and raised hopes for transitions to democracy throughout the world have advanced the recent surge in formal implementations of multipartyism and the proliferation of a variety of popular associational forms that have arisen largely as evidence of and responses to the phenomena of globalisation and internationalisation. Many development scholars - liberals and critical theorists, alike - now equate *sustainable* development with *democratic* development, at least to the extent that they accept that sustainability involves local decision-making, self-reliance and non-governmental organizational activism - in short, vital civil societies. And development agencies exalt the benefits of popular participation and the protection of human rights, and favour policies which are designed to promote 'empowerment' and 'capacity building'.

Yet, frequently, despite the association of these various *processes* with 'democracy', the latter is understood to be primarily an *outcome* - a set of empirically-measurable conditions or standards, based on universally similar legal and institutional structures. In this view, democratic governance is founded on the principles of political representation and accountability of the governors to the governed. Free and fair competition for elected office,

various citizens' rights (eg. of expression and assembly), and freedoms from such harms as arbitrary imprisonment or other penalty by the state are assured by legal rules.

The openness of many Western political systems, the relatively high degree of respect for human rights, and the legally-endorsed opportunity periodically to select or reject political leaders have undoubtedly contributed to the widespread appeal of this conceptualisation of democracy. However, to assume that this procedural, formal definition of 'democracy', which is closely associated with the values and traditions of modern Western liberalism, is the only one which is worthy of the designation overlooks that other legitimate, albeit sometimes more informal, forms have existed in other locations and times. In short, such assumptions ignore the fact that democracy has been radically transformed over space and time - ie. that the concept is historically contingent and ideologically contentious.

Certainly, modern Western democracy has little in common with the original Athenian version which reportedly was established by Kleisthenes in 508/507 BC (Dunn, 1992: 240).²⁰ The main distinguishing feature of the first democracy was the subordination of private life to the public. The *zeitgeist* of classical Greece involved a commitment to the notion of *civic virtue* which tied individuals' rights to their duties as citizens. There was no distinction made between state and civil society, and direct citizen participation had as much (or more) to do with the understanding that the good, virtuous life was possible only through service for the common good than with a belief that civic action was a legally-ensured

²⁰ Note that the Athenian model was a very limited 'democracy'; it excluded women, slaves and inhabitants of conquered territories from becoming citizens. By modern standards, this system was clearly undemocratic. On the other hand, the lack of direct citizen participation in contemporary democracies would be considered undemocratic by Athenians of 500 BC.

privilege to be exercised or not as a matter of individual choice (Held, 1987).

Direct democracy as practised in the Greek city-state was not readily transposable to the larger, more complex format of the nation-state. Therefore, on the introduction of the latter, some type of *representative* system became necessary and the modern division between state and civil society came into being. This evolution in polity form introduced new challenges for democracy. In particular, as many eighteenth-century scholars warned, there was an increased danger of factionalism within a representative system of government - either from certain individuals or groups tyrannizing others or from a possible 'tyranny of the majority'. In either case, the preventative was deemed to be a carefully devised series of institutional checks.²¹ To a large extent, such concerns and the surrounding debates contributed to a shift in the conceptualisation of democracy. It came to be viewed more and more in procedural or juridical terms and the classical idea of democracy as fulfilment of the individual through service to the community began to fade into the background.²²

According to John Dunn (1992: 248), "representative democracy is democracy made safe for the modern state: democracy converted from unruly and incoherent master to docile and dependable servant." But it is a specific form of modern state - the capitalist state -

²¹ Many of the debates on these issues surfaced during the writing of the American Constitution in the mid- to late 18th century. Arthur's (1992) edited text provides a concise, but fairly comprehensive sampling of these various discussions within the broader context of the historical development of the concept(s) of democracy (see particularly pp. 12-39).

²² However, the association of democracy with the 'common good' and educative or developmentalist benefits for citizens was never totally eclipsed. Strains of these themes may be traced from the work of Rousseau in the 18th century through to that of G.D.H. Cole in the early years of this century and contemporary scholars such as Robert Dahl and Carole Pateman.

which this form of democracy has come to serve.²³

C. B. Macpherson has presented perhaps the clearest treatise on liberal democracy's support of capitalism. In *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* (1977) he traces the advancement from Locke through Bentham and Mill of a conceptual trend which was concerned with finding an ethical justification for placing the protection (and unlimited accumulation) of private property at the centre of the democratic project. Such thinking comprised a strain of liberalism which was quite different from one that was evident in the work of scholars such as Rousseau and J. S. Mill. In the latter tradition, while it was accepted that individuals should possess at least enough property to secure their livelihood, it was believed that great disparities in individual possessions would undermine the individual freedom which was the very essence of democracy. In Rousseau's words, ideally "no citizen shall ever be wealthy enough to buy another, and none poor enough to be forced to sell himself" (cited in Macpherson, 1977: 17).

Liberal democracy's philosophical grounding in the essentially economic principle of maximizing *individual* choice has been criticised because it ignores (and exacerbates) the social inequalities which prevents the exercise of *equal* choice. Feminist scholars, in particular, have noted that the liberalism's radical individualism, especially because it has

²³ While the association of liberal democracy and capitalism has not wavered, their dialectical interaction has altered both over time. See, for instance, the work on 'post-industrial societies' of Keynesians such as John Galbraith and Charles Lindblom, neo-Marxists such as Claus Offe and James O'Connor and regulation theorists such as Michel Aglietta and Alain Lipietz (For summaries of the different perspectives of these scholars and schools, see respectively, Dunleavy & O'Leary, 1987: 288-99; Chilcote, 1981: 196-7; Noel, 1987).

been tied to the dichotomisation of public and private, disguises and perpetuates gender inequalities. As Peterson (1990: 319) argues:

Liberal mystifications of 'free and equal individuals' have masked the perpetuation of patriarchy as it has taken different forms; from 'father patriarchy' to 'husband patriarchy' to 'public patriarchy': the 'transference of gender roles from the home to the work world'.

Many development scholars add to feminist criticism by arguing that the narrow, essentially economic, individualism which is at the core of liberal democratic theory too often limits choice on a societal scale while extending it only to elites who engage in free competition for political power (Schmitz & Gillies, 1992: 6).

The Development Agenda's 'Protective' Version of Democracy

Yet, despite such concerns, it is the liberal conceptualisation of democracy, resembling the former, 'protective' version of democracy associated with Locke, Bentham *et al.*, which dominates the contemporary development discourse. The philosophical continuity is made especially clear in the neoliberal logic of the World Bank's recently initiated 'governance' project. The claim being made is that 'good governance' goes hand-in-hand with less government. The rationale is that privatisation, economic liberalisation and decentralisation of governmental functions reduces the power of the central state, thereby creating spaces to be filled by private entrepreneurs and/or civil associations (Landell-Mills & Serageldin, 1991).

However, as Gerald Schmitz (1993) notes, the Bank's primary concern is the performance of the macro-economy rather than the polity. To support his claim, Schmitz

(1993: 11) cites the Bank's assertion in its 1989 *Long-Term Prospective Study* that 'the root cause of weak economic performance in the past has been the failure of public institutions' or, in other words, a 'crisis of governance'. Likewise, the foreword by the late Bank president, Lewis Preston, in a more recent publication begins with a similar claim that "(g)ood governance is an essential complement to sound economic policies" (cited in *ibid.*, 11). In short, the close, supportive ties which Macpherson identified between capitalism and the political institutions of the protective model of democracy have been made particularly explicit in the World Bank's discourse on 'good governance'.

Although countered by alternative perspectives from agencies within the development circle such as UNRISD and the UNDP²⁴, the hegemonic position of this particular discourse is reinforced by the actions, if not necessarily the rhetoric, of major bilateral OECD donors, including Canada. Even while their policy statements insist that human rights and democracy are valuable in themselves, these countries continue to interlink their policies with the Bank's position, as Schmitz argues (1993: 11), by "anchoring...political conditionalities within the good governance regime to orthodox economic conditionality and the fundamentals of 'market friendly' development."

The Canadian case reflects the interdependency of the orthodox liberal themes of market, governance, and democracy which dominate the current development agenda. A

²⁴ An alternative discourse by these agencies defines development and security predominantly in human as opposed to economic and military terms. And, the associated definition of democracy emphasises the importance of empowering people in ways beyond granting electoral freedom to participate in processes that affect their achievement of higher levels of development and security (see below).

recent statement by the Canadian government expresses a firm commitment to the promotion of “human rights, democracy, good governance” through the judicious use of its aid dollars (Government of Canada, 1995: 42). At the same time, Canada has become a strong (if rather late) supporter of the Bank's structural adjustment programs²⁵, and of the neoliberal ideological agenda generally (Burdette, 1994; Black & McKenna, 1995).

However, it remains questionable whether the goal of promoting democracy, human rights, *etc.* is consistent with current neoliberal policies.²⁶ For example, a growing literature which seeks to discern a directly causal or positive relationship between economic and political liberalisation finds no clear or consistent connection and many scholars conclude that “democracy...cannot be achieved simply through the implementation of more liberal economic reforms” (Fierlbeck, 1994: 168; see also, Gills & Phillip, 1996; Gibbon, 1992; Shaw, 1996).

In Western societies, a positive connection does appear to exist between the sustainability of liberal democracy and a well-functioning market system, with the viability of the former no doubt being linked to its “effective protection” of the latter (Held, 1987: 252). This does not mean, however, that political liberalisation, defined as the relaxation of civil and political control by government authorities, automatically leads to better economic

²⁵ However, while supporting structural adjustment in principle, Black and Thérien (1996) point out that Canada has focused considerable attention in recent years to the alleviation of social stress caused by SAPs.

²⁶ Yet, a recent statement by Prime Minister Chrétien reiterates the conviction that neoliberal economic policy is not only conducive to future prosperity in Canada, but is the best strategy (through the exercise of free trade) for promoting democracy in the rest of the world (Globe and Mail, 20 May, 1996: A1).

performance in all contexts (Bratton, 1993). Nor is there any conclusive evidence to support the corollary that the enforced introduction of market principles will foster democratic transitions.²⁷

Indeed, as Bratton and van de Walle (1992: 29) caution:

It is entirely possible that liberalization can occur without democratization, and in some parts of Africa the disintegration of authoritarian rule may be followed by anarchy or intensified corruption, rather than by stable and accountable government.

Furthermore, when the market mechanism is applied with little or no softening of its harsh propensities for increasing social hardship, as has been the case with the majority of structural adjustment programmes particularly in Africa, the possibility for democratisation is likely to diminish while the probability of conflict and instability increases (Shaw, 1993; Shaw & Korany, 1994). And, if unmitigated market policies do contribute to extreme dissatisfaction in civil societies of the South, no amount of technocratic instructions on 'governance' from the North will be sufficient to foster a political culture of mutually respectful relations between state and society upon which a stable democracy ultimately depends.

It is probable, as Alexis de Tocqueville (1862) argued in the past century, that such relations are generated in situations where economic disparities are not too extreme. Yet, while redistribution involves state intervention, neoliberals are more concerned with fiscal

²⁷ Considerable material has been written on this subject. See, for example, Beckman, 1992; Bienefeld, 1994 & 1995; Gibbon *et al*, 1992; Leftwich, 1994; Shaw, 1996; Williams and Young, 1994; and papers by Beckman, Bratton, Callaghy, Sandbrook, van de Walle and others, presented at USAID workshop, 'Economic Reform in Africa's New Era of Political Liberalization' (April, 1993) Washington, D.C.

efficiency and economic growth. And, because there is a tendency to assume that the market alone 'gets prices right' while unnecessary state intervention distorts them, current policies attempt to reduce the latter's involvement in economic matters. The justification for policies that favour growth over redistribution is that the latter is only possible if assets are produced by the former. Yet, empirical evidence does not necessarily support this reasoning. First, the notion that benefits from economic growth will 'trickle down' to the poorer levels of society has not been verified by most countries' experiences. Second, the prior assumption that market- rather than state-dominated strategies are more likely to produce economic growth is not only unsubstantiated but has been largely discredited by recent examples.

Certainly, the Western liberal democracies which are being held up as models for the rest of the world have been fostered and/or sustained through potentially difficult periods by non-market interventions. The Marshall Plan in Europe in the late 1940s and 50s and the corporatist compromise of the Fordist period achieved political stability *and* economic growth through interventionist-state rather than free-market strategies (Bienefeld, 1995). Moreover, the phenomenal economic growth recently experienced by the newly industrialising countries (NICs) of East Asia was fostered by highly interventionist state management (Haggard, 1990).

In short, the claim that a simple, direct and/or instrumental association exists between economic and political liberalisation is insupportable. Furthermore, the procedural and/or institutional definition of democracy favoured by neoliberals is inadequate. Multi-partyism and free and fair electoral processes may be necessary attributes of democracy, but they are not sufficient to ensure conditions that encourage members of society to be involved in

making the decisions which affect their well-being (Beckman, 1989: 86). In short, formal *democratic institutions* are needed to protect human rights and to formulate efficient public policy, but they do not necessarily foster the establishment of *democratic political cultures* which are also important features of *democratic societies*.

In sum, the development of democratic civil societies involves much more than the adjustment of economic and governmental structures. Therefore, as Bienefeld (1995: 52) argues, “genuine, popular democracy” that depends upon “sustained and effective pressure from a politically engaged population, monitoring and influencing government through the institutions of a strong and diverse civil society” is unlikely to be achieved under neoliberal structural adjustment programmes - at least as a *direct*, as opposed to *dialectical*, consequence of policy.

An Alternative: ‘Participatory’ or ‘Developmentalist’ Democracy

If development policy is to be more directly influential in establishing democratisation momentum, clearly what is required is a shift in focus from institutions to people. Such a shift would involve defining democracy as a *developmentalist and participatory* process which is more closely associated with the Greek and Rousseauian traditions than the *protective* Lockean concept. A developmentalist/participatory democracy is not merely a set of detached institutions which protect private property and individual freedom. A developmentalist or participatory concept of democracy holds that the ultimate social objective is the ability to participate in society to one’s highest capacity.

That capacity is developed through participation in a supportive communal environment. In a developmentalist democracy, the individual is not so thinly conceived as in the protective version; that is, he or she is never entirely divorced from the community which helps determine and shape individualist objectives. Instead, participation in civil society has an educative value which may in fact moderate the choices that people make. And “the range of human possibilities and choices” of any individual is intricately related to the range of possibilities and choices that are open to the community of which he or she is a member.²⁸ According to Schmitz and Gillies (1992: 16):

The developmental potential of democracy lies in its capacity to expand the range of human possibilities and choices, to benefit people as persons and as members of communities - in general, to improve the human condition.

In short, a ‘developmental/participatory’ model of democracy is more supportive than a ‘protective’ version of sustainable development. As well, a concept of development which emphasises people instead of economies is more democratic. This reciprocal relationship between ‘human development’ and ‘participatory democracy’ is described in a recent UNDP *Human Development Report* (1995: 11-12):

The concept of human development is much broader than the conventional theories of economic development...It analyses all issues in society - whether

²⁸ This more communitarian conceptualisation has obvious connections with the classical Greek view of democracy as being embedded in the virtuous society. As well, it recalls the theories of Rousseau and J. S. Mill which not only define democracy as the active involvement of citizens, but also suppose that good governance is achieved and maintained partly because people become more responsive, knowledgeable and competent in civic matters through active participation (Pateman, 1991b: 106-113). More recently, scholars including G.D.S. Cole (1919), Carole Pateman (1970) and Robert Dahl (1985) have expanded on these ideas arguing that, in truly democratic societies, participation must extend beyond political institutions into civil associations and the workplace.

economic growth, trade, employment, political freedom or cultural values - from the perspective of people. It thus focuses on enlarging human choices...There are four major elements in the concept of human development...productivity, equity, sustainability and empowerment.

Participatory democracy and human development are necessarily associated with a system that Falk (1995a) terms 'humane governance'. According to him (p. 46), the latter:

emphasises the importance of governance for the entire planet and its peoples. As such, it relies on global constitutionalism both to overcome the negative features of geopolitics as currently operational and to construct a positive form of world order.

The concept of 'partnership' suggests possibilities for encouraging revisions in forms of association between Northern and Southern actors that may contribute to participatory democracy, human security, sustainable human development and humane governance. Hence, the analysis now turns to an investigation of the prospect that a new 'people-centred' paradigm for development might be built upon the idea and practices of 'partnership' .

Partnership: A Discourse for a More Democratic Development Agenda

Ideal(istical)ly, a development agenda based upon a commitment to developmental/participatory democracy would involve moving towards a system of cooperation and mutual support between and among participating actors - in short, it implies the establishment of 'partnerships'. The concept of North-South partnership appears by definition to reject the notion that Northern organizations, judgements or experiences are superior to Southern ones or that 'expert' knowledge has a claim to 'truth' which is

necessarily superior to indigenous, intuitive or innate knowledges. Instead, partnership implies greater equality, mutual respect and reciprocal exchanges of knowledges. Therefore, theoretically at least, (de/re)construction of the development apparatus on the basis of 'partnership' serves to discredit the end/non-fulfilment of history, development/underdevelopment dichotomies which traditionally have been used to describe North-South relations (Dubois, 1991). Also, meaningful 'partnerships' for development promote greater popular (including informal) participation and voice as well as an increased acceptance of diversity.

As noted already, the shift towards the new discourse of 'partnership' by the dominant development agencies is a result of pressures from agents in both the South and the North. Besides the increased self-awareness and confidence among the growing numbers of Southern NGOs and academics, etc., there is an emerging sense of mutual insecurity. Global problems of environment, debt, crime, refugee movements, arms trade, *et cetera* now, more than ever, unite various groups in the North and South as potential losers in intractable development dilemmas. As a consequence, the relationship between actors in the development process is increasingly understood to be less one of Northern benefactors and Southern beneficiaries but one in which the inhabitants of both the North and the South are mutually affected 'stakeholders'.

Revisionist attitudes about North-South relations derive also partly from a growing disillusionment within civil societies that is a result of the globalisation of capitalism. Much of the skepticism and disenchantment in the South focuses on SAPs which have become a symbol as well as a symptom of the near-hegemony of neoliberalism. And negative

sentiments are likely to increase if instead of generalised economic growth and improved governance, the results are more extreme variations in economic growth patterns and greater political instability, state authoritarianism and/or 'complex emergencies'.²⁹

In the North, many people are becoming concerned, even alarmed, by the prospect of impending environmental catastrophe and are heeding the warnings of those who see a direct relationship between ecologically-destructive over-consumption and what Brodhead (1993) has described as the Western equation of "development = modernization = growth = economic growth = GNP growth" (see also, Liepitz, 1993; Gayle, 1995). And, along with the threat of ecological degradation is a sense of a disintegration of modern Western society. Sociological critiques of modernism (Adorno, Foucault, Habermas) are supported by daily media reports of urban decay, family violence and breakdown, disaffection of youths, loss of community identity, a growth in crime, violence and drug use, and an increase in religious and ethnic intolerance. Relatedly, in the past few decades, several groups have emerged to protest the lack of democracy within supposedly democratic Western societies, citing disparities related to gender, race or ethnicity as evidence upon which their concerns are based.

Overall, the concept of North - South partnership has global as well as national and regional dimensions. These involve not only responses to the effects of the globalisation of neoliberalism, but aspects also of the postmodern critique of modernism, and of

²⁹ Indeed, Timothy Shaw (1996: 36) argues that the later "...may not be 'emergencies' at all, but rather the predictable, structural consequences of the profound economic contractions which have resulted from the reforms insisted upon by the international financial institutions (IFIs)."

universalising discourses, in particular. As such, 'partnership' formations are not singularly-motivated responses to economic, social, ethical and environmental insecurities of global proportions but may also be manifestations of particularistic interests, insights and values. Indeed, the notion of 'partnership' allows us to entertain the possibility of creating a stable, developmentalist global system based on pluralist values; it permits "...a world-view ...of cultural diversity, of one world comprised of many different villages (and ideologies) rather than a homogeneous global village modelled on the US" (Ekins, 1992, p. 69).

In general, then, revising the official development enterprise based on a paradigm of 'partnership' involves a radical dismantling of the 'we/other' dichotomy which was established during Truman's administration and later entrenched in the norms and values of the aid community. As well, it involves rejecting the idea that 'development' can be segregated as an isolated problem for analysis or for public or foreign policy. Instead, 'development' is a multifactorial process (as opposed to end-point) and a multidisciplinary field of enquiry. Moreover, it is a global and transnational (as well as national and regional) problematic, the dimensions of which are inextricably interrelated - certainly, in terms of the political and economic, but also across the boundaries of various levels of polity, and across the margins which have been drawn around such issues as security, state sovereignty, ecology, human rights and gender.

In short, democracy, development and security are not separate issues but an integrated complex which link ultimately on the ability of people from all levels of society to have control over and/or voice in the processes that affect their lives. Moreover, conceptualisations of each of the components of this democracy/security/development nexus

are more expansive than in their traditional versions. Hence, the idea of democracy is extended beyond legislative, legal and electoral institutions to encompass relationships within civil society as well. Security includes issues of human security - basic needs, environment, human rights and gender equality - as well as traditional geopolitical concerns. And development involves more than economic growth and national statistics, but the ability of people to actualise their human potential in conditions of peace and security (cf. UNDP, 1994; UNRISD, 1995).

One of the central arguments presented in this chapter is that the present neoliberal development model does not support an agenda of participatory democracy, human security and sustainable development. The question remains, then, (and will be discussed at greater length in subsequent chapters) whether the equitable, mutually supportive partnerships upon which such an agenda would depend are likely to develop or be sustained given existing, entrenched inequalities and hierarchies (Fowler, 1991). Especially if 'partnership' as a 'new' paradigm for development is incorporated into a discourse that includes an understanding of democracy in a 'protective' rather than 'participatory' form, the current climate for change is not likely to produce positive developmentalist results. As Schmitz (1993, p. 7) explains:

...the nature of globalizing phenomena (either welcomed or feared) increasingly forces interconnections. The question is whether these can be contained, and popular demands appeased, within an elite-managed 'governance' regime, or whether the current crisis will spark a more fundamental transformation of inequitable global structures 'through a global democratization from below'.

The apparent incongruity between the dominant ideology and practices on the one hand and the projected outcomes on the other is not the only obstacle to sustainable

development. Alternate proposals for a new world order based upon 'democratisation from below' or the resurrection of civil society are not yet clearly articulated. For instance, ideas about the political forms that would accommodate a new system of democracy on a global scale are still uncertain and controversial.³⁰ And, although many recent analyses envisage a greatly enlarged role for non-state actors, they differ on what their relationship with the state and/or multilateral organisations is or should be.

Moreover, there are also problems with viewing the organizations or movements of civil societies too optimistically, either in terms of what they can accomplish within national boundaries or in terms of their ability to promote fundamental change in international or global power structures. Besides efforts by representatives of both state and market forces to coopt or regulate the various associations of nascent civil societies, there is considerable evidence that there are inherent difficulties with the organizations of civil society themselves. The inability to articulate a definitive universal ethical standard, the lack of democracy which exists within many of these organizations, and the problem of establishing or measuring legitimacy and accountability for non-governmental organizations are serious problems that those who champion NGOs' and/or social movements' role in democratization and development have yet to adequately address.

³⁰ One scholar who has made a significant contribution to conceptualising new forms and institutions of democracy is David Held (see Held, 1987, 1991, 1993; see also contributions of Held and others in Held & Pollitt, 1986 and Archibugi & Held, 1995; Weiss & Gordenker, 1996 and editions of a new journal entitled *Global Governance*).

Conclusions

The recent articulation of a 'crisis' in development reflects the recognition of the inadequacy to date of theory and practice to find effective formulations not only for fostering economic progress in much of the Third World but for achieving equitable North-South social relations as well. In this chapter, I argue that 'partnership' is a useful, perhaps necessary, ideal and mode of operation for sustainable development. However, it will gain and maintain its relevance only if it reflects and/or contributes to true democratisation within the development structure. And, since there is not a single, neutral definition of 'democracy', it is necessary to specify that the more appropriate model would follow a participatory, developmentalist line rather than the instrumental, protective version favoured and currently promoted by influential bilateral donors and IFIs.

However, it is noted that a wide assortment of relationships within the development enterprise are now being described as 'partnerships'. Such indiscriminate use of the term may reduce its potency as a developmental innovation. Moreover, of the many development 'partners' which have been identified, few advocate or advance the necessary structural changes which would lead to sustainable democratic development.

Of the latter, some of the most obvious are NGOs. However, while it is frequently assumed that NGOs reflect and/or enhance the socially-transformative potential which exists in the voluntarist motives of ordinary people, especially in the South, many of these organisations reflect the interests of the dominant minority in the global political economy.

Moreover, there has been a tendency to exaggerate the developmentalist and democratising attributes of even those NGOs which support popular interests. Therefore, the following chapter examines and attempts to evaluate the various claims that have been made regarding NGOs' roles as agents for the promotion of sustainable democratic development.

Chapter 3: NGOs and Partnerships: contradictions and potentials

All development decades have their emphases. The 1980s were dominated by an economic ideology of adjustment, coupled to an institutional doctrine promoting private enterprise and encouraging non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The stress on privatising development has led to sharp increases in official aid to NGOs, giving rise to a rapid growth in their numbers world-wide, as well as provoking new debates about the desired relationship and division of labour between NGOs in the North and South. A common conclusion of these dialogues is that 'partnerships' have to be created between them.

- Fowler, 1991: 5

Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I argued that the neoliberal policy agenda that currently dominates the international aid regime is unlikely to promote sustainable, 'people-centred' development. Moreover, it also asserted that although most NGOs have been incorporated into or associated with that system, some may be part of a counter-hegemonic project which favours a development model based on participatory democracy and human security. This chapter focuses on the latter part of that proposition and attempts to provide criteria by which such NGOs can be identified. It evaluates claims which are made regarding NGOs' inherent and differentiating attributes, their potential for autonomous action and/or the opportunities and obstacles which the contemporary environment presents for agency by non-state actors.

Much of the recent analysis on democratisation and development - regardless of how these processes are defined - accepts uncritically that NGOs play a central role in the advancement

of these processes. Indeed, it has been suggested by at least one liberal scholar that this role is fulfilled merely by the existence of a plurality of voluntary associations which serve as a potential counterforce to state authoritarianism (Diamond, 1988). And, commonly, it is assumed that Northern NGOs may enhance the democratising potential of Southern organisations by helping to build their 'institutional capacity' (Postma, 1994).

Moreover, given the range of new transnational issues, actors and processes, it can no longer be taken for granted that the state is (or will/can continue to be) sovereign in all areas of world politics (Held, 1995: 102). And, as the nature of the state is transformed, the vitality of civil society at the global as well as at the national level has implications for the prospects both for the democratisation and the sustainability of 'people-oriented' development processes. (This will be developed in greater detail in chapter four.) Therefore, because partnerships and global networks of NGOs are widely assumed to be of central importance in the formation of a democratic global civil society, the attributes of NGOs generally and of North-South partnerships in particular have become increasingly salient development issues.

However, while it is frequently taken for granted, it has not yet been proven that the proliferation of NGOs, even as active agents of (and for) civil societies, will automatically promote *any* sustainable form of democracy and/or development. First, as was argued in the preceding chapter, the present climate of neoliberal hegemony, while 'creating space' for greater NGO activity and influence, is not likely to lead directly to democratic transitions or consolidations. Moreover, as James Mittelman (1994b: 434) points out, democracy depends upon a 'coalescence' of various interests within civil society. Without some level of consensus, argues Mittelman, there is an increasing possibility not of democratisation but of a

“Lebanonisation of political life”. Yet, given their diverse relations and objectives, *it is not clear that NGOs contribute to a sense of “fellow feeling”* (Mittelman, 1996: 80) *within civil society nor is it yet certain that NGOs can take advantage of the space that is now available to them to facilitate the development of sustainable democratic political cultures.*

In an attempt to evaluate their abilities and limitations, this chapter begins by distinguishing among three alternative positions regarding NGOs’ primary contribution to democratic development: (1) as a counterforce to the state; (2) as a facilitator of state or IFI policy; and (3) as a promoter of ‘people-centred development’. I argue that the role projected by the third position is most closely associated with the ideas explored in the preceding chapter relating to a new paradigm of ‘partnership’ and the latter’s association with ‘developmentalist’ democracy, human security and human development. Then, by comparing and contrasting aspects of NGOs’ attributes, practices and associations, the remainder of the chapter attempts to assess how (and which) NGOs contribute to the participatory democracy/ human security/ development nexus. First, I question the widely-held assumptions that NGOs possess a ‘comparative advantage’ in community development and that ‘scaling up’ by forming partnerships can enhance this comparative advantage. Second, I explore several issues - ‘political space’, funding, legitimacy, accountability - which may affect NGOs’ ability to realise their partnership objectives and developmentalist potential.

Perspectives on the Role of NGOs in the Development of Civil Society

Because of their direct social involvement, often at the most basic of grass-roots levels, NGOs as a group are logically and legitimately situated to be major actors in any paradigm which would place civil society at the centre of the development process. However, opinions vary on what roles NGOs do or can play in the construction of strong and vital civil societies. More traditional perspectives tend to divide on the basis of whether NGOs are identified as being effective countervailing forces to the state or as facilitators of states' or IFIs' policies (see discussion below). Recently, more nuanced analyses have argued that NGOs act in oppositional or facilitative ways with regard to other relevant actors, not necessarily or only because of any inherent predilection but often also because of the changing exigencies of their external environments. In short, *all NGOs do not interact with state and/or global power structures the same way at all times, but rather some(times) as collaborators and some(times) as adversaries depending on their ideological assumptions, strategic considerations and the political space available for their actions* (Riker, 1995a,b,c).

NGOs as Countervailing Forces to the State

Within the liberal pluralist tradition, it is assumed that competition underlies successful democracies and that a heterogenous, even conflictual, mix of associations prevents overly strong interests from forming within civil society either to capture state power or to influence policy unduly. Therefore, it is argued, the establishment of a pluralist array of local associations

of self-help and community-action groups will present “a countervailing power to incumbent (authoritarian) regimes” in the South, especially when supported by NGOs from outside serving as agents of empowerment, “strengthening and linking grass-roots groups into mass solidarity networks” (Fowler, 1991:61)¹.

For liberal pluralists, it appears that the very presence of NGOs in large numbers has sometimes been taken as proof of the existence of a ‘strong’ civil society. For example, in referring to the recent proliferation of NGOs in Africa, Larry Diamond (1988:26) makes the claim that:

As they proliferate and mature, such groups spin a web of social pluralism that makes the consolidation of authoritarian domination increasingly difficult. Although they are not explicitly political, they constitute a significant and often potent constituency for responsive and accountable government.

Few scholars would disagree that accountability of the governors to the governed is a criterion of democracy, however the latter is defined. As well, most would concede that a strong (and potentially vociferously oppositional) civil society does help to ensure accountability. However, strength is not conferred simply by numbers and/or a plurality of interests. Clearly, democracy also requires respect by citizens and the various organisations of civil society for the rule of law as well as *some* measure of consensus on what constitutes the general good of society.

While most scholars within the liberal tradition would accept such premises as necessary criteria of democracy, they lack a convincing theory for explaining how such an accord might form or be fostered in the peripheral areas of the global economy, especially during the present

¹ This position is described, not necessarily advocated, by Fowler in this article.

period which combines not only a growing postmodern scepticism concerning the validity of universalising doctrines but widely divergent economic growth experiences as well. As was argued in the preceding chapter, neoliberal claims in the early 1980s that an established link existed between economic and political liberalisation proved to be overly optimistic. And evidence continues to mount that the economic changes enforced by structural adjustment, even (or perhaps especially) when supplemented by imposed conditionalities for improved 'governance', are not likely to lead directly in most countries of the South to either economic growth or meaningful and sustainable democratic reform.

NGOs as Policy Facilitators

Not only is there a lack of empirical support for the neoliberal assumptions which inform the dominant development agenda, but there is an apparent inconsistency between ideology and practice, especially as the latter relates to the role which is envisaged for NGOs. Although the liberal tradition upholds the view that the strengthening of civil society from *within* is a necessary requirement for democratization and sustainable development, the actual policies which are implemented under the current development agenda are decidedly top-down. In short, while the liberal pluralist ideal situates NGOs as *voluntary units of competition*, in the more technical (and technocratic) version of liberalism which is associated with the IMF/Bank-dominated structures of development, they are considered to be agents or contractors; ie. *facilitators of IFI policy* (Edwards & Hulme, 1994: 4). To be sure, the Bank does promote 'political liberalisation' - a relaxation of control by the state to enable the proliferation of a variety of organizations - but its current policies ignore a basic requirement of liberal pluralist

democracy - an uncoerced competition of views.² Instead, the Bank tends to use NGOs to promote its own ideological agenda - by providing funding support to those NGOs which are sympathetic towards its policy, while at the same time, ignoring or, in some instances, taking measures to change the views of NGOs which have been critical (Nelson, 1995: 2; World Bank, 1990: 19). In short, there is an important distinction between the Bank's efforts to persuade, coopt or coerce NGOs to follow the Bank's directives and the liberal pluralist ideal which takes freely-formed and freely-operating voluntary associations as basic units of an autonomous civil society.

A Statist Version

One alternative to the view that NGOs should serve as agents for IFIs/liberal capitalism is evident in the 1990 Report of the South Commission. This report places heavy emphasis on the role that the state can and should play in the development process. While its commitment is to 'people-centred development'³, clearly it envisages that such a programme will be led by states - albeit states with improved planning mechanisms and reformed public-sectors (South Commission, 1990: 115). NGOs are seen as playing a 'complementary' role in this framework (*ibid.*, p.35).

² Qadir *et al* (1993: 416) succinctly describe the distinction between 'political liberalisation' and 'democratisation' as follows: "Political liberalisation implies a process of political change controlled from the top down, as a means of preserving most of the *status quo*. It is a game elites play to manage the granting of very carefully selected concessions. It is a cosmetic exercise and does not install the fundamentals of democratisation."

³ In the following section, see the definition of 'people-centred development' as it was conceived by Korten and others. In the latter, unlike the South Commission's conceptualisation, development is activated and actualised by the initiatives of people rather than by the state.

However, as James Riker (1995b: 101) observes, although NGOs' advantages and abilities in local development are acknowledged in the Commission's report, "the emphasis is more on re-orienting state managers and administrators (within a macro-oriented NIC strategy) than on mobilizing people and working jointly with them to define their development priorities." In essence, the South Commission's development strategy is no less top-down than the Bank's more technocratic one. They differ in that the former sees NGOs as performing ideally as *facilitators of policy* determined by independent national governments while the latter enlists the services of NGOs to help mold national policies and civil societies to comply with the tenets of Western neoliberalism.

NGOs as Promoters of 'People-Centred' Development

An alternative to both the South Commission's statism and the Bank's top-down neoliberalism is based on the Gramscian view of the state-civil society relationship. Within this perspective, the organizations of civil society serve either as reinforcing agents of elites' hegemonic control over the rest of society or as potential sources of counter-hegemonic force which might emerge in response to either structural or super-structural events or contradictions (Gill & Law, 1988: 63-68; 76). Thus, *NGOs are roughly equivalent to Gramsci's "organic intellectuals", meaning those individuals who help to establish and maintain community consensus - which may be either supportive of or oppositional to the dominant ideology of society depending upon the extent and effectiveness of hegemonic control and/or state-societal congruence* (Bobbio, 1979; Cox, 1997: 246). In short, Gramscian analysis accommodates the view that relationships among states, economies and civil societies are interactive and

changeable and, therefore, the role which NGOs can play in democratisation and development will depend upon the historically specific conditions of any particular space and time.⁴

Yet, while the specifics of the situation vary from region to region and from country to country, the proliferation in NGOs throughout the South has followed a fairly consistent pattern.⁵ Stages of diversification from welfarism to the promotion of self-reliance, then advocacy and finally to partnership are evident in all regions of the South, although the process of diversification does not follow a set or unilinear pattern and the proportions of each type may vary considerably within different geographic areas. In short, despite obvious variations, the relative, over-all constancy in the pattern of evolution in NGO behaviour suggests a causal force which is of global dimension. And at an operational level, the fairly uniform evolutionary pattern reflects functional and ideological shifts throughout the entirety of the NGO community. In short, recent changes involving NGOs as a group are somewhat paradoxical - on the one

⁴ And, empirical evidence from the work on NGOs of various scholars suggest that such national variations do exist (cf. Bratton, 1989 a & b, 1990; Riker, 1990, 1991; Clark, 1991; Soedjatmoko, 1986).

⁵ Riker (1995a: 18-19) describes differences in degree among NGOs' activities in different regions. According to Riker, Sub-Saharan African NGOs have played "a critical role" in alleviating the rural and agricultural 'crisis' in that sub-continent. Likewise, Latin American NGOs have promoted development at the micro-level but have been involved as well in protesting for democracy. South Asian NGOs have played roles in micro-development, policy advocacy and humanitarian assistance. And Southeast Asian NGOs "are becoming increasingly important development actors at all levels within the institutional landscape." According to Fowler & James (1994:2) these regional variations may be explained in part by their cultural or political cultural origins. Hence, many Asian NGOs arise from the "spiritually informed inspiration" of Islam and Hinduism, Latin American NGOs arose as part of the "liberation theology movement" in opposition to military autocracies while African NGOs are largely "a product of Northern intervention rather than an expression of indigenous obligation".

hand, being suggestive/promotive of homogenising trends, yet, on the other hand, pointing towards greater specificities and particularities within the community.⁶

Both the seeming universality of heightened civil society activism and the localised actions and interests of specific groups are concerns of those who emphasise NGOs' importance in promoting 'people-centred development'. In contrast to the South Commission's statist interpretation of this concept, NGOs' ability to promote 'people-centred development' (or even to be effective facilitators of other agents' policies) is contingent upon a variety of factors (from functional and organisational to political and financial) and issues (ranging from largely unsubstantiated claims proclaiming NGO's comparative advantages to concerns about NGOs' lack of accountability). The following sections advance analysis and discussion on several of these factors and issues and on various debates which surround them.

NGOs and the Issue of Comparative Advantage

Although religious and welfare organisations had been involved in 'development' issues for decades, it was not until the 1970s, with the shift in the policy agenda towards greater community involvement, that scholars began to take significant notice of NGOs as important members of the 'development' community. At that time, especially in the area of rural

⁶ As many analysts have noted, this paradox is a feature of globalisation, generally. A particularly eloquent description of this phenomenon by Featherstone (1993: 169) provides a set of images and ideas associated with a more unified and interdependent world. Yet, he argues, "the awareness of the finitude and boundedness of the planet and humanity (paradoxically) is not to produce homogeneity but to familiarize us with greater diversity, the extensive range of local cultures".

development, an assumption grew that voluntary organisations possess a comparative advantage over governments in meeting the needs of local communities and of the poor. First, since it is widely accepted that voluntarism is based largely on altruism, it was generally assumed that NGO workers would demonstrate a greater sense of commitment to development projects and the people they served than would more technocratic government officials. Second, it was assumed that NGOs possessed an advantage because of their close proximity to the community they serve; that is, their grassroots connections placed them in a better position to identify and understand the needs of the communities concerned and to build upon local resources in carrying out projects. Finally, because of their small size and their largely volunteer composition, NGOs were believed to possess a greater measure of cost effectiveness and of flexibility, especially in transferring a variety of innovative and appropriate methods and/or technologies (Cernea, 1988: 17-18; Hyden, 1983: 120-21).

It was observed at the same time, however, that some of the same attributes which contributed to NGOs' strengths also diminished their developmental potential. Cernea (1988), for instance, noted that while small size and voluntarism did confer some comparative advantages, these properties also contributed to problems which plagued many, even most, NGOs projects. The disadvantages were "limited replicability", "limited self-sustainability" and "limited technical capacity" as well as the "lack of broad programming context". In sum, while NGOs' smallness, flexibility, *et cetera* might produce positive results in isolated communities on particular projects, it was unlikely that the results could be reproduced over an extended period of time, throughout a large area, or on a variety of issues.

Enhancing Comparative Advantage through 'Scaling Up'

Such disclosures concerning the contradictory nature of the effects of NGOs' attributes were not necessarily viewed, as might be expected, as serious problems in treating issues of community-development and self-reliance. Instead, 'scaling-up' - ie. by establishing cooperative ventures between and among NGOs - soon came to be seen as a way both to mitigate the problems associated with smallness and to enhance the benefits (Clark, 1991: 86).

The term 'scaling-up' is applied to at least three different processes involving NGOs (*ibid.*, 84). Two are related to the issues of political reform, where 'scaling up' refers to the formation of grassroots networks and/or alliances for the more ambiguously defined purpose of "*articulating popular concerns*" as well as for the more direct purpose of "*influencing policy reform*" (*ibid.*). With regard to the functional aspect of comparative advantage in local development, however, 'scaling up' refers to *establishing linkages and networks among NGOs for the purpose of disseminating information and technical knowledge.*⁷ It is assumed that exchanging experiences regarding particular project successes and failures will alleviate the problem of 'limited replicability' of projects and establish the process of creating and extending institutional memory for the NGO community. In this way, appropriate policy based on diverse experiences and knowledges in specific or related sectors of activity can be devised for a broad scale, while still retaining the ability to address local and particular circumstances.

⁷ Obviously, these three different concepts of 'scaling-up' are not totally separable. According to most analyses, increased popular participation depends upon local 'development' - improved material conditions, 'empowerment' of communities *et cetera* as well as the establishment of processes and institutions by which the interests which are articulated at this level of society can influence official decision-making.

Contradictions of Comparative Advantage and 'Scaling-up'

Yet, despite the apparent logic and understandable appeal of 'scaling up' as a policy innovation to improve NGOs' effectiveness, recent analysis suggests that the process is not without drawbacks (Korten, 1990; Hellinger *et al* 1988; Friedmann, 1992). In general, the problems associated with the process are produced either by complications arising from adding an additional level of bureaucratisation to the NGO policy structure (Edwards & Hulme, 1995: 12) or by difficulties arising from attempts to form equitable and cooperative arrangements among very different and unequally endowed organisations (Malena, 1995).

At a more basic level, some analysts have begun to question whether NGOs really do possess a significant comparative advantage in local development either over-all or at least in certain areas of operation (Brett, 1993; Edwards & Hulme, 1994; Bebbington & Farrington, 1993). For instance, while there are documented examples showing that NGOs have provided certain services more cost effectively than governments could have done, in some cases the reverse has been true. Moreover, it has been argued that if governments were endowed with resources for providing particular services which were similar to those that accrue to NGOs through uncalculated subsidies from external donors, any measurable gap in relative cost efficiencies would decrease. Finally, as NGOs are increasingly scaling up, specialising and hiring or contracting themselves out to provide expert advice and/or service, the apparent 'on-average' edge they now enjoy in relative cost advantage will doubtlessly decline (Edwards & Hulme, 1994: 10).

A second set of concerns about NGOs' purported comparative advantage centres on the question of whether it is their inherent attributes or the nature of the current environment which has expanded their activities and exposure. Certainly, the increased importance of NGOs as service-deliverers to local communities and to the poor in those communities is, to a considerable degree, a result of the current downsizing of governments and the concurrent decentralisation of power. While the latter process may afford some opportunity for greater input by NGOs and local constituencies in the development processes which affect them directly, it also signals that centrally-controlled resources are being reduced. Hence, the long-term sustainability of social goods such as national health and education programs, which are crucial to sustainable development, becomes uncertain, not only because diminishing quantities of funds are being injected into the systems but also because responsibility for providing these services is being assumed increasingly by a volunteer sector which is not universally or electorally accountable.⁸

This relates to a third source of skepticism regarding NGOs' so-called 'comparative advantage'. While empirical evidence now exists to support the widely held assumption that NGOs have a greater capacity than governments to target support to poor people, some authors have noted that "claims of reaching the 'poorest of the poor' are ... often inaccurate" (Edwards & Hulme, 1994: 10). Furthermore, it has been suggested that NGOs' relations with their intended beneficiaries are not necessarily based on participatory principles or democratically arranged administrative structures. In short, as Bebbington and Farrington (1993: 205) argue:

⁸ As well, in both the North and the South, many services traditionally provided by governments have been assumed by the private sector (Meyer, 1992).

NGO rhetoric on participation exceeds reality... NGOs are self-appointed rather than elected bodies, and control institutional resources from within. All too rarely do they apply to themselves the principles they apply to the state; that the rural poor should have a voting say in the use of public resources.

Such reservations emerge from a more discriminating, 'second wave' of scholarship and improve upon earlier analyses which accepted uncritically that NGOs, as a group, possess inherent developmentalist advantages. Nevertheless, despite the elements of caution and nuance which have recently been introduced by some analysts, most continue to conclude that, at the very least, "... NGOs may well *contribute* (my emphasis) to increased democratisation" in the South (Bebbington & Farrington, 1993: 205 citing Lehman, 1990; Fox, 1992). As Fowler and James (1994: 16) observe, NGOs may not "systematically realise" any *potential comparative advantage* they might possess in micro development, but that does not mean that the potential is non-existent or that it may not be realised in some instances by some NGOs.

Some Success Stories

Indeed, there are several NGOs throughout the South which are frequently credited with maximising their comparative advantage in terms of development results. Many observers, for example, refer to the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India, the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) in Pakistan, the Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP) in Zimbabwe, and the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka

as NGO 'success stories' (Clark, 1991; Perera, 1997; Sandbrook & Halfani, 1993; Theunis, 1992; Wignaraja, 1993). Certainly, widespread popular enthusiasm for these organisations is evident in their impressive growth records: since its inception in 1976, the Grameen Bank's membership has grown from a few small five-person village credit units to 230,000 people (Clark, 1991: 98 & 84); the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, which originated in the 1950s as an externally-initiated, single-village project now operates in 2000 villages and has been involved in some way with 8000 altogether (Perera, 1997); and ORAP, which began working with eight family units in 1981 to help alleviate rural poverty, is now involved with 500,000 people (ORAP Policy Paper, 1993).

If the 'success' of these organisations may be measured (to some extent) by their growth, it is usually explained by a concerted effort to retain their closeness to the communities they serve. In particular, in several of these cases, there has been an attempt to maintain the attribute of *smallness* and to support the principle of *grassroots participation* despite the huge 'scaling up' processes involved. Hence, in the Grameen Bank the unit size of each cell is retained at five members and the decision-making process at the village level remains unchanged, notwithstanding the increased number of linkages with district and regional structures (Clark, 1991: 60). Similarly, in ORAP, there has been a concerted effort to maintain decision-making authority at the field level of the organisation. Also, there has been a deliberate resistance to the imposition of any accounting procedures or schedules by external donors which might threaten to undermine the indigenous organisation's autonomy and faithfulness to its rural constituency (ORAP Policy Paper, 1993).

The attribute of *innovativeness* which has been associated with NGOs' presumed

comparative advantage has also been ascribed to several of the 'successful' NGOs - BRAC for its skillful and creative management training methods; the Grameen Bank and SEWA for their willingness to provide credit to the poorest members of society and the latter also for its advocacy of legal changes which awarded new (and profitable) marketing space for its women members; the Aga Khan Foundation for its "careful applications of management techniques" to create an "enabling environment" of complimentary relations between "public policy, entrepreneurship and social innovation" (Clark, 1991: 95-6, 59, 109-10 & 98).

NGOs and Linking Micro and Macro Levels of Development

Those NGOs which have been 'successful' in micro-development have made determined efforts to retain the attributes which have been associated with NGOs' apparent comparative advantages. Still, many studies are, at best, sceptical about the impact that even successful NGOs have actually made on community development, alleviation of poverty and 'empowering' the weakest and/or poorest members of societies - usually women. It might be argued that such organisations are at least helping to lay the groundwork for democratisation processes by improving material advantages and by providing opportunities for greater popular participation. However, *the advances achieved at the community level will only promote sustainable development and democratisation if they translate into the ability to influence government decision-making and simultaneously to promote change in international and global power relations* (Fowler & James, 1994: 19).

'Third' and 'fourth generation' NGOs promise to play meaningful catalytic roles in such a translation process but, in the view of several scholars, they will be successful in the long term only if they become more strategic in their actions. Specifically, this involves 'scaling-up' by devising systems and lines of communication and action which will link the micro, grass-roots levels of society with the macro, official policy levels. For influencing decisions at the national level, one important system of linkages consists of networks and partnerships among various types of NGOs. These associational links occur along horizontal lines among NGOs working at the same level of society (ie, community level or national level) as well as along vertical lines which connect NGOs working at local, national, regional, international and/or transnational levels.

Horizontal networks of NGOs at the community level might include organisations with such diverse objectives as improving welfare (in health, sanitation, environmental, educational or employment standards, etc.), increasing knowledge (eg. by providing technical assistance or education or advice on legal and human rights), or promoting 'empowerment' through self-awareness (through the restoration of indigenous histories, appraisals of gender relations, etc.) (Fowler & James, 1994: 3). Such networks may be quite *ad hoc* and/or informal but frequently they are held together by a formal 'bridging organisation'; that is, an NGO set up for the express purpose of facilitating exchanges of information and/or coordinating the interests and various forms of expertise of NGOs working directly at the grassroots.

Often such organisations form part of the vertical links which exist among NGOs. As part of the vertical linkage structure, 'bridging organisations' may serve as advocates for the (more or less) consolidated views of the NGO network, as support organisations - providing

'institution-building' information or assistance to members, and/or as conduits between the grass-roots organisations and NGOs whose functions and objectives are nationally, internationally or transnationally oriented (Brown, 1991).

The ability of 'bridging organisations' to establish effective linkages among a variety of NGOs has been greatly enhanced in recent years by the advances in communications technology (Edwards, 1994). And, partly as a consequence of these technological improvements, NGOs which focus on gathering information, doing research and disseminating their findings have become increasingly prevalent in the South as well as the North. Such organisations may be issue- or country-specific⁹ while others may provide information on a wide variety of development issues and/or at the regional rather than national level.¹⁰ Many of these organisations also provide training and/or consultation services to other NGOs and to government departments or employees.

⁹ An example is the Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN). According to an informational brochure from this organisation, "(t)he ZWRCN collects documents, data, reports and information on women in development issues from various (non)-governmental organisations on a regular basis, and makes this available to users in the Centre. It produces fact sheets with interesting data for NGOs, women's organisations, ministries, donors and other groups to use."

¹⁰ "The Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) is (such) a nongovernmental organization committed to supporting people's organizations and nongovernmental development organizations (NGOs) in India and Asia through participatory research, evaluation, consultation, and training services. It publishes educational materials and serves as a research and information agency for grassroots activists on issues of land alienation, women and work, and occupational safety and health. Its capacity-building program serves people's organizations and nongovernmental development agencies" (Brown, 1991: 815). The Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) provides similar services in Southern Africa, focusing on issues of environment, women and development, peace and security and disaster management (SARDC information pamphlet).

Increasingly, NGOs which fulfill these linkage functions in the South are either indigenous, are in partnership with indigenous organisations or are staffed by local people (at least for carrying out the local part of their operations). While some external organisations are still actively involved in local 'development' in the South, the growing emphasis on the necessity for community 'ownership' of projects has tended to relegate them to largely advisory, 'capacity-building', bridging and funding roles.¹¹ Moreover, as 'capacity' is developed in Southern organisations, Northern NGOs are being increasingly encouraged by their Southern counterparts to focus on their funding roles, international advocacy and development education in their home countries.

North-South NGO relationships are often envisaged and described as 'true' partnerships with local and external organisations each contributing and benefitting according to their respective needs and abilities. However, as will be argued more fully in chapters six and seven, in reality the ideal is seldom achieved and considerable friction often exists between Southern and Northern 'partners', especially with regard to the issue of accountability of the former to the latter for funds received (Fowler and James, 1994: 10; Malena, 1995; Unger, 1994).

Some difficulties may be inevitable in any attempt to forge positive and equitable relationships with diverse and unequally endowed actors. Nevertheless, many development scholars and practitioners believe that working toward partnership, defined primarily as an

¹¹ This applies to so-called 'developmentalist' more so than to welfare and disaster-relief organisations from the North. The latter continue often to work directly with people affected by wars or natural disasters; however, even among such organisations there is an acknowledgement of the need to support the development of indigenous civil societies so that in the long term, the need for emergency services will be diminished.

equal interchange of ideas and knowledges, is a worthwhile objective. The creation of such partnerships is important not only for helping to promote development in areas of the South but also for specifying and encouraging the transnational linkages which are necessary for the globalisation of democracy (see following chapter). In short, 'partnership', so defined, is related to the notion that development and democracy in countries of the South depends upon their positions in the global political economy and the nature of their political cultures as well as upon the nature of their respective state -society relations. Nevertheless, although processes of participatory democracy and human development/security are influenced critically by sub-, inter- and transnational forces and events, at present the state continues to be a major focal point and determinant of NGOs' activities (Macdonald, 1995a). Therefore, I will examine state-NGO relations in further detail below.

The Issue of Political Space

The degree to which NGO partnerships can claim any developmental successes at the national level - either by increasing the material advantages for the poor or by promoting popular participation - depends to a large extent upon the amount of 'political space' available for NGO operations. To some extent, at least, NGOs may be able to influence the amount of space that is available. As James Riker (1995a: 27) explains:

An NGO's relations with the government and its capacity for strategic management will...influence the degree of political space within which it operates...

According to Riker and others, and in particular many who focus their research on South and Southeast Asia, strategic action involves a “search for a common ground” in defining the respective responsibilities of NGOs and the state (Riker, 1995a: 15). In other words, this viewpoint assumes that developmentalist trajectories involve finding ways in which NGOs can work cooperatively rather than in confrontation with governments (Heyzer *et al*, 1995; Bebbington & Farrington, 1993). Nevertheless, as proponents of this position are careful to note, cooperation with governments does not mean cooptation by them, but rather that NGOs will interact with them from positions of relative strength and autonomy.

Contradictions of Political Space and Structural Adjustment

In many countries of the South, a strategy for cooperation is tempered by the realisation that NGOs do not necessarily move easily or uncontested into the increased ‘political space’ which has been made available by the ‘withdrawal’ of the state - the latter often being involuntarily induced through structural adjustment policies. States, especially under conditions of constriction and constraint, tend to respond cautiously at best, and with antagonism frequently, toward groups in civil society which encroach upon their traditional areas of jurisdiction and/or influence. Commonly, even when governments delegate responsibilities to NGOs to help mediate post-structural demands, they are reluctant to relinquish final control of any development project or to concede credit for any operational successes.

Consequently, in most countries, at least on certain issues, states appear to react with considerable circumspection toward NGOs. For example, often suspicion and a desire to dominate has motivated several governments in the South to set up registries for NGOs in the past decade.

Ostensibly, such registries are established to coordinate and/or prevent duplication of services, but more plausibly, in the view of many observers, they are put in place to maintain surveillance and control over all the NGOs which operate within the country (Bebbington, *et al*, 1993: 50).

Even where direct control by government over NGOs is not so overt, there are often attempts by the former to derive some benefits from the latter's current popularity. In particular, as NGOs gain greater prominence and more direct access to ODA, the number of GONGOs has also grown. Evidently, the latter have come into existence largely to compete for the development resources which are being diverted to NGOs (*ibid*).

These observations suggest that there may be an inherent tendency for mutual mistrust and competition between states and NGOs. Nevertheless, despite obvious and perhaps inevitable divisions, in some instances a more cooperative relationship between governments and NGOs has positive sum potential. Clearly, on the part of NGOs, their very ability to operate or even exist usually depends upon the government's consent. Therefore, because even weak states have a large degree of control over the amount of political space available for voluntary action, it would seem that the onus is on NGOs to find methods to expand that space. The power balance is not totally weighted in favour of the state, however. Increasingly, it is also in the interest of many, perhaps most, governments to foster positive relations with NGOs. The latter's activities in local development are often useful alternatives or adjuncts to government services in times of fiscal constraint. Secondly, because NGOs have an alleged greater competence than governments in certain areas, partnership arrangements may be able to utilise the strengths of both. Finally, to mitigate embarrassment, governments are often interested in appeasing

NGOs; since as self-declared advocates for the poor, the latter are frequently very vocal critics of state-sponsored or-supported neoliberal policies which have widened economic gaps in societies (Riker, 1995b: 102).

Indeed, in many countries, states have been making at least some attempt to foster more accommodative relations with NGOs - even if it is often through *cooptation* rather than *cooperation* or *collaboration* (*ibid.*, 119). In short, regardless of the form they take, strategies for greater coordination between states and NGOs may be initiated or supported by the former as well as by the latter. Often in these instances, however, the state tends to be attracted to NGOs because they have the potential to fill a service gap which has opened up during the contemporary period when sustained structural adjustment policies and public sector contraction have increased human need and intensified popular demands (Bebbington & Farrington, 1993: 203).

NGO Strategies for Expanding/Claiming 'Space'

In order to be more than mere 'service-providers', NGOs must necessarily be strategic. In very general terms, some appropriate strategies include becoming informed on current issues of political economy so as to understand what motivates the government's actions and devising plans to appropriate the space and opportunities made available to them without relinquishing autonomy.

In some instances, even careful strategising may appear to be largely irrelevant. Despite an apparent trend toward improved state-NGO cooperation, there are some Southern governments which have not made even a pretense toward accommodation and which react with outright

hostility toward any NGOs which they do not control directly. On occasion, the responses of such regimes to criticism or pressure from societal groups have been swift and brutal.

Although several governments around the world might fit this description (particularly at certain times and/or on certain issues), much recent attention has focused on the authoritarian tactics in several African countries. The Kenyan government headed by Daniel arap Moi is one such case: pressures especially from women's and environmental groups for greater democratic freedom and sustainable developmental policies have been met with "continued harassment and intimidation" (Nzomo, 1993). Likewise, in spite of the democratic facade which was constructed by last year's multi-party elections, the Rawlings regime of Ghana has retained a strategy of repression to silence critics or quell opposition in civil society (Akopari, 1996). And, very recently, the execution of the leader of the Ogoni environmental group by the Nigerian government suggests an intensification of state intolerance to pressure from indigenous NGOs in that country.

In countries where the state resorts to such tactics, it would appear that there is little 'political space' in which NGOs can manoeuvre. Furthermore, if, as Bratton (1989b: 577) argues, the less legitimacy which a government enjoys, the less likely it is to concede space to voluntary associations in society, it would seem that NGOs' potential comparative advantages are not as realisable where democratisation and development are least advanced. Yet, as James Riker (1995b: 101) points out, while oppression and repression may indeed thwart NGOs' activities, adversity may also have the opposite effect. He claims convincingly that:

Adversity and government-dominated development have in effect spawned counter-vailing non-state actors who seek to strengthen elements within civil society in the development process. Indeed, the mere fact of operating under

adversity has in some instances pushed NGOs and their leaders to think strategically about their actions as well as to explore new avenues for organizational survival and efficiency.

It has been widely accepted that economic recession and governmental withdrawal from service provision has contributed significantly to the proliferation of voluntary associations in many parts of the world. As noted previously, it is frequently argued that the emergence of these organisations has become possible only because of the withdrawal of the state and, indeed, that civil society only exists where voluntary associations are visible. However, even where the oppressive measures of government against the democratising forces of civil society are most severe, it appears that civil society is not necessarily completely destroyed or non-existent as some analysts have assumed. Instead, the types of organisation and the tactics of resistance may become increasingly covert, informal and/or take on unique and culturally-specific forms. Illustrative of the latter is Maria Nzomo's (1993) account of women's protests for human rights under conditions of increasing authoritarianism in Kenya:

Their courage and persistence was demonstrated even in the face of police brutality. As the police forcibly and violently evicted them from their hunger striking venue - Freedom Corner - the women demonstrated their defiance by stripping naked in front of the law enforcement agents - a most effective traditional method of cursing.

While it lacks the symbolic expressiveness of the latter, another potentially potent form of resistance against repressive regimes emerges from diasporas. Following the recent executions in Nigeria, for instance, members of the large and widespread expatriate Nigerian community made considerable effort to unite in voicing a forceful condemnation of the government's action. Clearly, the rapid transit of information and ideas, especially with electronic-mail, prevents governments from suppressing accounts of events and assists in the rapid aggregation and

consolidation of opposition. Communications links between members of the external and home communities are only part of the resistance equation associated with diasporas; the latter also provide potentially supportive connections with the international community.

External Support in Claiming Political Space

Both covert and external forces of resistance and democratisation which emerge in situations where indigenous organisations are suppressed or harassed by repressive regimes may be supported and assisted by inter- and transnational NGOs and networks. Often the assistance takes the forms of education and advocacy. In the recent Nigerian events, for instance, several international NGOs brought the situation to the attention of media sources and circulated information through various electronic-media networks. Initially, they called for the support of academics, students, and interested citizens in countries around the world to appeal directly and/or to call upon their own governments to pressure the Nigerian government to spare the lives of the nine convicted activists. When the entreaties failed to prevent the executions, NGOs then encouraged proclamations of condemnation from individuals, groups in civil society, governments and international institutions such as the Commonwealth. And at least one Canadian GONGO argued that Royal Dutch Shell could and should have used its considerable influence as a multinational corporation investing in Nigeria to lean on the government to prevent the executions.¹²

¹² This criticism of Royal Dutch/Shell was issued by Edward Broadbent, director of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development at a Conference on human rights and global trade held in Toronto in February, 1996. Following the conference, the vice-president of Shell Canada disclosed that "Shell's Nigeria managers had engaged in

The rapidity and national-transnational interconnectedness with which such forces of resistance are currently mounted is unprecedented in the history of civil society reaction to abuses of state power. Moreover, with growing access to rapid and convenient communications technology, NGOs are better positioned for 'scaling-up' - through careful replication of successful operations at the grass-roots, by establishing facilitative and capacity-building networks for micro-macro coordination and by creating North-South partnerships which divide their labours according to perceived strategic advantage or aptitude (Heyzer, 1995: 11). In short, NGOs, especially in alliance, can help to fulfill the prevalent view that "civil society represents a counterweight to state power and can thus serve as a critical agent of democratization" (Fatton, 1995: 67).

However, despite NGOs' capacity as democratising agents and despite their high profile in current processes of development, there are several impediments to realising the potential they possess. First, NGOs have become increasingly dependent upon external donors for their operating capital, thereby calling into question NGOs' integrity in devising independent strategies of action (ODI, 1995; Fowler, 1992). Second, as NGOs claim a central role in democratisation processes, they are confronted by questions about their accountability. Partly because most NGOs are answerable ultimately to their funders, but also because of the transnational and political nature of their connections, the issue of constituency is relevant. In other words, who do NGOs represent? And to whom are they accountable? A related issue involves NGOs' legitimacy. Just as Fatton (1995: 71) claims that "(although) civil society is a potentially liberating

'quiet diplomacy' with the regime of General Sani Abacha, (but conceded that) perhaps they could have done more" (*Globe and Mail*, 23 February, 1996, p.A10).

factor in any political calculus...it is not always civil”, neither are NGOs always supportive of democratisation or development. These issues of autonomy, accountability and legitimacy will be discussed in more detail in the following three sections.

NGOs and Official Donors

A Changing Donor Funding Ratio

Statistics indicate that there has been a considerable increase in the amount of direct funding to NGOs from official donors over the past ten years (ODI, 1995). For instance, in just two years between 1992 and 1994, the percentage of all official aid funds being channelled to or through NGOs jumped from 5% to 10% (*ibid.* ; Gordenker & Weiss, 1995: 365)¹³. In real dollar terms, these percentages amount to approximately US\$2.2billion¹⁴ and US\$8billion respectively. The percentage change in the amount of NGOs’ operating funds received from official donors is even more remarkable: “the World Bank judges that whereas in the early

¹³ These figures do not reveal the wide variations in amounts being directed to NGOs from individual bilateral donors. According to the ODI (1995), percentages vary from 1% to 30%, with the Japanese at the lower end of the scale and Sweden at the top.

¹⁴ OECD statistics cite that amount, while the World Bank places the figure at US\$2.5bn. In either case, argues the Overseas Development Institute (ODI, 1995), these figures are gross underestimations of the actual amount of official development funds to which NGOs now have access: donations from some countries are not reported; only bilateral donations are included although considerable bilateral aid is diverted through multilateral channels; funds to projects in which NGOs are involved as implementers but are not the initiators tend not to be included; and bilateral funds which go directly to indigenous NGOs are often excluded.

1970s about 1.5% of total NGO income came from donor sources, by the mid-1990s this share had risen to about 30%" (ODI, 1995: 1).

Besides the funds received from official donors, the two other main sources of revenue for NGOs are public donations and self-financing, investment or enterprise operations (although the last accounts for significantly less revenue than the other two) (Fowler, 1992: 10). Traditionally, the major proportion of NGO funding was received from private donation, reflecting the altruistic (predominately Christian) motivations which spurred the rise of 'first generation' NGOs. Clearly, such motivations still persist in societies and are most obvious in response to natural disasters, mass hunger and/or dislocations of people. In many recent crisis situations, donations motivated by compassion have provided important remedial relief to suffering.

However, such endowments tend to fall within a fairly inelastic range in terms of the types of operations they support and are usually directed at situations which receive high levels of media coverage. 'Second', 'third' and 'fourth' generation-type NGOs have more difficulty in generating extensive support, sympathy or interest from average citizens since long-term development programmes which involve strategies for structural change tend to be poorly understood and not widely approved. And because they rarely constitute 'fast-breaking news', such activities receive little attention from the media and the NGOs which are involved have limited opportunity to disseminate explanations of their developmental philosophies and objectives.

Yet, there is a widespread feeling within the NGO community (and the development enterprise generally) that charity, which forms the basis of private donations, is an inadequate principle on which to build sustainable processes of development. Moreover, even in emergency

situations where charitable efforts continue to be beneficial, it is increasingly accepted by the NGOs involved that their relief and welfare procedures are mere 'stop-gaps' and that sustainable solutions will almost always require long-term strategies involving both community development and structural changes. Therefore, with responsibilities for an expanded range of services and activities which are not adequately supported by traditional private donors, NGOs have been obliged to turn to official lending agencies for funding. Hence, while philanthropic donations still account for a considerable amount of total aid transfers, their percentage of total funding for NGOs is declining.¹⁵

ODA Support to NGOs as a Factor of Neoliberal Policy

NGOs have turned to official agencies largely out of necessity, but the latter's reasons for directing more aid money through NGOs are more complicated, or at least controversial. Undoubtedly, bilateral and multilateral agencies that are attempting to achieve maximum impact for their aid expenditures have been positively influenced by claims about NGOs' real or potential

¹⁵ This percentage decline has not translated into a real dollar decrease of public donations in most countries, although there has been considerable concern raised about a perceived or anticipated growth in 'donor fatigue' (Fowler, 1992). Several explanations have been put forward for this phenomenon: the annoyance and confusion in prospective donors which results from the increased demand generated by the larger numbers of organisations competing for the same resources; the failure or perceived failure of development organisations to make a discernable difference over the past several decades; charges of corruption and/or mismanagement within the NGO community; a drop in donors' disposable income at the present time of fiscal restraint, high unemployment and job uncertainty; and, finally, the moral decline which has been a feature of the Western modernist project, evidenced either in an increase in complacency among the 'comfortable' majority (Galbraith, 1992, cited in Fowler, 1992) or a diminished sense of civic responsibility (Wolfe, 1989, cited in Fowler 1992).

comparative advantage in local development (Ascher, 1983; Ayres, 1983; Masani, 1985; Salmen & Eaves, 1989). Moreover, the sequence of development trends throughout the past two to three decades - from basic needs to local empowerment, then democracy - has been responsible for refocusing funds as well as attention from the state to civil society and NGOs (Borghese, 1987; Clark, 1991; Drabek, 1987; Williams, 1990). However, while funding changes may reflect progressions in functional knowledge and in development strategies, according to many scholars the more salient determinant of current funding patterns is the hegemonic neoliberal ideology which dominates the development enterprise.

In short, it is not mere coincidence that the redirection of bi- and multi-lateral aid funds to NGOs increased when structural adjustment became the main official development policy. As noted above, NGOs are engaged by ODA donors to play a facilitative (or complicit, according to some observers) role in helping to make SAPs more effective and/or more politically acceptable. Hence, as Southern states withdraw from social programs under the guidance of IFIs, NGOs are seen as important substitutes, 'franchises' or 'sub-contractors' in the delivery of public services (Hulme & Edwards, 412).

A 1992 World Bank Report on financing Zimbabwe's health services under structural adjustment illustrates this view. It concludes (p. iii) that:

with the cash-strapped public sector now providing more than half the health services and health financing in Zimbabwe, non-governmental actors will need to play an increasingly important role in the future.

Therefore, along with prescriptions for increased user fees, increased and designated taxes on alcohol and tobacco, a larger role for private enterprise in the health sector, and cost-sharing with (or downloading to?) local governments, the report advocates that church missions, along

with traditional practitioners, should be encouraged to become health providers. The report argues that involving church missions would not only provide relief for the financially-strapped government, but would generate local resources and *probably* improve care by giving communities a “sense of ownership of health facilities.”

This optimistic projection of dual economic and political gain demonstrates the assumptions which underlie and connect the economic, political and financial ‘dimensions’ of the neoliberal order’s ‘New Policy Agenda’ (Edwards & Hulme, 1994). Each of these is reflected the IFIs’ revised attitude toward and treatment of NGOs. The economic dimension is characterised by a reliance on markets and private-sector initiative and an assumption that NGOs are market-based actors, more “efficient and cost-effective than governments”; the political is distinguished by the placement of NGOs as presumed central actors in the development of pluralist civil societies which will serve as checks on the state's power; and the financial is associated with increasing amounts of official aid money being channelled through NGOs (*ibid.*: 3-5).

As Edwards and Hulme (1994) argue, the problems with the assumptions upon which this new policy agenda is based concern, first, the inability to substantiate that there are any developmentalist and/or democratising connections between the first two dimensions. In short, there is no definite and/or positive relationship between market-led growth and the establishment of pluralist, democratic societies (see preceding chapter). Second, the contributions which NGOs may make in either of these dimensions has been assumed rather than demonstrated (see above, this chapter). Third, IFIs view NGOs primarily as ‘service-providers’ and, therefore, those which are funded directly are contributing explicitly to the implementation of the neoliberal

policy agenda and at least implicitly to the advancement of its associated ideology¹⁶. Finally, and relatedly, the increasing incorporation of NGOs into the ‘new policy agenda’ raises questions and problems relating to issues of *legitimacy* and *accountability*.

The Issue of Legitimacy

In the ‘new policy agenda’, official donors see external NGOs primarily as ‘service providers’. According to this view, NGOs’ right to participate in development projects or processes, ie. their *legitimacy*, is conferred through the agencies they represent, which increasingly are IFIs. In other words, as service providers, NGOs have no inherent legitimacy to participate in development. Instead, they are entitled to act only on behalf of governments or inter-governmental agencies, the legitimacy of which is based on law or principle and derived from ‘the tacit assent of the governed’ (Edwards & Hulme, 1994: 16).

Yet, present ODA policies expose an apparent contradiction in this logic, especially where states are circumvented and external NGOs are funded directly. John Clark (1996) reports

¹⁶ The emphasis here on IFI’s treatment of NGOs as service providers is not to imply that these are the only international organisations employing NGOs in their operations. For example, Gordenker and Weiss describe the creation of DONGOS - donor-organised NGOs which serve a variety of organisations as well as varying agendas and ideologies. “As donors become more interested in NGOs, they also find themselves tempted to create NGOs suited to their perceived needs. Both governments and the UN system have ‘their’ NGOs for particular operations and purposes. (But, as well, the more ‘anti-establishment’) United Nations Development Program (UNDP), has been involved in fostering their growth for a decade. The UN itself created local NGOs that contributed to mobilizing the population for elections in Cambodia and to demining in Afghanistan” (Gordenker & Weiss, 1995: 361).

the case of Mozambique “where, in 1990, 170 foreign NGOs were running programmes in complete isolation from the state.” Some scholars argue that in some countries, such as war-torn Mozambique, the state is in such a crisis that it no longer meets the conditions upon which its legitimacy is obtained, namely, the “effectiveness of government in meeting the needs of its citizens and the existence of mechanisms through which people can hold their government in check” (Healey & Robinson, 1992, cited in Edwards & Hulme, 1994: 16). However, under present international law, even if the state violates these claims to legitimacy, its jurisdictional authority is not then ‘trumped’ by that of international agencies since the legitimacy of the latter depends ultimately on agreements among *sovereign* member states and therefore rests fundamentally on the principle of state sovereignty.

In actuality, any claims to ‘legitimate’ authority by any external agencies in such situations have no (or questionable) justification in existing, ‘official’ law. Therefore, interventions such as those described by Clark in Mozambique represent unprecedented directions in policy. Yet, for the most part, it is widely accepted that the direct funding of NGOs is necessary under extreme circumstances and the practice has generated little controversy in countries like Mozambique. However, some scholars note that there is an intensely intrusive aspect to this type of intervention. As Sandbrook (1996: 18) writes, “(a)lmost unnoticed, the agencies have taken on responsibilities that surpass those assumed even by the original colonial powers.”

Not all NGOs are merely ‘service providers’, working under contract or at the behest of official donors. In these instances, NGOs may lay claim to ‘legitimacy’ on the basis of their *voluntarism*. According to Archer (1993, cited in Edwards & Hulme, 1994), “in the final analysis it is the quality of participation that determines the legitimacy of the decisions.” In other words,

the more that NGOs involve those they purport to assist and/or respect their opinions, the more they can claim to be legitimate. Some scholars make further qualifications on such bases for legitimacy, citing criteria such as self-financing or having a wide degree of popular support.

The 'Law of Humanity' versus the Laws of the Statehood

The 'legitimacy' which NGOs enjoy because of their support for popular participation may conflict with legitimacy which is legally conferred, especially if the NGOs' activities are seen to be oppositional to the 'official' government (Clark, 1996). In these instances, NGOs may invoke what Richard Falk (1995: 170) terms "*the law of humanity*" as moral, if not necessarily legal, justification for their community involvement. Indeed, according to Falk, it is this law, embedded in "a normative focus that is animated by humane sustainable development", which is (or should be) prior to all others. And, he continues, "transnational social forces", including the activism of a variety of NGOs, are the most important vehicles for promoting this law (*ibid.*, 170).

Assumptions concerning the legitimacy of NGOs to act in the interests of the 'law of humanity' appear in part to derive from negative sum calculations which confer entitlement on the former to act on behalf of their 'constituents' because the state has reneged on its responsibility to them as citizens. And, it is not only states in crisis whose legitimacy is being contested. The feature of globalisation which Cox refers to as the 'internationalisation of the state' arguably has resulted in a general loss of legitimacy of the latter. To the same extent that the state is unable to extricate itself from the constraints and exigencies of the global economy and political economy, it is prevented from fulfilling its 'contract' with its citizens. And, since

the legitimacy (and the sovereignty) of the state, according to traditional philosophical principles, is dependent upon the latter honouring its primary responsibility to its citizens, any process which interrupts this mandate disturbs the authenticity and authority of the contract. Therefore, argues Falk, given that the pressures of globalisation have changed the conditions for governance and hence for establishing *legitimacy*, social forces now affirm their possession of the latter when they act “to pursue their emancipation from oppressive structures of governance” and “to expose the abuses of states and the deficiencies of international institutions and to provide civil society with its own autonomous voice”(ibid., 164 & 165).

To summarise, *it seems that the definition of ‘political legitimacy’, like other philosophical concepts whose meanings have until recently have been largely taken for granted, has been rendered controversial by the contemporary restructuring of the global political economy.* And, in searching for new or resurrected principles which justify legitimate social action by various actors in this present era of globalisation, we are reminded that the underlying principles upon which our institutions of governance are grounded, as well as the forms they have assumed, are socially constructed and historically contingent. Moreover, it appears that in order for official institutions, including states and inter-state organisations to persist in their claims to ‘legitimate’ authority, they may require major structural reforms (eg. Archibugi & Held, 1995; UNDP, 1994; UNRISD, 1995). These reforms would include not only changes to institutions such as the UN General Assembly, the Security Council, the GATT system, the IFIs and the World Court¹⁷ but also revisions in conceptualisations of terms such as sovereignty and citizenship

¹⁷ Proposed changes range from the inclusion of a ‘Peoples’ Assembly’, composed of direct citizen representatives from the various UN countries at the UN General Assembly;

(eg. see Murphy & Tooze, 1991 & Peterson, 1992a&b). Furthermore, such changes would position international organisations to play an instrumental role in creating a favourable climate for various NGO initiatives for the promotion of Falk's so-called 'law of humanity'.

Ultimately, argues Falk, the promotion and widespread observance of this law - which is protective of the earth and responsive to the needs of its most vulnerable people - is dependent upon the construction of transnational democratising forces within civil societies. However, the notion that such forces have the right/'legitimacy' to work toward the de/re/construction of institutions which would support the 'law of humanity' remains controversial. Not only does this idea contradict traditional views which centre notions of political legitimacy on the state, but its radically destabilising potential conflicts with the 'new policy agenda' which dominates the contemporary global political economy. The contradictions associated with this struggle between popular counterforces of an emerging global civil society and the globalising forces of neoliberalism are discussed more completely in the following chapter.

The Issue of Accountability

The issue of NGOs' accountability is related to the question of their legitimacy in that

giving a seat in the Security Council to non-state organisations; (further?) increasing the 'democratisation' of the Security Council, by changing the veto rules, enlarging the membership, or altering the nature or membership of permanent and semi-permanent status; giving 'mandatory' jurisdiction on certain issues to the International Court of Justice; to creating an Economic Security Council, establishing new world bodies or revising existing international ones to regulate the global economy, and introducing a global tax for development, such as the suggested Tobin Tax on transnational capital transactions (See for eg. Archibugi & Held, 1995; UNDP, 1994).

the latter depends at least in part on the requirement and/or willingness of organisations to be held responsible (ie. account) for their actions (Edwards & Hulme, 1994: 18). However, in the case of NGOs, it is not always absolutely clear to whom or to what they are or should be responsible. Therefore, the standard definition that: “(t)o be accountable means to be obliged to render full and truthful reports to a superior level of authority concerning one's activities” (Friedmann:1992: 82) is not particularly helpful since it fails to identify where the ‘superior’ authority exists. As the previous section argued, in the present conjuncture of globalisation, it is not always entirely certain which actors and which behaviours are ‘legitimate’ and therefore of ‘superior authority’.

Some analyses leave aside discussions about the philosophical justification for accountability and argue merely that NGOs as a group have “*multiple* accountabilities - ‘downwards’ to beneficiaries, staff, supporters, and - if they are membership organizations - members; and ‘upwards’ to donors, trustees and government regulators” (Edwards and Hulme, 1995: 853). Others, including official donors tend to imply that “multiple accountabilities” are congruent and, indeed, that NGOs’ role in service provision (where they are directly accountable to the official funding agency) compliments their role in “building participatory approaches for development” (where, presumably, their prime responsibility is to the popular ‘participants’ (CIDA, 1996).

Even leaving aside the argument from the preceding chapter that the neoliberal policies are not likely to contribute to ‘participatory approaches’, the implied congruity between NGOs’ multiple accountabilities and neoliberal development policies is open to question. If legitimacy is assumed to reside in traditional institutions of governance, then it follows that NGOs are

accountable primarily to official donors as representatives of national governments and/or international organisations. Yet, the 'legitimacy' of many of the institutions of governance as they are presently constituted within the dominant world order is currently being contested, in particular because of the social inequalities and insecurities which are generated by the system (Archibugi & Held, 1995) and as well because of an increasing (or increasingly perceived) inability of many people to participate fully in social decisions¹⁸. Therefore, if legitimacy was conferred on the basis of respect for the 'law of humanity', as explicated by Falk, rather than on the basis of increasingly controversial philosophical traditions, NGOs' *primary* responsibility may more rightly be to the grass-roots beneficiaries of their developmentalist action than to states or international organisations¹⁹.

In short, it cannot be assumed that, in all instances, NGOs are simultaneously and equally accountable to their beneficiaries *and* to official donors. Such assumptions ignore the power imbalances and conflicts which converge around the issue of accountability. With respect to North-South NGO partnerships, these inequities and struggles are highlighted particularly in the area of funding. In most cases, partnership arrangements involve transfers of funds from

¹⁸ 'Participation' is conceptualised here following Melucci's (1992: 71) double meaning of "acting so as to promote the interests and the needs of an actor, as well as belonging to a system, identifying with the general interests of the community."

¹⁹ This is not to dismiss the importance of investing authority in legitimate institutions of governance, but rather to argue that there is a 'crisis of legitimacy' in institutions as they are *presently constituted*. As Held (1995: 102) argues:

... the very idea of consent through elections, and the particular notion that the relevant constituencies of voluntary agreement are the communities of a bounded territory or state, become open to question as soon as the issue of national, regional and global interconnectedness is considered and the nature of a so-called 'relevant community' is contested.

Northern to Southern NGOs. Frequently, the latter complain that their Northern counterparts require such stringent 'functional' accounting for the use of funds, that their own ability to be 'strategically' accountable is undermined (Chari, 1994)²⁰.

Some analysts have pointed out that the notion of 'partnership' should imply 'reciprocal accountability'; that is, in return for accounting for their use of funds, Southern NGOs should be able to expect accountability from their Northern partners for expenditures of funds raised using 'information or images obtained from the South' as well as accountability for the manner in which that information is used for publicity or campaign purposes. At the same time, criteria for performance evaluations should be set by Southern as well as Northern partners and, ideally in consultation with the recipients of the development action (Malena, 1995: 14; Clark, 1991: 72-3; Howes, 1992). Yet, despite the logic of such reasoning, most analyses of the issue suggest that the necessary two-way transparency, exchanges of information, consultation, and bilateral decision-making processes which would be involved in realising 'reciprocal accountability' are exceptions rather than rules in North-South NGO relationships (Malena, 1995; Chari, 1994).

Ironically, problems relating to 'strategic' accountability do not arise only out of the power imbalances which exist between Northern and Southern partners, but also sometimes out of initiatives which, on the surface, would appear to mitigate such imbalances. For example, Bebbington and Riddell (1995: 880) argue that the recent move to fund indigenous organisations

²⁰ 'Functional' accountability refers to maintaining accurate records of capital transfers, being able and prepared to justify expenditures, and submitting to performance evaluations which compare outputs with initial projections while 'strategic' accountability refers to answering for effects on structural changes or, in other words, to developmentalist impact in the long-term (Avina, 1993; Malena, 1995).

directly may contribute to undermining their accountability to the local populations. This happens when some and not other indigenous organisations are singled out for funding, thereby creating ‘imbalances across civil society’. As well, when external NGOs act as intermediaries in securing funds for indigenous groups, they frequently take on the role of representing those groups in official policy fora; in the process, the power of direct, indigenous voice tends to be diminished (*ibid.*). Finally, easier access to direct funding has contributed to the establishment of a variety of opportunistic NGOs or QUANGOs, including ‘yuppie’ NGOs which are created “as survival strategies for a professional middle class” and not accountable to any popular base (*ibid.*)

Especially when external NGOs act as intermediaries between official donors and indigenous community organisations, there is a tendency for accountability to legal governance systems to take precedence over the ‘law of humanity’ and for ‘functional’ accountability to supersede ‘strategic’ accountability. However, as Bebbington and Riddell (1995: 880) point out, local membership organisations (POs) may not be any more accountable to a popular base than are external NGOs. The internal structure of such organisations may be excessively hierarchical and undemocratic and/or the organisation may represent only the interests of small, elite groups within the community, in which case, they are unlikely to be particularly democratic in distributing the resources at their disposal (*ibid.*: 881).

As noted above, POs’ accountability to their communities may be further undermined by collaboration with external NGOs; however, in some instances, cooperation between local organisations and especially international NGOs may enhance the former’s level of democratic involvement in (and for) the community (Fox, 1992). External organisations which act as ‘bridging organisations’ can help to establish the various horizontal and vertical networks which allow

for an uninterrupted two-way flow of developmentalist information (Brown, 1991; Covey, 1995); they can provide technical and other 'capacity building' assistance to community groups to enhance their prospects for sustainable community development; they can help to bring international pressure to bear on governments which harass or suppress local organisations; and 'functional' accountability requirements may help in some situations to reduce inefficiencies and corruption in indigenous organisations.

Over-all, however, generalisations about the effect of collaboration - whether North-South or NGO-PO - on NGOs' accountability to their constituents provide little insight concerning questions about the impact of partnerships on sustainable democratic development. In short, as a group, NGOs are not necessarily less or more accountable than POs to the constituents they serve; neither are Northern, external or membership organisations necessarily less or more accountable to popular society than are Southern, indigenous or non-membership organisations (Brett, 1993: 273). Nevertheless, accountability to the people they purport to serve is the primary justification for NGOs' existence and for the formation of North-South partnerships, as well as the alleged reason for which they receive funds from other sources. Therefore, in order to assess NGOs' performance - both functionally and strategically - it is necessary to differentiate among the types and sources of accountability and to show the problems which emerge when NGOs try to meet their obligations to various actors.

Conclusions: NGO Partnerships and Social Transformation

Although any effort to measure NGOs' accountability and legitimacy will be difficult and imprecise, scholars of a 'new' comparative politics attempt to evaluate the relative developmentalist potential among different NGOs and NGO types. For example, Macdonald (1994: 221-2) distinguishes on the basis of development ideology between two 'ideal types' of NGOs:

- a) "mainstream" - characterised by "instrumental participation", "foreign agency paternalism", and "limited local linkages"; and
 - b) "progressive" - characterised by "an explicitly political strategy of empowerment", support for the "relative autonomy of the local NGO", and "links with social movements."

As analysis of individual NGOs in chapters five and six will demonstrate, these distinctions are not easy to discern in practice. Most NGOs, regardless of their primary ideological motivation, are incorporated, often directly, into the "mainstream" structure. Moreover, interventions by individual NGOs from both "mainstream" and "progressive" groups may (or may not) improve particular conditions in a certain area for some period of time and to that extent be "developmentalist".

However, as Macdonald's typology suggests, NGOs do differ in their contribution to supporting *sustainable* and *democratic* development to the extent that they are *primarily accountable to their beneficiaries rather than funding agents*; that is, whether they support the view that their legitimacy derives more from the 'law of humanity' than from the imperatives of the neoliberal/ Westphalian order. Likewise, the partnerships and networks these NGOs

form can be separated according to whether they reinforce the prevailing attitudes, practices, relations and institutions that help to maintain that order or whether they set goals which seek to establish a system of 'humane governance' guided by principles of 'participatory democracy' and 'human' security and development.

According to Falk (1996: 13):

To have any hope of reaching such goals in the present setting, and of purifying their political space, depends on resituating the sovereign state, making governments less responsive to the priorities of global market forces, and more receptive to the needs and aspirations of the peoples of the world, especially those who are economically, socially and politically deprived.

Such efforts require action on several fronts and bring together a variety of different types of NGOs and movements in civil society as well as national and international government organisations. However, in summary, 'progressive' NGOs operate at the local community level to support changes that will be *sustainable* because they become part of the *usual* work and behaviour patterns of the community involved and can endure within the latter's *normal* capacity and resource base. However, as the ability of any one NGO to promote *sustainable* and *democratic* development is not a function of its singular activities alone, 'progressive' NGOs support forms of cooperation at national, regional, international and global levels to work toward the establishment of relations and institutions which will create the 'enabling environment' in which sustainable local practices of development may flourish.

'Progressive' partnerships and networks arise from formal or informal collaboration among a variety of organisations from grass-roots to national, inter- or transnational 'development' NGOs and/or environmental, human rights and women's groups and movements. Such progressive linkages are supported various institutions (or by groups or individuals within) of civil society

such as media, universities or research institutes, labour organisations, churches. They are also supported by certain international institutions, such as the UNDP, which despite being part of the state-centric system is critical of its present construction (see UNDP, 1994).

What brings these various types of agents together under the heading of 'progressive' is their collective contribution to the collapse of "many of the old physical and mental barriers between people and countries...(thereby) giving new significance to the term world community" (UNRISD, 1995: 167). Yet, while ingredients and opportunities now exist for the possible emergence of a world community, together with a prior or contiguous sense of global citizenship, any major reregulation of the current political economy will depend ultimately on the collective and cooperative effort of popular forces. Moreover, as Cox (1994a: 110) argues, the "building of sufficient foundation in social organization at the base" must be matched by "a creative response and initiative through multilateralism."

NGO partnerships and networks are centrally situated to play major roles both in building transformative foundations in civil society and in promoting multilateral cooperation in the effort. However, NGOs' room for manoeuvrability in the present development environment and the final success of the transformation project are by no means assured. According to Cox (1994a), the present conjuncture in the world order offers unprecedented opportunity for "reregulation and repoliticization", but since any actual positive change will be determined by people taking advantage of the opening and since the exercise of human agency is unpredictable, it is not possible to make conjectures about the future with any degree of certainty. However, it is possible to present potential alternatives. And it is the role of the concerned academic to attempt to define those alternatives as clearly as possible so that actors involved

in social change may make informed choices. In the case of NGOs, this means that their members and the people and institutions they influence should be aware of the development trajectory their organisation and its partner(s) supports.

Chapter 4: NGOs, Social Movements and Institutional Reform for a 'New' Global Order

The losers in global restructuring seek to redefine their role in an emerging order. In the face of the declining power of organised labour and revolutionary groups, the powerless must devise alternative strategies of social struggle. They aim to augment popular participation and assert local control over the seemingly remote forces of globalisation. New social movements - women's groups, environmentalists, human rights organisations, etc. - are themselves a global phenomenon, a worldwide response to the deleterious effects of economic globalisation.

- Mittelman, 1994: 434

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the proposition that *the growing transnational nature of many NGOs' activities and relationships may contribute positively to the promotion of sustainable democratic development*. The hypothesis builds upon the central arguments of the preceding chapters. To summarise, in chapter one, I asserted that the recent proliferation in non-state actors was at least partly in response to the pressures of globalisation, and not only reflects a significant change in social relations, but challenges orthodox assumptions regarding state-societal relations and "the Westphalian normative order" (Sakamoto, 1996: 13). Chapter two focused on the official development structure as an area which is informed by and, in turn, supports these orthodoxies and that, as a result, tends to perpetuate North-South inequalities rather than promote a more democratic 'people-centred development'. Finally, in chapter three, I explored the possibilities and problems

associated with NGOs as potential supporters of the latter and, in particular, evaluated claims that have been made about their inherently developmentalist and/or democratic propensities.

In this chapter, I combine and extends these themes, arguing that **the increasing transnationalisation of civil society, demonstrated especially by NGOs in association with 'new' social movements, is indicative of an unprecedented global social change with important implications for advancing a 'people-centred' approach to development theory and policy.** I discuss the phenomenon of transnational civil society, arguing that hypotheses of its recent emergence, and its supra-state nature have generated the need for a new definition of civil society that avoids the state-centricity of traditional versions. Further, I assert that the construction of a global civil society is supported by various responses by international governmental organisations (IGOs) to recent events and/or pressures from NGOs and social movements. Finally, I end by questioning how extensively evolved are (or can be) the fact and the ideas of 'global society' and 'global citizenship', especially given the entrenched nature of traditional ideologies and institutions on one hand and the increasing heterogeneity of forms of identities on the other.

The problems and issues explored in the previous chapters have direct implications for this analysis. The current 'crisis of development' discussed in chapter two is inextricably related to conceptualisations of democracy and security. Increasingly, the latter involve transnational processes and identities which must be taken into account in any possible solutions to the 'crisis'. NGOs (particularly those which are connected in some way with 'new' social movements) may figure prominently in a solution by serving as agents for a democratising process of 'globalisation from below' - involving networks of popular

coalitions seeking “to stimulate a humane, cooperative, peaceful and sustainable alternative to an increasingly globalised culture of commodity-fetishism, armed force, ecological despoliation and mutually-damaging worker competition” (Waterman, 1996: 22). Yet, as the analysis of chapter three suggested, such coalitions are likely to be tentative and fragile because NGOs display at least as many weaknesses as strengths in their abilities to form accountable, democratic partnerships and networks.

Contradictions of Transnationalisation

Many NGOs, particularly women’s, environmental and human rights organisations, are members of or associated with the ‘new’ transnational social movements which, as Mittelman (introductory quote) asserts, appear to be a feature of the restructuring in the global political economy. And, whether the growth of non-state actors is viewed as evidence of progressive internationalism or as an emerging counter-hegemonic force to dominant globalising powers and ideologies, many analysts would agree that “there has begun a change in the structure of collective action ... a new space for theory and social action” (Calderon & Reyna, 1990, cited in Escobar, 1995b: 216).

While some critical scholars, such as Cox (1994a&b), believe that the ‘new space’ offers unprecedented, but not yet seized, opportunities for democratic change led by non-state actors, others postulate that a radically-transformative (albeit still embryonic) global/transnational civil society has already emerged. In either case, “(at least some) NGOs

are ... presented, and present themselves, as an *alternative* model to the hegemonic ideology and methodology of the official 'aid regime'" (Macdonald 1995b: 119). Moreover, it is frequently implied that a complimentary association exists between the counter-hegemonic activities of localised, popular organisations, various national, international and regional NGOs and some of the 'new' social movements which have broad-based, transnational membership and agendas.

Yet, although many critical scholars draw connections among various non-state actors and movements and suggest that the pressure they exert collectively is increasingly counter-hegemonic, few argue that their action is always or usually intentionally collective or collaborative. As Melucci (1992: 47) points out:

the idea of social movements as unified subjects acting on the stage of history, oriented towards luminous destinies or pledged to an inevitable collapse,... (is an) essentialist and teleological idea... the last expression of a (modernist) philosophy of history and of a metaphysical assumption.

Instead, the increased numbers and varieties of non-state actors appear to be features of a 'postmodern' condition which is characterised by the prevalence in society of heterogeneous interests, identities and representations. "In the field of social conflicts we are witnessing the decline of the great collective forms of identification and the emergence of fragmented and multiple collective actors" (Melucci, 1992: 52).

Such diversity presents a variety of problems: for activists attempting to build global solidarity forces (see chapter seven); for analysts attempting to distinguish between its socially degenerative and constructivist aspects; but perhaps especially for policy-makers who are attempting to control and/or redefine social relations from within the very

institutions which are being questioned and threatened. The remainder of this chapter is an attempt to contribute to a growing literature which explores the dimensions of these problems as they pertain to the nature of the connections between national and transnational civil societies, NGOs and social movements, and non-state actors and institutions of governance. The context for this analysis is the changing world order; therefore, the nature of the change, which was summarised in the introductory chapter, is examined in greater detail in the following section.

A Changing World Order

In his application of Gramscian theory to the analysis of the contemporary international political economy, Gill (1994: 2) claims that the maintenance of any world order involves:

the social force of ideas (including ideologies, ethics, inter-subjective meanings concerning social order, social values, political legitimacy, etc), institutions (such as state, and market, international organisations) as well as material aspects of social life (production broadly defined, including the means of destruction).

According to several scholars, including Gill, we have entered a period of instability following a period of relative order in which there was a harmonious convergence of these various factors. During the period of stability which began after the end of the Second World War, the nature of the international system of states was determined largely by the material and ideological dominance of the West and the United States in particular. As noted in

chapter two, the hegemony, or at least supremacy, of the latter¹ was both reflected in and reinforced by the preeminence of the ideas of “embedded liberalism”² and the policies of the various Bretton Woods international institutions as well as private organisations such as the Trilateral Commission (Gill, 1994; Cox, 1981). In the early 1970s, however, the collapse of the Bretton Woods fixed exchange-rate mechanism signalled the unsustainability of the prevailing order. Since then, there has been a steady increase in the liberalisation of capital flows and of trade, an increasingly deregulated and ‘marketized’ financial order and a concomitant ‘internationalisation’ of the state (Stubbs and Underhill, 1996: 145-62).

These new policy directions - features of the increasing globalisation of production (*ibid.*) - represent a profound disruption of the relations which previously had been typical of the postwar international system. Yet, the conjectured dismantling of the present world order may be representative of even broader-reaching and more fundamental change than the preceding analysis suggests. What is actually at issue, according to some scholars, is a world system which is more consistent with Braudel’s notion of the *longue duree*: “a relatively persistent pattern of ideas, institutions and material forces which form historical structures over time, *where structures can transcend particular societies or civilisational forms*, both

¹ As Gill (1994) observes, US dominance during the period was based on elements of coercion and/or supremacy and therefore may not be considered a true hegemonic order based on widespread consensus. And, clearly, a powerful ideological alternative to Western liberalism existed in the Soviet system.

² For a description of “embedded liberalism”, see page 54, above, as well as note 10 on that page.

in space and time.” In short, a longer-ranging and more encompassing ‘world order’ than the post-war Pax Americana is currently at stake.

In the more iconoclastic postmodern analyses of current events and processes, it is the ‘relatively persistent pattern’ of modernity which has been profoundly disrupted so that we are now experiencing essential change in the “character of our relationship to nature, space and time” (O’Sullivan, 1993: 23). In sum, the modernist concern to “control and transform” nature has been lost to “a purely man-made, artificial” postmodern world; the modernist project of “constructing a public space which would secure human rights and provide scope for freedom” is now met by “varying degrees of (postmodern) skepticism”; and the modernist ideal “to shape either the present or the future in any grand fashion is dismissed as impossible” (O’Sullivan 1993: 24-5).

Such interpretations of the present human condition are frequently criticised because they seem inevitably to lead to the desolation of relativism, where human discourse is reduced to a contestation of competing narratives, and human agency is emptied of any meaning other than what the competing discourses inscribe upon it. And, although postmodernism does offer emancipatory possibilities in its postulation of the “incomplete, open and negotiable quality of every identity”, its rejection of *any* foundationalism denies the prospects of ever legitimately institutionalising democracy. In other words, as O’Sullivan (1994: 35) inquires: “(i)f deconstruction validates any and every difference, how is it possible to prevent the new politics of inclusion from either disintegrating into anarchy, or else giving rise to despotism as the only means of holding postmodern society together?” (O’Sullivan, 1994: 35).

From Deconstruction to Reconstruction

Extreme postmodernist analysis is unsettling. Some scholars dismiss it outright. Others, perhaps equally dismayed by its implications, are more heedful of its warnings. Among the latter are critical theorists who are attempting to salvage the modernist project by searching for ways to reach some kind of social consensus for devising rules by which to choose among competing discourses (Jowers, 1989: 98). Assuming that the latter have been generated and/or exposed by the recent major changes in world order, many critical scholars recognise the need to find new ethical guidelines for the political structuring of society.

The need for revisitation and revision has been more made evident by the end of the Cold War division of power, the implications of which parallel those resulting from the breakdown of the post-war economic order. Although the collapse of the Soviet Union may have had the effect of adding support to the consolidation of a new hegemonic order based on neoliberal ideology, practice and institutions, an alternative, and arguably more ultimately transformative, effect has been its reinforcing role in the erosion of belief in universalising doctrines. In sum, we are witnessing not merely a shift by dominant players in the international system either from bi-polar to multi-polar or from state-centric to market-centric ideology and policy but rather a major conjuncture which challenges long-held assumptions about the basic units, values and institutions of society.

Both changing conditions and the new skepticism undermine many widely-held assumptions about the origins and/or essentially ethical nature of state-societal contracts. The

old world order which was characterised by the international system of states and traditional concepts of democracy which were developed within the ideological structure of that order are being threatened by the nature and degree of changes now occurring (Archibugi & Held, 1995). And, as was noted above, civil society is recognised as being at the centre of these various changes. While the processes of globalisation may attest to the resilience and adaptability of capitalism, and while the state continues to dominate in international relations, emerging forms of activism and resistance within civil societies not only confirm the fallacy of an 'end of history' thesis, they also assert the need to revisit basic assumptions about the essential political nature of society and the continuing relevance of existing institutions of governance. For several critical scholars, *the proliferation of diverse NGOs and 'new social movements' not only provides one of the clearest indicators of current social change but also a potential foundation for a revised political ethic based on democratic civil societies.*

The latter has already been discussed in some detail in chapter one which noted the present disagreement on defining the term and concluded that Cohen and Arato provide a useful reinterpretation of the concept for the current conjuncture. The following section resumes the discussion, but with emphasis on its application to the transnational and global contexts. It argues that the growing salience of the latter makes a further refinement on Cohen and Arato's conceptualisation necessary. In short, while the separation of civil society from the economy as well as the state is a useful advance in theory, the political context has expanded so that the global polity as well as the national is now critical to any deliberations regarding the conceptualisation of civil society. But, as the following section asserts, the

contentious nature of the present deliberations on the subject suggest that there is continuing disagreement on the extent to which scholars accept that such an expansion is occurring.

(Re-)Conceptualising Civil Society for a New Global Order

Debating the Idea of Civil Society

Within the burgeoning literature on current social change, there have been several attempts to define and/or present a theory of 'civil society'. And, as was suggested in the introductory chapter, although presently there is no single, universal conceptualisation of the term, it is generally accepted that the notion of civil society involves "a terrain of human association, some notion of 'society', distinct from the body politic and with moral claims independent of, and sometimes opposed to, the state's authority" (Wood, 1990: 60). However, views differ on the degree to which society must be secularised, autonomous from the state, 'advanced' beyond familial association forms, and/or on the degree to which the notion of 'society' or the level of civility must exist before the space of voluntary association may be considered 'civil society'.³ Also, different viewpoints assign varied political and/or social roles to civil society. The latter is described variously as: a crucial actor in democratisation, the product of democratic action, the product of economic process, a terrain of social contestation, a reservoir of social forces ranging from emancipatory and 'civil' to reactionary and criminal, and an analytical variable for comparative analyses.

³ For good discussions on the issue of defining 'civil society', see Cohen & Arato, 1992; Hutchful, 1995/6; Wood, 1990.

Because of the ambiguity which is currently associated with the concept, some scholars appear ready to give up the project of theorizing civil society altogether, deeming it to be “a task...as pointless as it is impossible” (Fierlbeck, 1996). However, while such frustration may be an understandable response to the present revisionism, to discount the usefulness of the project is to miss an essential factor which informs the contemporary debate. The point is that the definition of ‘civil society’ is being revisited and/or revised in response to changing political economy pressures for much the same reason that other terms whose meanings have come to be largely taken for granted are now being questioned, disputed and/or ‘deconstructed’. In short, not only ‘civil society’, but other (especially Western, liberal) concepts such as ‘democracy’ are being critically evaluated. Different forms of democracy are being examined for their appropriateness and possible application in developing countries, as well as for their respective treatments of gender, racial, ethnic or other inequities. (cf. Held & Pollitt, 1986). The liberal concept of ‘state’ as well has been opened up to renewed scrutiny. In particular, there is a growing challenge to the idea that the state as a ‘natural’ product of human social action, and the notion of the state as a reified, rational actor is increasingly discredited.⁴

⁴ Critiques of the liberal theories of the state are obviously not new. In the past, Marxists, in particular, have challenged the notion of state as a politically neutral institution separate from the class relations of society. Current critical analysis of the state differ from traditional Marxist versions in two significant ways: (1) that the state is an inevitable stage in the evolution of capitalist history (or of a socialist future), and therefore, (2) there is at least an implicit, and often explicit, rejection of the Marxist claim that social emancipation requires the capture and control of the state by the proletariat (eg., see Sakamoto, 1996: 49).

Realignments in theory tend to follow changes in events and processes and the questioning of reified, taken-for-granted concepts by recent 'critical theory' reflects changes occurring in the broader contemporary social life. Therefore, while there may be some validity to critics' claims that recent contestations and redefinitions by critical theories contribute to "analytical ambiguity" (*ibid.*), the uncertainty associated with the present state of political theory reflects the nature of the changes which are occurring in contemporary social processes. While positivist, essentialist, traditional theories may claim greater elegance and even precision (within a specifically and ideologically bounded realm), new critical theories offer the possibility for opening up analytical and operational spaces which were previously excluded and/or obscured by the dominance of orthodox liberal and realist theories.

It would appear that scholars who lament the loss of meaningful content in the present usage of the term not only underestimate the extent of current social change, but tend also to overlook the historical inconstancy of 'civil society' - in analyses but also in form. For instance, despite its association with liberal democracy, the idea of civil society has not simply evolved in line with the modernisation of the latter. Instead, different conceptualisations of civil society have prevailed at various times in the past, reflecting both changes over time in political practice, but also the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic repositionings of the theories which informed the praxis.⁵

⁵ To some extent, this argument recalls the position of Laclau and Mouffe in their 'theory of discursive articulation'. They postulate that hegemonic discourses are always threatened by that which is left out in the construction of the discourse and, secondly, the limits of the dominant discourse are "revealed by the construction of positive antagonisms"

The 'Statist' Nature of Traditional Concepts

Historical accounts of the evolution of the concept of 'civil society' differ in their descriptions of its earliest form and in their views of the 'uses and abuses' which the term has endured (Wood, 1990). Some scholars trace its origins to struggles for religious freedom (Walzer, 1992: 101; Gelner, 1991: 495) while others place its beginnings in the eighteenth century growth of capitalism, arguing that civil society emerged as a sphere of social interaction (including economic relations) apart from the private realm and in juxtaposition with the state (Blaney & Pasha, 1993).

Reflecting the development and hegemony of liberal institutions and theory, this definition of 'civil society' has become fixed, even naturalised in dominant orthodox theory; that is, it is frequently assumed that the Western, liberal version of civil society is an inevitable and final form.⁶ Moreover, it is frequently accepted that civil society emerges only when societies have become capitalist and/or reached a certain level of institutionalisation (Woods, 1990; Blaney & Pasha, 1993: 3).

Yet, a variety of factors reveal a need to reconsider embedded assumptions about civil society and to revisit the primary philosophical principles which underlie the concept. These include:

society; new or revised definitions are not merely descriptions of institutional change or progress.

⁶ Some scholars question, for example, whether civil society can exist in societies which do not have a liberal and/or secular form of government or whether civil society exists in societies in which strong associative family ties or low levels of civility exist.

- 1) recent events: such as the end of the Cold War and the spread of democratisation movements;
- 2) new actors: 'new' transnational social movements and associated NGOs;
- 3) novel ideas and ideologies: from feminism to poststructuralism;
- 4) the emergence of identity as a major force for defining social positions and struggles;
- 5) and changing power relations within and between contemporary societies.

The unprecedented conjuncture of these factors highlights the necessity to revisit basic assumptions about the organisation of society. In short, there is a need to go beyond theory which explains current changes in the behaviour of certain actors, such as NGOs, merely as rational choice responses to pressures within a polity context which is largely fixed. Instead, it is reasonable to begin with the conjecture that *such behaviours may reflect fundamental social change and major revisions in conceptions about appropriate forms of polity*. Such analysis would begin by revisiting questions about the manner in which civil society comes into being. Does civil society arise, as some scholars suggest, in opposition or potential opposition to the oppressiveness of the state or, alternatively, does the actual *implementation* and not only the *effectiveness* of institutions of governance require the existence of at least some nascent form or degree of civil society? And, in either case, what is the role of materialist change in the formation, development and preservation of civil society?

Several contemporary scholars argue that in order to exist, civil society requires the protection and, therefore the prior development, of institutions. For example, Blaney and Pasha (1993; 4-5) argue that the "sphere of civil society involves at least minimal

democratization”, the latter manifested by “a stabilization of a system of rights, constituting human beings as individuals, both as citizens in relation to the state and as legal persons in the economy and the sphere of private association”. Yet, while there seems to be a clear relationship between the development of active and vital civil societies and the existence of laws and institutions which allow and protect the formation of organisations in society, it may be equally (or more) appropriate to argue that the formal “stabilisation of a system of individual rights” requires at least a minimum of prior organisation and democratisation *within civil society*.⁷ Moreover, some communitarian critics of liberalism’s ‘ethical individualism’ might consider it equally appropriate that members of civil societies be legally constituted as members of communities as well as individuals.

The basic question which underlies such speculation concerns the motivation for and/or the essential nature of social organisation. In liberal theory, it is assumed that individuals form social units to optimise their material or other advantages or to create protection through numbers against coercion, especially from the state (see chapter 1). However, the liberal notion that social organisation (and, hence, the development of civil society) is the result of freely choosing individuals maximising their utilities is only one explanation. An alternative one that has been given greater resonance by the various changes we are currently witnessing explains social organisation as a process that is as much the

⁷ This assertion raises yet another problem of definition. According to modern liberal conceptions civil society does not exist outside its relation with the state. My purpose here is not necessarily to argue the semantics of the issue, but to raise the point that the motivations for voluntary social organisation that is understood to comprise civil society may be prior to rather than in response to political organisation.

expression of the human need for community as it is a result of individualist political or economic decision. In Walzer's (1992: 97) words, "(w)e are by nature social, before we are economic or political beings."

Walzer argues that people form social groups for a variety of reasons - political, economic, religious, ideological, developmental - but also for sociability itself. And if, as Walzer asserts, the latter is prior to other reasons for forming social relationships, then political institutions and economic systems may influence the form that civil society will assume, but they do not necessarily determine its origin. *States (and economic forces) may suppress, distort, control or manipulate civil society, but the latter's origins are in the nature of human behaviour.* Therefore, it would appear that in a participatory democracy, it is necessary but not sufficient that citizens are equal in law and have equal opportunities for access to political and legal apparatuses. Full developmental, participatory democracy requires that the principles of equal rights extend into the institutions and organisations of civil society (NGOs, social movements, etc.) itself, as well as to those institutions where civil society overlaps with the state, the economic, and the private spheres (labour unions, workplaces, the family).

A similar argument was made in the last century by Alexis de Tocqueville who claimed that a democratic political culture would not develop and therefore democracy would not be sustained unless citizens were *actively* participant in *egalitarian* institutions and civil associations (Cohen & Arato, 1994: 19). In other words, the idea that institutional democracy may be impossible to sustain and/or is a less developmentalist version to one which involves the full participation of an actively engaged and democratically constituted

civil society is not new. However, what is 'new' is the unprecedented proliferation of transnationally-connected non-state organisations in apparent response to and/or in association with the globalisation of the economy and the internationalisation of the state.

While de Tocqueville allowed that voluntary associations played an essential role in the consolidation of democracy, he assumed their interests were always mediated through the state. In short, de Tocqueville did not foresee the possibility of democratic action extending beyond the boundaries or jurisdiction of the nation- state. Yet, pressures from local groups challenge us to re-examine the meaning of democracy in sub-state contexts and the transnational character or influences of current social changes confronts the state-centric limits which have been imposed on traditional theories of democracy and civil society. To assume, as do most theorists on the topic, that civil society arises in response or protest to the political structures, rather than that political structures emerge secondarily to the needs and pressures of civil society, ignores the possibility that observed changes in civil society may point the way to predicting or informing appropriate institutional revisions for maintaining or extending current democratic forms within a changing global system or alternatively of creating new forms of democracy.

An Alternative Conceptualisation

Cohen and Arato's (1994) provide a useful starting point for the reconceptualisation of civil society for a new global order. First, these scholars establish that civil society is the realm of potential social hegemony or of counter-hegemony; that is, they allow for the possibility that state-societal relations may range from cooperation and consensus to

adversarial positions. Second, by setting civil society apart from the economy as well as the state,⁸ Cohen and Arato acknowledge that the potential for opposition (or cooperation) which exists in civil society may be directed at economic forces as well as at political ones.

In particular, by setting civil society apart from both the economy and the state, it is possible to develop a plausible explanation for the recent proliferation of non-state actors and the decline of the 'ideology of the state' as separate but related reactions to the globalisation of capital. In short, the rapid rise in non-state actors results primarily from the negative social effects of globalisation and the 'flexible' wage and production structures with which it is associated - increased social polarisation, migratory pressures, escalating ecological threats (Cox, 1994a: 106-7). Actors responding to these changes tend often to turn first to the state, pressuring the latter to provide security against these novel and/or intensified threats. However, as the post-Keynesian state has been unable to meet these new, increased demands, and instead, is (or at least appears to be) renegeing on its social contract obligations, the continued relevance and legitimacy at least of its present form is threatened.

In sum, various issues - human rights (especially involving gender, race and/or ethnicity), environment and human security - ie. problems of identity and security - often transcend the state's authority or competency threshold. Many of the problems, such as those in the area of the environment, are transnational by nature. And even those which are of

⁸ Civil society (as the realm of communal or associative activity), the economy (as the realm of individualist interest) and the state (as the realm of social mediation and/or control) obviously do not exist in total separation from each other but overlap in various ways (see note 17, page 25 for more on this).

essentially national concern are being treated (or are perceived to be treated) less effectively by an increasingly 'internationalised' state.

The present moment of change toward a new 'world order' represents an unprecedented opportunity for the extension of democracy at various levels of society and polity. And while strong possibilities exist for reversals in democratisation processes, the transformative force of various NGOs and social movements is not only crucial, but according to some scholars (eg. Cox, 1994a: 111), it is upon such organisations that 'participative democracy' may be built. Cox argues that an accompanying institutional reform would be necessary, involving a 'dualistic' multilateralism - "one part of its being involved in the present predicaments of the state system, another part probing the social and political foundations of a future order" (*ibid.*). The final sections of this chapter treat the issue of institutional reform, but first, because the development of a transnational civil society is salient to any such reform, the next sections will compare alternative perspectives on its emergence and relevance to theory and practice, analyse its association with conceptualisations of global governance and democracy, and assess the democratising inputs of NGOs and 'new' social movements as transnational civil society actors.

The Emergence of Transnational Civil Society

Because most conceptualisations of civil society - contemporary as well as traditional - refer only to national contexts, discussions about an emerging 'transnational civil society'

tend to lack a comprehensive theoretical base for explaining its form or its origins. Clearly, conceptualisations of civil society which perceive its existence only in its relationship to the state become meaningless at the global level where there is no over-arching central authority. Therefore, transnational civil society may be similar to, but it is not exactly equivalent to the idea of national civil society as it is usually conceived; nor is the “global space...(in question) more or less the same as a statist space only larger” (Walker, 1994: 690).

A ‘transnational’ civil society is not what is featured in the current liberal idea of global democracy which envisages a worldwide *international* community of liberal democratic states (Diamond, 1994). Neither can transnational civil society be defined merely as a growing network of non-state actors from different national civil societies; it may consist of these networks, but it is more than their sum.

These networks and associations are part of a transnational civil society - as opposed to being merely international actors - if the actions or intentions of the individuals or groups involved are to circumvent state (or possibly inter-state) direction or if the issues upon which they connect are global in scope; ie. the issues are such that they do (or, arguably, should) transcend national or international regulation. Moreover, to the extent that the actors involved are self-identified as members of a global ‘community’, they are participating in the construction of a ‘global citizenship identity’.

Since by its nature, it either circumvents the state or subverts its regulatory function, the establishment of a transnational civil society presents a challenge to the present international system which has been based on the concept of state sovereignty. Therefore, a useful theoretical framework to investigate transnational civil society needs to begin by

questioning the viability of the state system as it currently exists rather than accepting that it is a fixed and immutable structure (Gill, 1994; Peterson, 1992a&b).

Among analyses which begin at this point, one approach sees transnational civil society as an emerging opposition or potential opposition to a diffuse and unofficial system of governance at the global level (Rosenau, 1994; Commission on Global Governance, 1995). However, if civil society develops in response to centralised political power as this argument supposes, it still needs to be ascertained what has changed in the nature of social relations to cause the centralising process.

One approach which offers some potential for clearer understanding on the subject draws on Gramsci's concept of hegemony (see chapter one). The latter refers to the societal condition which results from the existence of a widespread ideological consensus among state elites, the owners of production and the general population. The order thus established implies the entrenched dominance of the state and elite social forces in compliance with capitalist power, with the dominance assured by consent of the population rather than coercion. However, an inability of either the government or the productive forces to meet the needs or demands of citizens will tend to lead to the disruption of hegemony through the emergence of counter-hegemonic forces within civil society.

While Gramsci's insights on hegemony and social process were initially conceived in application to national contexts, they are useful for understanding current changes at the level of the international political economy. In particular, they help to explain the present conjuncture or period of transition and the concomitant development of a transnational civil

society as results of the globalisation of capitalism (Cox, 1991; Gill: 1994).⁹ Furthermore, they may explain the ‘new forms of resistance’ which are associated with the transnational civil society movements: ie. those which are “relatively invisible and outside traditional conceptions of political action” (Gill, 1994).

To date, however, despite a widespread acknowledgement within the globalisation literature of a “new type of politics” (*ibid.*), there is a tendency in many of the analyses to present the ‘new social movements’ and the various ‘enlightened’ NGOs which supposedly constitute a nascent transnational civil society as forces merely of resistance rather than of transformation. In other words, few scholars have speculated upon where such resistance will lead, and especially about what type of political structures might arise (or would be appropriate) for dealing with the new issues, processes and relationships which have emerged.

However, a few scholars have begun to explore the nature and extent of the institutionalisation problem.¹⁰ While recognising the formidable obstacles and difficulties involved, they are convinced nevertheless of the necessity of moving beyond an entrenched

⁹ Note that the ‘globalisation’ of capital in Cox’s and Gill’s analysis does not mean the ‘universalisation’ of one capitalist form, but rather the formation of different forms of capital: often competing and/or regionally specific (see eg. Cox, 1994b and Gill, 1995). Moreover, while the analysis centres on the globalisation of capitalism as a primary source of social change, the structural power of capital is considered to be inseparable from society and the ideological and institutional structures which it comprises (Cox, 1981).

¹⁰ For example, see David Held, “Democracy: from city states to cosmopolitan order”, in Held (ed.) *Problems of Democracy: North, South, East West* (Cambridge: Polity, 1993) and ‘Sites of Power, Problems of Democracy’, *Alternatives*, 19(2) (Spring, 1994) and Archibugi and Held (1995).

state-system mentality in order to establish a global civic culture based upon peoples' self-identification both as local actors and as global citizens. To use the terminology recently employed by Sandel (1996: 72& 74), "(o)nly a politics that disperses sovereignty both upward and downward can combine the power required of a public life that hopes to inspire the allegiance of its citizens". In short, at the present conjuncture, *the construction of a democratic system of global governance requires revisions in both ideation and institutionalisation which will be led and/or informed by the forces for change within civil societies.*

Global Governance and Global Citizenship Identity

While few scholars discuss directly the emergence of such a global 'citizenship identity', there is a growing literature on 'global governance' in which it is generally maintained that some NGOs and social movements play a major role in 'qualifying sovereignty' by fostering transnational connections between and among individuals and groups in civil societies (Finkelstein, 1995: 367). In this literature, 'governance' is usually defined more broadly than in application to the setting of rules and provision of services by legally constituted governments. Instead, 'governance' is understood to be the constitution of systems of conformity in which patterns of behaviour by various actors come under control and/or are normalised. Thus, by this definition, despite the dearth of legal institutions possessing supra-national authority, it can nevertheless be said that informal elements of 'global governance' exist in certain transnational patterns of regularised behaviour (*ibid.*)

In much of the 'global governance' literature, considerable attention is paid to the growing importance of NGOs in relation to the functional roles of multilateral organisations. In particular, NGOs which promote environmental, human rights and women's issues are frequently singled out as major players: as advocates for change in international fora and/or as service providers on contract to IGOs, especially recently in peace-keeping and landmine removal operations (eg. Weiss & Gordenker, 1996).

The issues with which these NGOs are associated have relevance at a global or transnational polity level as opposed to (or in addition to) the national or international level. Moreover, because 'new' transnational social movements have consolidated around these issues, such NGOs tend to be part of or at least ideologically allied with these more diffuse collectivities of social actors.

NGOs, Social Movements and 'Global Democracy'

Emancipatory Potential

As it was noted above, the NGOs that are frequently assumed to contribute most to the development of a transnational civil society are those which are members of or associated with 'new' social movements. In general, a social movement is:

a collective actor constituted by individuals who understand themselves to have common interests and, for at least some significant part of their social existence, a common identity. Social movements are distinguished from other collective actors, such as political parties and pressure groups, in that they have mass mobilisation, or the threat of mobilisation, as their prime source of social sanction and hence of power. They are further distinguished from

other collectivities, such as voluntary associations or clubs, in being chiefly concerned to defend or change society, or the relative position of the group in society (Scott, 1990:6).

Although 'new' social movements share these general characteristics with 'old' style movements, their concentration on issues of identity and culture distinguishes them from the latter which tended to focus on class politics (Shaw, M., 1994). 'New' movements are further differentiated from the 'old' by being less concerned with capturing state power as a necessary step in the social transformation being sought, and with activating change at various levels of society - from the global to the interpersonal (Falk, 1987).

Usually, social movements - 'old' or 'new' - are located within discourses of emancipation and democratisation. Typically arising out of periods of social stress (Pettman, 1991: 144), social movements are forms of collective action motivated by the desire of their members to rid society of some perceived form of oppression. And, because "their sense of outrage and moral purpose" is a compelling mobilizing force, especially for those who perceive themselves to be marginalised from society, social movements may make important contributions to extending levels of participation and to generating debates on the continuing relevance and legitimacy of existing institutions, social norms and/or cultural values (Pettman, 1991: 145; Melucci, 1992). In short, as emancipatory processes, *some* social movements contribute significantly to *some* democratisation projects either by promoting democratic institutions of governance or by challenging the assumptions and principles upon which existing forms of democracy rest.

However, as several scholars are careful to point out, social movements should not be taken uncritically as democratising forces or "the keepers of the moral flame" in societies

(Pettman, 1991: 146; Cohen and Arato, 1994; Melucci, 1992; Mouffe, 1988). While, in general, they affirm emancipatory pretensions - they tend to be subversive of authority and frequently claim “legitimacy against current principles as well as excesses of power” (Apter, 1992: 141) - not all social movements follow a ‘liberating’ or democratic agenda (Mouffe, 1988).

As with comparative analyses of NGOs, attempts to evaluate the liberating or democratising propensities of social movements are complicated by their diversity. To begin with, social movements target different institutional forms and adopt different strategic tactics. Apter (1992: 140), for instance, distinguishes among: 1) “extrainstitutional” movements which form “alternative modes of action” to “regularized channels”; 2) “revolutionary insurrection” movements which attempt to disturb and overthrow the state; and 3) “terrorist” movements which commit acts of violence against individuals or groups who have been designated as “symbols or surrogates” of state and/or society. These three categories of movements are further differentiated by being “left or right, sacred or secular, particularist or universalistic” (*ibid.*).

Such diversity would seem to militate against the possibility that social movements might be major contributors to the promotion of a sense of common citizenship on which ‘global democracy’ could be based. And, to complicate the picture even further, it appears that the recent surge in numbers of ‘new’ social movements in industrialised countries is sometimes motivated by different interests and objectives than in other parts of the world. As was noted in the preceding chapter, a similar preoccupation with issues such as culture or identity may obscure the differences between ‘new’ social movements in the North and

South. Yet, the former may be reactions against the trappings and problems of modernity while in the latter they are as likely to be protests against being excluded from modernity's benefits (Graf, 1994). Also, as Walker (1994: 685) observes, their grounding in the 'spiritual' also distinguishes many 'new' social movements in the South from their often more secular Northern counterparts.

In sum, as with NGOs, it is impossible to generalise about the motivations, ideological perspective or mode of operation of social movements. Indeed, the variety of interests they reflect and promote suggests that they are not representative of a trend toward a homogenous revolutionary or counter-hegemonic process but instead exemplify a condition of cultural and discursive plurality (Featherstone, 1990: 2). This is in spite of the fact that their recent proliferation appears to be a response to the universalising properties of globalisation.

Global Democracy and the Dilemma of Diversity

The apparent paradox of heterogeneity spawned by a single process is explained by the observation that, while the 'globalisation of capitalism' is a universal phenomenon, "there is no universal capitalism" (Cox, 1995: 16). Rather, economic forces are institutionalised differently in different societies "and the encounter with globalisation provokes a conflict of internal social forces within civilization" (*ibid.*, 16). Therefore, while social movements may arise from such conflict, the responses are likely to be dissimilar in different countries and regions, among different classes or cultural groups and/or over time.

The challenge for activists, analysts and policy-makers committed to the ideal of global democracy is to explain how this diversity can be channelled in such a way that a common 'citizenship identity' can be forged upon which an effective and democratic system of global governance can be built. The challenge is compounded by the acknowledgement that while the state will be resituated in such a system, it is likely to be supplemented not replaced by other institutions (Falk, 1996). Yet, as difficult as these challenges are, they constitute a new political 'realism', made manifest by the almost universal pleas for the extension of democracy.

Some scholars assume that traditional approaches are adequate for dealing with the social problems and pressures which are attendant upon the changing world order. Such a position is presented by Diamond (1994: 7). In his words:

We are present at the creation of a new world order; historically, this is always a dangerous and momentous time. If we fashion as a successor to containment a doctrine of democratic globalism; if we recognize the need for continued American leadership, but within a new, much more authentically collective framework; if we understand that this global leadership must involve our continued military, economic, and diplomatic engagement throughout the world; if we hold fast to our democratic principles, then a truly new world order is within the reach of the next generation. If we shrink now from these challenges of global leadership and vision, the world we inherit will be new only in the weapons that people and nations employ to brutalize and destroy one another.

Employing Diamond's own apocalyptic rhetoric in rebuttal, it might be argued that the policy direction he advocates may in fact increase rather than diminish the brutality and destruction in the world. In particular, the nationalist hubris displayed in his prescription for a stable new world order based on American leadership is unwarranted. American leadership is currently centred in the neoliberal 'doctrine of democratic globalism' based on the

'protective' concept of democracy which, as was argued in chapter two, is not likely to produce the participatory practices associated with sustainable development and human security.

Admittedly, at present, there is not a clearly articulated alternative vision of a world order based on the latter. Certainly, as was noted in the previous chapter, the democratising properties of some NGOs and 'new' social movements are countered by a variety of internal and external constraints and contradictions. Moreover, the difficulty should not be underestimated of trying to imagine (much less construct) a "politics of connections"¹¹ that could accommodate various forms of identity and ideation under a system of governance based on a broadened view of sovereignty. Yet, the proliferation of NGOs and social movements and the force of the democratisation momentum they represent suggests that 'old' systems of governance and security no longer adequately serve the changing world order. Indeed, the diversity and incongruities - functional, ideological, cultural, ontological - among these organisations and associations challenges the notion of universal ethics or principles upon which our present official systems of governance are constituted even while they confound attempts to reconstitute more suitable political institutions (Walker, 1994).

However, despite the difficulties, with respect to system-transforming potential, it is probably a mistake to view the 'new' transnational social movements involved in environmental, women's, peace and human rights issues, merely as idealistic, but largely

¹¹ This phrase is used by Walker (1994: 699) who argues that while a "politics of connections" between the various emancipatory movements and organisations is necessary, it should not necessarily be seen as "a politics of a united front or a counter-hegemonic strategy".

ineffectual, Cassandras. Because of the heterogeneity within the movements as well as their fluid and diffuse nature, their impact is not easily quantified. Yet, 'new' social movements' most significant impact may be subtle and in less tangible areas of attitudinal and value change (Thiele, 1993: 281). And, although change in these areas is difficult to document, there is some evidence of its occurrence. For example, the adoption by dominant actors in the international aid regime of the discourses of 'new' social movements - eg. 'participatory democracy', 'human security' and 'developmental partnerships' - suggests that these concepts have gained increasing resonance in policy circles as well as with a popular audience. Moreover, observers can now point to significant *practical* impact on world politics and society of NGOs that are associated with 'new' social movements in areas of community development, peace-keeping, IGO policy-making/implementation (see chapter seven).

It appears that pressures from these actors are also partly responsible for the recent revisionism in ideas and practices regarding improvements to international organisations' methods or systems of 'governance'. At the same time, such revision as has already occurred in the latter has provided some openings in which NGOs can build new partnerships and networks that contribute to the elaboration of a transnational civil society. This latter point will be discussed more fully, with references to empirical examples, in chapter seven. In the meantime, the following section examines the changes which are occurring at the international institutional level which may have relevance for the emergence of identities and institutions that would support a democratic global governance.

Social Movements, NGOs and IGOs: Partners in Global Governance?

There is an emerging literature on the interface between NGOs and IGOs, including IFIs, which discusses:

- (1) the impacts which NGOs have made on the policy decisions (and implementation) of IGOs;
- (2) the supportive effect on NGOs of being included in IFI policy development;
- (3) the effect on issues areas - the environment, humanitarian assistance/intervention, the economy and human rights - of NGO-IGO cooperation;
- (4) the implications of NGO-IGO cooperation for the extension of a global (or international) civil society and/or for global governance; and
- (5) the implications of NGO-IGO cooperation in establishing a more effective program for the worldwide promotion of democracy and sustainable development (Fox, 1995; Ghils, 1992; Nelson, 1995 & 1996; Quadir & Shaw, 1996; Stiles, 1996; Weiss & Gordenker, 1996).

In these analyses, there is a general consensus that NGOs now play an important role in international relations through their interactions with various IGOs. But, it is also widely agreed that the myriad uncertainties and misapprehensions about NGOs as well as the still tentative and fragile nature of NGO-IGO relations prevents easy explanations or projections about the policy implications of such interactions.

NGOs as International Actors

The 1991 Rio Conference on Environment and Development is frequently considered to be the watershed in NGOs' evolving role in 'official' international politics.

NGOs played a significant role in shaping the agenda of the conference and in the international mobilisation around the concept of sustainable development. They also contributed to building the political consensus that made adoption of the Rio Declaration possible. Nongovernmental organizations were rewarded for this role in Chapter 27 of Agenda 21, which gave full recognition to the role of 'major groups' in implementing and monitoring the agenda; it further emphasised the vital role played by NGOs in shaping and implementing participatory democracy (Donini, 1996: 84).

The Rio Conference was important in signalling not only that NGOs, as informal actors, had become more numerous, visible, and coordinated, but also that their representatives would hitherto be taken more seriously in international fora as formal spokespersons on various social issues. Since Rio, NGOs have continued to make considerable progress in both formal and informal respects. Besides smaller scale and/or isolated advocacy campaigns directed at various IGOs, NGOs have organised well-attended and highly publicised counter-meetings at several international conferences.¹² As well, various international organisations - the UN and the World Bank, in particular, but also organisations such as the OECD - have increasingly brought NGOs into their policy considerations and declarations.

The Impact of IGOs' Policies on NGOs

In recognition of the positive impact that many NGOs have made on human security

¹² Following Rio, particularly notable NGO forums were organised at the UN Conference on Population in Cairo (1994), the UN Social Summit in Copenhagen (1995) and the Beijing Conference on Women's Issues (1996). Moreover, NGOs have organised meetings to run parallel to some conferences of major international players. An example of the latter are NGO-organised 'people's conferences' held to coincide with G-7 meetings.

issues, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, made a well-publicised plea to give NGOs a larger formal role in UN activities. In his *Agenda for Peace*, he stresses that NGOs have key roles to play as assistants to UN forces in peacekeeping, as active participants in peace-making/-building, and as mobilizers of states' and public opinion to promote peace and democratisation (Boutros-Ghali, 1992 & 1996).

One practical measure to increase NGOs' participation in UN activities involves recent revisions to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution 1296 (XLIV) which had set the terms of interactions between NGOs and the UN since 1968. Following the establishment of an Open-Ended Working Group with a mandate to revise Resolution 1296 and after "three years of hard slogging", a new version was adopted by ECOSOC on 25 July 1996 (Wiseberg, 1996: 350). Although NGOs did not get full concession on their demands, there were improvements over the original in areas of categorizing NGOs, on granting them national consultative status and establishing a provision to undertake future reviews of consultative arrangements (*ibid.*, Quadir & Shaw, 1996; also see NGLS).

Meanwhile, although such formal arrangements on their status change proceed slowly, NGOs' informal activities within the UN appear to increase at a more rapid pace. Donini (1996: 85) lists several areas in which NGOs are becoming more involved in the General Assembly: as informal but active participants where some of their members have at various times "taken the floor", circulated documents, taken part in special committees, served as high-level advisors and been invited to attend certain hearings.

As well, according to Donini (1996: 85), although NGOs' interactions with the Security Council are "more low-key and indirect (than with the General Assembly), they

...nevertheless are significant” here as well. As the security agenda has shifted in the recent past, especially following the end of the Cold War,¹³ the Security Council’s traditional mode of operation is now considered to be out-of-date by many observers. Along with calls to reform this agency to better reflect both the changing international balance of power *and* the need to be more sensitive to the issue of democratisation at an international (and especially North-South) level, there is considerable discussion on the present body’s limitations in dealing with the ‘new’ sub- and trans-national security issues (Seara-Vazquez, 1995; Archibugi, 1995). In particular, within this ‘new security’ environment, there is intensified pressure on the Council to pay greater attention to humanitarian and human rights issues. Much of that pressure has been exerted informally by NGOs - “in the corridors of the UN and the capitals of key member states” (Donini, 1996: 85). Moreover, an increased emphasis on peace-keeping/making in the ‘new security agenda’ includes an increased role for NGOs as local sources of information, informal participants in preventative diplomacy and as service providers in crisis areas: in short, as ‘partners’ with IGOs concerned with security issues (DHA, 1995).

Because of the nature of their operational focus, some UN agencies, such as UNICEF, UNDP and UNHCR, have a long history of working with NGOs. These links are further reinforced by a ‘significant number’ of the staff of these agencies having worked

¹³ As noted in an earlier chapter, this shift involves a move away from a concentration on “high politics” inter-state concerns to an increased focus on sub- and trans-national issues of an environmental, economic or social nature involving specific problems such as civil breakdown, crime syndicates, people migrations, cultural and ethnic crises or struggles: in short, a move away from a strict focus on military security and an increased concern for “human security” issues.

previously for NGOs (Gordenker & Weiss, 1996, 29). Also, recent events and crises have promoted even closer relations between these IGOs and NGOs. In several recent 'complex emergency' situations, for example, the UN agencies involved have made highly publicised efforts to contract the services, cooperate with and/or coordinate the activities of NGOs in the affected areas (Natsios, 1996: 69; Shaw, 1996; Weiss & Smith, 1997). Meanwhile, UNICEF's and the UNDP's expositions and criticisms of the negative social effects of structural adjustment programmes have brought these organisations ideologically as well as functionally closer to the many developmental NGOs which have also opposed SAPs.

Ambiguities and Problems associated with NGO-IGO Interactions

Some scholars suggest that the closer links between NGOs and IGOs are supportive of the development of a transnational civil society (Quadir & Shaw, 1996) and/or of establishing a more effective system of global governance (Commission on Global Governance, 1995: 254-55). Nevertheless, many of these analyses also recognise, as Gordenker & Weiss (1996: 217) point out, that NGO-IGO interactions continue to be plagued by a variety of 'ambiguities and dilemmas'. These authors claim that despite experiential and analytical evidence to the contrary, there is still a widespread tendency to assume that "the outcome of NGO efforts is universally worthwhile" (p. 217). Yet, not only are NGOs' comparative advantages and abilities variable and subject to debate (see chapter three), but a great deal of ambiguity surrounds the mixture of "conflict, competition, cooperation and cooptation" which characterises NGOs' relations with states and IGOs.

The lack of clarity in these boundaries warrants the judgement that linkages between

NGOs and formal governmental structures should be established (and analysed!) with caution. Furthermore, the extreme heterogeneity within the NGO community (see chapters one & three) - in size, in level of operation, in function, in internal democracy of individual organisations, etc. - makes it difficult for policy-makers in IGOs to select appropriate NGO 'partners'. Finally, there is concern - especially given the misgivings about NGOs' effectiveness, efficiency and accountability - that turning over too many responsibilities to them will contribute to 'inadequate stateness'. In other words, while many analysts have "no nostalgia for the national security state of the past", few believe that the state is unimportant or dispensable (Gordenker & Weiss, 1996: 218-9).

Quadir and Shaw (1996) present another set of problems associated with NGOs' increased interaction with IGOs. They note that the sheer number of NGOs which now demand access to the UN has created administrative problems for the latter and has hampered progress in their official accreditation. Second, some governments have been resistant to both the idea and to any attempt to broaden NGOs' participation in UN activities.¹⁴ Finally, within the ECOSOC Working Group, tensions have escalated between the Northern and Southern NGO participants on the issue of consultative status: ie. fewer Southern than Northern NGOs have achieved this status. Quadir and Shaw (1996: 12) argue, that "(i)n order to resolve these inevitable conflicts, it is essential to develop a healthy and transparent relationship between Northern and Southern NGOs based on the notion of partnership". However, as was observed in the preceding chapter, while such a "notion" is

¹⁴ The US and India have been particularly vociferous in their objections (Comeau, 1994: 24-25).

now firmly entrenched in contemporary development discourses, the 'fact' of NGO partnership is not yet realised nor is it easily realisable. In fact, the situation is a tautological dilemma: revision of the international policy agenda requires the cooperation ('partnership') of Northern and Southern NGOs while the latter depends upon change in the official development structure.

NGOs and the World Bank

According to some scholars, to move beyond the impasse of this tautological situation requires changes in the World Bank in particular. The latter (along with the IMF) probably has a greater impact than any other IGO on development issues.

It maintains a lending portfolio on the order of \$20 billion (US) annually. Excluding the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which moves a similar amount on an annual basis, this figure is nearly an order of magnitude greater than the combined budgets of the approximately 20 other functional agencies affiliated with the UN system (Conca, 1995: 109).

Control over such a massive amount of capital coupled with the increased importance, as a result of the debt crisis, of their 'last-resort' lender positions give IFIs considerable command over the current development agenda.

However, despite the obvious power of the IFIs, and their tendency to regard NGOs as 'service providers' (see chapter three), the latter's increased involvement in the Bank's policy agenda may provide them with greater opportunity to petition for revisions in Bank and IMF policy and/or structure. Indeed, there is evidence that NGOs, and particularly NGO networks, have been effective in petitioning the Bank to change its policy on certain issues.

For instance, "...they have helped to win: new environmental safeguards, greater emphasis on social safety nets in austerity and structural adjustment programs, more liberal information disclosure policy, and others" (Nelson, 1996: 2).

Yet, many commentators view any such changes in the Bank's policy as little more than cosmetic given that, over-all, the general direction and approach of Bank policy has changed very little. And, despite the formation of a standing committee of NGOs to consult on Bank policy and despite the rhetoric of 'partnership' with which the Bank refers to its relations with many international advocacy groups, it continues to be most interested in NGOs as its policy implementors (chapter 2, above; Nelson, 1996; Quadir & Shaw, 1996). Moreover, the Bank deals with these NGO service-providers within the context of a state-centric policy environment, usually attempting to coordinate collaboration among these 'operational' NGOs, national governments and itself (World Bank, 1992). Therefore, although the Bank makes concessions to the discourse of 'participatory democracy', it is not referring to the alternative form outlined in this thesis nor does it support the idea of a global democracy which "disperses sovereignty upward and downward" (Sandel, 1996).

Nevertheless, merely by adopting the terminology of the discourse, the Bank signals that it is paying attention to the advocacy groups which are seeking these objectives. Moreover, while discourses may lose substance when they are assimilated into the rhetoric of the dominant agencies, it may not be possible to strip them totally of their radical content. Mouffe (1988: 96) has argued that "(d)emocracy is our most subversive idea because it interrupts all existing discourses and practices of subordination"; it may be that the Bank's emphasis on 'popular participation' indicates that a slow and subtle democratisation of its

agenda is occurring: a small, 'subversive' advancement in the dismantling of neoliberal hegemony.

Moreover, even if the Bank's structure and policy are slow to change, there is little disagreement that the level of interaction between NGOs and the Bank has not only increased but is being taken seriously by all actors involved. In the short term, such recognition may have more impact on NGOs' behaviour than on the Bank's: first, it highlights the achievements made by NGOs to date, encouraging them to intensify their efforts to be included in national and international policy decisions; and, second, it exposes areas where NGOs might improve upon initiatives for greater coordination among themselves.

NGOs, Transnational Civil Society and Global Governance

Nelson (1996: 8) claims that NGOs which are concerned with different issues such as environment, human rights, etc., tend to maintain distinct agendas and as yet have not developed much of a coordinated strategy for dealing with IGOs. In spite of this, however, he argues that the relative few NGOs which are involved in attempting to influence IGOs directly have formed a loosely associated network of NGOs. Moreover, he contends that these NGOs do possess "a common, collective agenda" based on "shared values, shared political experience, funding and other project agreements, and joint participation in international gatherings." Nelson's account of this sense of commonality involves issues of global (or at least transnational) governance, and therefore it seems that he is describing the beginnings of a sense of citizenship identity at that polity level. However, the extent to which we can talk about this being counter-hegemonic or socially transformative will depend upon

the ability of these networks to establish effective vertical linkages from the grass-roots to inter- and trans-national organisations (see chapters 2 and 7). Moreover, it will depend upon their ability to devise effective strategies and articulate appropriate alternatives to existing institutions and behavioural norms.

In particular, this would involve the de/reconstruction of the official development agenda. It would include democratising the relationships of participating actors (states, citizens, NGOs and IGOs) by creating new opportunities for the establishment of meaningful partnerships - especially on North-South terms, but also between relevant actors at different levels of society and/or polity. It also involves restructuring institutions to accommodate the principles of the alternative, counter-hegemonic, 'people-centred' discourse being promoted by *some* new social movements and *some* NGOs and NGO networks (as well as some intergovernmental organisations). The following section looks at some of the practical, revisionist measures which have been suggested and at the 'new' development and human security agenda which is envisaged as a result.

Revising the Development/Security Agenda

Certain United Nations agencies - UNRISD (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development) and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) in particular - have articulated visions of a more effective development policy structure in conjunction with a more clearly elaborated system of 'global' governance. The same concerns were the focus

of a United Nations Commission which published its Report on Global Governance in 1995. For UNRISD, the UNDP and the Commission, the problematic of development is not merely a question of rational/public choice in separated national settings, but rather, it is firmly situated within the broad context of the global political economy. In the latter, *'development' is inseparable from human security, democratisation, and global as well as national interest.*

To reiterate, a design for a new development policy for the era of globalisation is, then, first of all, people- rather than state-centred and, second, is cognisant of the myriad interconnections and complexities involved. Moreover, it is democratised in the sense that it sees the ideal developmentalist North-South relationship as being one of 'cooperation' or 'partnership' rather than one established on a donor-recipient or patron-client basis (UNDP, 1994: 61). It is also democratised in a 'cosmopolitan' sense; that is, it derives from "a system of governance which arises from and is adapted to the diverse conditions and interconnections of different people and nations" and, therefore, must "cut across the territorial boundaries of the nation-state" (Held, 1995: 106).

In general, "a new design for development cooperation" calls for a different pattern in the capital flow between North and South - involving changes in aid, trade, investment, labour movements and debt schedules (UNDP, 1994: 61-63). It also includes provisions for more radical changes: ie. items such as compensation for past inequities; new migration laws and/or commitments to reduce national barriers to migration; and the establishment of new global funding sources for development and human security (*ibid.*: 66-7). Finally, it requires the creation of new institutions and or revisions in existing ones.

Dealing with Southern Debt

One of the most controversial and persistent problems regarding North-South capital flows is Southern debt. When the Third World debt crisis became an international issue in the early 1980s, rapid remedial actions by dominant international economic players prevented a feared collapse of the Western banking system (Helleiner, 1994: 171). However, for much of the South, especially the least developed countries (LLDCs) of the 'Fourth' and 'Fifth' Worlds, the problem has worsened as the debt has continued to increase, growing between 1980 and 1993 from approximately US\$573 billion to US\$1770 billion. Over that time, this translated into a net transfer of more than US\$50 billion dollars from the South to the North (Canadian Government Report, 1992).

Several possible solutions or palliatives to the debt crisis have been proposed. These include: suggestions by official bilateral donors for writing down the debt of the poorest and most highly-indebted countries;¹⁵ proposals to use the IMF's Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and/or the sale of a 'modest' amount of the IFIs' gold reserves to pay down the debt (Canadian Government Report, 1995: 41); and the controversial request to cancel the debts of the poorest countries on the condition that the recovered money be used for social development (UNDP, 1994: 64; CCIC, 1994: 46-7).

¹⁵ These proposals were submitted to the Paris Club (the international forum for rescheduling bilateral official debts) following various economic summits (eg. Toronto, Naples, Trinidad) of the Group of 7 (G-7) industrialised nations. However, although the participating industrialised countries reached accords at these meetings, they have not followed through by complying with the terms of the agreements (Canadian Government Report, 1995: 40; UNDP, 1994: 64).

Problems Concerning Multi/Transnational Corporations

Another aspect of the debt problem is the lack of direct foreign investment (DFI) as a source of repayment capital. Because of the inability or unwillingness of some governments to structurally adjust, and a continuing reluctance by external capital to invest even in some strong adjusters, the anticipated investment which was to follow the implementation of SAPs has not been widely realised. Moreover, as attractive as DFI is to countries, its benefits are diminished when the investor is a multi- or transnational corporation (MNC, TNC) which uses monopolistic, discriminatory, corrupt and/or oppressive practices.

The ability of individual states to control the behaviour of M/TNCs seems to have been eroded with the growth in the numbers of the latter, the increased transnationalisation of production schedules and the 'internationalisation of the state'. Strange (1994) argues that these aspects of globalisation have placed M/TNCs in the position of being major diplomatic players in the international system. As such, they have a decided advantage over workers and consumers (and most NGOs!) in presenting their interests to official policy-makers. The weakness of ordinary people in civil society relative to large corporations undoubtedly has contributed to the growing 'global crisis in employment', although the 'flexibilisation' of production¹⁶ and the spread of new technologies which replace human workers have also been responsible for job losses and/or insecurity (CCIC, 1994: 44).

According to the Commission on Global Governance (1995: 173-5), there are several

¹⁶ For a description of 'flexibilisation', see note 13, page 57.

international controls (beyond the existing but rather ‘toothless’ UN Restrictive Practices Code) which could be placed on M/TNCs to deal with these problems. It recommends: 1) that the recently formed World Trade Organization (WTO) adopt a set of competition rules to combat monopolistic behaviour; 2) that minimum standards of corporate behaviour and rules to make corporate dealings more transparent be set; 3) that a code for international investment be established by joint WTO-UN effort.¹⁷

The highly competitive global market of the 1990s with a heightened rivalry for DFI is not particularly conducive to the adoption of measures to achieve greater control over M/TNCs behaviour. Moreover, many past recommendations on M/TNCs, such as those of the NIEO (see p. 53, above), have rarely been implemented. Yet, NGOs, in particular, persist in advocating control measures¹⁸. As well, several scholars have highlighted the need for measures especially to protect women workers who have suffered negative effects from the ‘flexibilisation and feminisation’ of labour (eg. Bakker, 1997).

Dealing with Unemployment and Migration

One of the more painful human consequences of globalisation and adjustment has

¹⁷ The Commission points out that NGOs such as Transparency International which is committed to eradicating corruption in international business transactions can play useful roles in establishing such a code.

¹⁸ For example, see the African NGO Declaration for UNCTAD IX (1996: 3) which claims that “UNCTAD should conduct objective analyses of, and monitor, the operations of transnational corporations (TNCs) around the world, especially their effects on local communities, national economies and the environment. The UNCTAD investment division should operate within the perspective of the former UNCTAD, instead of seeing its role as servicing the interests of TNCs.”

been has been increased unemployment and decreased wages for some segments of workers (UNRISD, 1995). The Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC), a Canadian consortium of NGOs, proposed some measures to deal with the employment crisis in recommendations presented in 1994 to the Canadian Foreign Policy Review Committee. It advised that steps be taken with respect to credit, technology and infrastructure to protect domestic industries in the South and that Canada push for the establishment of a regulatory framework which would protect Southern industries from the negative effects of globalisation (CCIC, 1994: 44).

An important aspect of the 'global employment crisis' is the increase in the flow of factors of production - including labour - across borders. While many countries are dealing with the pressures of a growing number of legal immigrants, an even more pressing problem is an increase in illegal immigrants and refugees (UNRISD, 1995: 58-71). UNRISD recommends adopting a pragmatic attitude toward international migrations: recognising that they are going to occur whether governments approve or not suggests that the aim should not be to eliminate them but to make them more manageable (*ibid.*, 70). One recommendation has been to establish a General Agreement on Migration Policy which would be set up along the lines of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) (*ibid.*, 70). Another proposal is for industrial countries to compensate developing countries "for restrictions on the migration of their unskilled labour" (UNDP, 1994: 62). The latter recommendation arises partly from frustration with the industrial countries' increasing resistance to immigration, especially as they are not moving fast enough to dismantle trade barriers which discriminate

against exports from developing countries (Commission on Global Governance, 1995: 167; UNDP, 1994: 62).

Coordinating UN Agencies and IFIs for Global Democracy

Beyond suggestions for policy changes in specific issue areas, many scholars urge that revisions in IGOs, and especially IFIs, are required for the establishment of a policy agenda which will promote sustainable, democratic development¹⁹. Childers and Urquhart (1994: 55) summarise the key problems currently facing existing official international institutions of governance as:

- 1) a lack of a “coherent macro-economic strategy and policy for the *whole* world” - especially one which takes Southern interests more fully into consideration;
- 2) an almost “total disjuncture between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions” which prevents the “coherent analysis, strategic options, and negotiating fora” for the development of such a macro-economic policy;
- 3) the weak and fractured nature of UN leadership in economic and social areas which is exacerbated by inefficiencies at the global, regional and country levels; and
- 4) enormous inefficiencies associated with the large array of separate and uncoordinated development funds and programmes which exist within the UN system.

Specific initiatives have been suggested to improve inter-agency coordination, especially between the UN and IFIs. These include establishing a mechanism which would provide for greater accountability of the IFIs to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and creating a UN Economic (or Development) Security Council to deal with major

¹⁹ The 50th anniversaries of the UN and Bretton Woods institutions was an important occasion leading to series of proposals for revising both systems.

problems of economic *and* social development (UNRISD, 1995: 170). According to Childers and Urquhart (1994: 61), the latter recommendation arises from a need to create an organisation of 'manageable' size which would carry out the developmentalist mandate with which ECOSOC was initially entrusted but has been unable to fulfill. A new institution would alleviate some of the burden of ECOSOC's work 'overload' but, more importantly, it would put an end to a 'superstition' that the latter can never be successfully revitalised.

Any changes to ECOSOC are likely to have minimal beneficial effect if they are not accompanied by revisions to the General Assembly's coordination mechanism. Specifically, the General Assembly should initiate the active '*engagement*' of agencies within the UN which now operate as separate, almost autonomous units - through increased consultation, cross-over representation at meetings and presentation of papers at joint meetings (Childers & Urquhart, 1994: 63-4). And to improve the opportunities for member-governments to align "their policies in agency governing bodies with the policies that their representatives recommend at the UN", it has been recommended that a "United Nations System Consultative Board" be established (*ibid.*, 62).

As well as several suggestions for providing NGOs with more active roles in the UN system, a more controversial proposal is for the creation of a UN Peoples' or a World Citizen Assembly. Such a body would give voting privileges to representatives of ordinary citizens as well as to their national governments. Despite the logistical problems associated with establishing an equitable and workable formula for implementing this dual voting system, its proponents argue that the initiative is necessary for the extension of democracy. Such a body could provide a forum for democratic expression for people in countries with autocratic

governments and for groups in any system with opinions which differ from those of their governments. Finally, a People's Assembly would be an important step in officially acknowledging the existence of a global citizenry and providing an important vehicle for promoting the development of a "cosmopolitan democracy" (Archibugi, 1995: 137-43).

Proposals to reform the Security Council are directed primarily against the veto power which is enjoyed by the five permanent 'super-power' members. As Archibugi (1995: 150) observes, "(t)he existence of the veto power contravenes one of the supposed principles of the UN Charter, which stipulates the equal sovereignty of states". Archibugi goes on to argue that "in no other constitution or organization founded on democratic principles is it accepted that a few members alone may invalidate the decisions of the majority". Moreover, the institutional arrangements which were devised to protect a balance of power at the end of World War II have lost any apparent relevance in the post Cold War period (*ibid.*, 152).

Therefore, proposals intended to 'democratise' the Security Council and/or to improve its currency include:

- 1) abolishing the veto and letting majority vote determine decisions;
- 2) establishing the requirement that two negative votes be necessary to constitute a veto as opposed to the single vote veto which now stands;
- 3) enlarging the Council to somewhere between 19 and 25 members with Southern countries making up the difference in numbers;
- 4) opening up membership to regional organizations such as the European Union (EU), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It has also been suggested that different categories of seats might be established: sets of permanent members, semi-permanent members based on geographical rotation (eg. Brazil/Argentina), and regional members;
- 5) establishing closer links between the Security Council and the International Court of

Justice and/or making the Security Council more accountable to the General Assembly;

6) giving representation to non-state members. For example, it has been suggested that when/if the World Citizens Assembly is formed it should elect a representative (with a consultative role only) to sit on the Council (Archibugi, 1995: 153-5).

Proposals to reform the International Court of Justice hope to make it more supportive of the 'law of humanity', as articulated by Falk (see p.116, above), and less protective of a state-centric view of law. Suggestions of ways to bring about this change include:

- 1) making the Court's jurisdiction mandatory²⁰;
- 2) extending the Court's jurisdiction to certain cases which involve relations between states and their citizens, especially as they affect human rights;
- 3) establishing an international criminal court for trying cases of inter- or transnational crime (such as terrorism) or for dealing with crimes against humanity (*ibid.*, 133-4; Commission on Global Governance, 1995: 308-23).

According to many analysts, a new agenda for development based on the principles of the 'law of humanity' is not achievable without a major restructuring of the Bretton Woods financial institutions. According to critics, both the World Bank and the IMF have veered from their initially-intended mandates in both cases, to the detriment of the South. The World Bank was set up as a development bank - that is, to lend commercially raised capital for development. Yet, its detractors argue, its adherence to orthodox economic ideology and policies following the decline of international 'Keynesianism' hardly promotes a developmentalist agenda (see chapter two). Moreover, because they support this orthodoxy,

²⁰ For a list of the World Court's areas of jurisdiction, see Article 36 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice. Reprinted in *The Commission on Global Governance* (1995: 310).

its programmes often run counter to (in effect, cancel out) those of other agencies within the UN system. Also, its 'orthodox' tendency to focus on national accounts and policy choices causes it to neglect the 'major international dimension' of development. Finally, because control of the Bank is weighted according to the size of the donations made by members-states, its policies are determined largely by the interests of the wealthiest states and usually not designed to the advantage of (nor in consultation with) poor Southern states (Childers & Urquhart, 1995: 79-83).

The IMF was established to promote stability in the international economy by providing loans to correct member countries' balance of payments difficulties. Critics charge, however, that the IMF has contravened the principle of intervening *equitably* in the economic policies of countries by disregarding the financial inefficiencies of the richer nations while adopting an 'essentially punitive' approach in dealings with developing countries. And, although the latter account for less than 10 percent of the world's liquidity, and "when the need for Keynes's 'internal stabilizing mechanism' is, if anything, greater (in the 1990s), the IMF has little role in relations either to the wealthier countries or to the daily electronic movement of money" (*ibid.*, 84).

Recommendations for reforming these IFIs involve initiatives:

- 1) to "democratize the structures and operations of the institutions themselves" (eg. a one country - one vote system rather than one involving weighted);
- 2) "to make them transparent and accountable (by opening access to information on policy and project loans, doing social and environmental impact studies, having participatory evaluation procedures, and taking responsibility for miscalculations or errors); and
- 3) to promote an equitable distribution of economic power on a global basis"

(consideration should be given to projects' impact on economic justice and equity, environmental sustainability, and participation in the project by those affected) (CCIC, 1994: 51).

Specific suggestions include: establishing arbitration tribunals to mediate between creditors and debtors; regular reporting to member-countries; and creating an Independent Appeals Commission to oversee the IFIs' operations (*ibid.*, 51).

Financing the Reforms

Changing institutional structures is only part of the strategy for establishing a new development agenda. Of equal importance is creating new sources of liquidity to fund the type of fundamental change which is envisaged. Yet, calls to increase aid funds are likely to go unheeded for the foreseeable future. Another proposal which is likewise unlikely to be realised, but which at least received an attentive hearing is the proposed 'Tobin tax' to be levied on international foreign exchange transactions, with the proceeds being used for social development needs. Other proposals to raise development capital include: a global energy tax; accumulation of a 'peace dividend' accrued through reduced military spending; a tax on trade surpluses; and a global income tax based on country per capita income.

To use the monies destined for development more efficiently, further suggestions have been put forward. One is for aid donors and recipients to enter into a 20-20 compact arrangement where 20 percent of the former's aid money and 20 percent of developing countries' budgets would be dedicated to basic human development. Another is for the establishment of a Global Human Security Fund. Finally, there have been recommendations

for a new international currency and for the establishment of a World Central Bank (UNRISD, 1995: 171).

Conclusions: Prospects for a New Development Agenda

These recommendations for revising five principle organs of the UN²¹ and the two major IFIs reflect a major shift in thinking about the nature of international relations and its relevant actors. To some extent, the various recommendations indicate a growing awareness among official policy-makers (as well as among critics of IGOs) of the limitations of the state and the present arrangement of the inter-state institutions for dealing with the problems which currently face the international community. Second, the strong emphasis on forging stronger links among the principle organs and between the latter and other international organisations and actors suggests a growing awareness of the interconnectedness of issues of international governance. In short, security and politics are inseparable from economic development and disparities. Moreover, security depends upon the interrelatedness of international, domestic, regional and global political economies.

In general, most of the recommendations for changes to IGOs seemingly are designed to further an ideal which is closer to the '*law of humanity*' as articulated by Falk (see above)

²¹ The UN was set up to be headed by six principle organs: the General Assembly, the International Court of Justice, the Secretariat, the Economic and Social Council, the Security Council and the Trusteeship Council. Only the last (which is obviously less relevant than it was at the time of the UN's establishment) has not been targeted for significant revision.

and which moves away from a firm endorsement of the principle of *raison d'état*. In essence, much of the revisionist trend involves efforts to extend democratic procedure within the international realm - both in terms of spreading sovereignty over different levels of governance and in terms of bringing citizens and NGOs into international policy decisions. Also, democratising the IGO complex involves establishing greater levels of equality and equity in official North-South relations and creating fora which are more conducive to the development of effective North-South 'partnership'.

Pressures for reform of international institutions are made, of course, within the context of broader political and ideational contestations and power struggles. Strategies to create institutions which will recognise and promote the ideals of the 'law of humanity' and principles of a 'people-centred' development agenda are countered by the entrenched interests of the dominant and resistant neo-liberal order as well as by a persistent reluctance of most national governments to let go of the traditional conceptualisations of statehood.

However, as Falk (1996: 15) argues:

(The) work of restoration need not rewind the clock of development or knowledge. The globalisation of production and distribution cannot be reversed, and is as much a consequence of the global reach of technology as it is of the expansionist compulsions of the market. Only a neutralising counter-globalism arising out of comparably transnational societal initiatives can give the state the political space that it needs to strike a better balance between the well-being of its own people as a territorial community, and fulfilling its emergent role and identity as an agency for the protection of the global commons and the promotion of human (as distinct from merely national) interests.

In essence, Falk describes the contemporary period as a conjuncture in which the norms as well as the functional capacities of existing institutions of governance have not yet

caught up with the social transformations that are taking place. **To a large extent, non-state actors serve to illuminate as well as help bridge the present gaps which exist between traditional conceptualisations and institutions and the revisionist alternatives which would be more suited to the age of globalisation we have entered.**

New social movements, aided by the unprecedented advances in communications technologies, merge the particularism and diversity of local democratic struggles with global struggles for protection of the environment, human rights and security. The connections within these diffuse and fluid constructions gain some measure of empirical definition and permanency through associated NGOs which are working - consciously or not - to promote participatory democracy at various levels of polity and of society. And the formation of 'partnerships' and networks among such NGOs may be an important strategy for helping to dismantle and/or reduce traditional borders/barriers - North-South, national-international ('inside-outside'), global-local, masculine-feminine - which, because of 'globalisation', appear to be losing their former claims to legitimacy.

Part II

Proposed revisions/reform of IGOs such as those which were discussed in the previous chapter may be viewed as strategies to deal with the insecurities and problems associated with the changing world order. The implementation of any single proposal would not necessarily significantly further the 'people-centred development' project described in Part I, above. Neither are all of these proposals, in themselves, especially 'progressive' or radically counter-hegemonic. For example, Waterman (1996: 166) claims that the highly publicised report, *Our Global Neighbourhood*, prepared recently by the Commission on Global Governance is not particularly innovative, supports the existing liberal order and, therefore, is unlikely to support the kind or degree of system change on which sustainable democratic development depends. In his words:

Here, in the tradition of Brandt and Brundtland, is a commission of the globally great and good, doing to *all* global alternatives what the Rio Conference did only to the ecological one. And this at great length and a - surely?- subsidised price. We are going to have OGN (*Our Global Neighbourhood*) quoted at us *ad nauseum* over the next five years, or at least until it joins the dustbin of utopian reformism.

Yet, continues Waterman, despite the Commission's over-zealous liberal internationalism, the document does need to be taken seriously and critically evaluated because it, like many of the current revisionist proposals, is "... a marker - a token of the achievements (and limitations) of the new democratic social movements" (p. 166) (and therefore, one might add, of many of the NGOs which are associated with these movements).

Yet, although there is some convincing and considerable anecdotal evidence to confirm that certain such organisations and movements are promoting changes toward a

more 'people-centred' development strategy, there have been few empirical studies which attempt to assess the actual extent of their achievements and limitations. In particular, there have been few analyses which attempt to make connections and/or distinctions between and among democratising trends/processes/strategies at local, national, regional and transnational levels.

In an attempt to address such lacunae, and seeking to establish if (and how) civil society linkages may contribute to 'people-centred development', this thesis now turns to a case study of Canadian-Zimbabwean NGO partnerships involved in Zimbabwean 'development' and/or 'global' development. Chapters five and six examine state-NGO relations in Zimbabwe (chapter five) and Canada (chapter six) in order to assess the ways in which NGO behaviour (including the forming of 'partnerships') is conditioned by national political economies and cultures. Chapter seven continues to focus primarily on Canadian and Zimbabwean organisations, but argues that democratic change in Zimbabwe (or elsewhere) cannot be separated from broader regional, international and transnational contexts and associations. In short, bi-lateral initiatives focused on national 'development' - while important - are insufficient in themselves to produce 'sustainable democratic development'. The latter requires multi-level structural and institutional change to avert or at least regulate the processes associated with the global neoliberal order which continues to exacerbate conditions of inequality and insecurity in the world. As was argued in chapter four, such changes are contingent upon the existence of a transnational civil society possessing some sense of rightful citizenry and NGO networks in association with 'new' social movements are important agents in the construction processes. Therefore, chapter

seven is concerned with providing empirical evidence from the Southern African area to show if, where and how such processes are occurring.

Canadian-Zimbabwean NGO partnerships were chosen as the case study for the following reasons :

(1) Canada provides useful examples for the central theme of the thesis in that its official aid agency was an early proponent for bringing NGOs into its structure and it has been an innovator in promoting the notion of developmental 'partnerships.' Moreover, it is frequently regarded as an 'enlightened', middle-power country with an aid policy largely motivated by a principle of 'humane internationalism'. As such, it provides a useful case study for investigating the contradictions which have been associated with the changes within the aid community during the period of ascending neoliberal hegemony.

2) Zimbabwe is a useful case for analysis of global structural change and of current development policy because it is in Africa and therefore in the increasingly (and arguably the most) marginalised periphery of the world economy, but also the centre of 'new' security agenda concerns and operations (Shaw & Adibe, 1996). Second, its position in Southern Africa as an immediate neighbour of South Africa provides a unique opportunity to analyse the regional dimensions of the issue of sustainable democratic development within a context of an unfolding democratising event with profound implications for theory and praxis. Third, Zimbabwe has a well-developed community of NGOs of sufficient size and maturity to provide useful empirical comparisons. Finally, Canadian NGOs have been involved in the Southern African region for several decades and therefore have well-established connections with Zimbabwean organisations.

Chapter 5: Contradictions of Democratisation and Development in Zimbabwe

Ours is a 'masked democracy', something which gives the stranger only a resemblance, which is not the real thing. Democracy does not mean fourteen or twenty registered political parties. It means participation at the lowest and weakest level of society.

- C. Hove, Zimbabwean novelist, 1994: 115-6

Introduction

Globalisation presents similar pressures, constraints and opportunities for NGOs around the world, yet organisations operate within national political economies which have specific and unique characteristics. Therefore, the degree to which NGOs affect, or are able to affect processes of democratisation and/or development in any country will depend to a large extent on the political economy of the latter (and in particular, on the nature and site of the country's insertion in the global economy, the evolution of state form, the political culture, and state-societal relations). In Zimbabwe, two events which have contributed significantly to molding the features of its current political economy are the achievement of independence in 1980 following a protracted struggle and the implementation of a structural adjustment programme a decade later.¹

¹ The analysis in this chapter begins with the formation of the Zimbabwean state. However, obviously, earlier factors and events have conditioned the country's present political economy. As analysis below will indicate, particularly important events in the period immediately prior to and during the struggle for majority black rule in a new Zimbabwean state were the Smith regime's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain and the resulting economic sanctions by the international community. A recent event which has significant implications for Zimbabwe's present and future political economy was the establishment of majority rule in the neighbouring Republic of

The country's development, in terms of both economic growth and democratisation, is, if anything, more elusive now than it was at the time of independence in 1980. Moreover, the general mood in the country has soured. The early post-independence period was marked by widespread optimism which was based on expectations of renewed economic growth following the war of liberation as well as the promise of fairer distribution and the alleviation of social distress. As the 1980s unfolded, however, hope became clouded if not totally eclipsed by recession, debt and drought. Then, in 1990 even the rhetoric of redistribution was silenced when Zimbabwe, like most countries in Africa, adopted a neoliberal development strategy and the policies of structural adjustment.

Since then, not only has economic growth remained elusive, but optimism concerning the polity has turned to increasing scepticism and hostility toward the government. In the early 1990s, the promise for a socialist democracy was down-graded to an offer of 'pragmatic socialism' (which appears to have been a euphemism for state corporatism). More recently, any pretense of forming a socialist state has been discarded, yet many feel that although the government increasingly favours the discourse of liberal democracy, the practice of democracy - either liberal or socialist - is still a long way from being realised.

This chapter attempts to discern the prospects for sustainable democratic development in Zimbabwe by exploring the nature of state-NGO relations since

South Africa (RSA) in 1994. Implications of this for Zimbabwe and the region will be discussed further in chapter seven.

independence within the context of changing national and global political economies. It begins with a brief summary of Zimbabwe's recent history, proceeds to analyses of the structure of the country's economy, polity and political culture and concludes with sections on the place of indigenous and inter-/trans-national NGOs in the political economy of Zimbabwe's 'development'. In short, the chapter employs the provocative opening statement by Hove as a starting point from which to explore questions about the depth of Zimbabwe's democracy and how problems of democratic consolidation and sustainability relate to the issue of economic liberalisation (and possible recovery) in that country. Finally, and ultimately, it is concerned with the roles which NGOs and North-South NGO partnerships may play simultaneously in Zimbabwe's democratisation.

History of Events and Issues Surrounding Independence

Zimbabwe became an independent country in 1980. Until that time, the territory had been known as Rhodesia and was governed as a British colony. When the ruling white minority declared a Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Britain in the mid-1960s, Zimbabwean Africans used the occasion as an opportunity to launch a guerrilla war for the liberation and independence of the black majority. Hostilities finally ceased in December 1979 when the contending factions signed the Lancaster House

Agreement and elections the following year brought the period of direct British rule to an end.

The liberation coalition had signed the Lancaster House Agreements at the urging of neighbouring countries and encouraged by promises from international donors that financial assistance would be forthcoming, especially to facilitate land redistributions. However, in signing, the coalition accepted several constitutional conditions that put significant constraints on the post-independence policy makers. In particular, conditions such as the guarantee of specified numbers of electoral seats - to whites and to tribal chiefs - and the protection of property rights for 10 years following independence had ambiguous and conflicting effects and, in fact, continue still to impact negatively upon the consolidation of democracy in Zimbabwe (Alexander, 1994).

The externally decreed constraints of the Lancaster House Agreements were complicated by internal political divisions within Zimbabwe. A serious split had divided Zimbabwe's main nationalist movement in 1964 into the Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU). Although the two rival factions were reunited in 1976 with the formation of the Patriotic Front (PF),² the union proved to be a temporary one which dissolved in 1980 when ZANU-PF opted to

² Efforts by individuals such as President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, especially, but also by other leaders of the states which were united against apartheid South Africa (the 'Frontline States') and by organisations such as the Organisation of African Unity Liberation Committee were responsible for the reunification of ZANU and ZAPU in 1976 (Scarritt and Nkiwane, 1996: 11).

seek election as a separate party.³ The latter's resounding victory in that election⁴ was a major first step toward entrenching the power of both the party and its leader, Robert Mugabe. Since then, other oppositional parties have remained weak and political power has become increasingly centralised to the extent that Zimbabwe has been a *de facto* one-party state at least from 1987 when ZAPU-PF was finally subsumed by the ZANU-PF government.

On the surface at least, ethnicity appeared to be a strong determining factor in the ZANU-PF election victory of 1980: 48 of the victor's 57 seats were won in Shona-speaking areas (the Shona make up 80% of the population) while 15 out the 20 seats won by ZAPU-PF were in Ndebele (17% of the population) districts. All of the 20 seats which were reserved for whites went to the Rhodesia Front (RF) which had formed the government during the UDI and the brief post-war Rhodesia-Zimbabwe inter-regnum. However, while it seems apparent that ethnicity was an important factor in explaining ZANU-PF's success in winning the large majority of the 'African' votes, some scholars argue that it was not the only or even necessarily the predominant one. Nhema (1994) claims, for instance, that ZANU-PF won the election largely because of its superior organizational tactics and structure. By establishing village and defence committees

³ Both ZANU and ZAPU used the PF suffix during and following the 1980 election (Scarritt & Nkiwane, 1996, nt. 7, p. 29).

⁴ ZANU-PF won 57 of the 80 'African' seats which had been allotted by the new constitution. ZAPU-PF and the Rhodesia Front (RF) won 20 seats each while the remaining seats in the 100-seat Parliament were distributed among another ten parties which had contested the election.

throughout the 'liberated zones' during the war, it had become widely and deeply embedded in society and the people simply voted to support the party and policies with which they were most familiar. Moreover, argues Nhema, South African and Western governments had demonstrated that they favoured the 'pro-capitalist' leaders, Joshua Nkomo (ZAPU) and Abel Muzorewa (prime minister during the post-war/pre-election period). This propelled the poor, unpropertied class toward ZANU-PF which had campaigned on promises to implement a mixed economy under a strong, distributive state.

Nhema's conclusions suggest that the popular support for ZANU-PF was based on consent. Or, in other words, there existed at least some measure of *hegemony*: consensus between the governors and the governed on the definition of the social good. However, an alternative and considerably less positive explanation for ZANU-PF's electoral success is suggested by David Moore's (1995) recent revisionist analysis of the relations between peasants and the Zimbabwe African People's Union Army (ZANLA), the armed wing of ZANU's guerrilla movement. Moore claims that the latter used extreme coercive measures during the war to bring villagers on side. This analysis suggests that coercion as much as (or more than) consent was the initial basis on which popular support for ZANU-PF was consolidated.

The Elusiveness of Hegemony

Regardless of whether the widespread popular support with which the ZANU-PF government began its 1980 mandate was gained more through consent or coercion, the government's initial policies suggested that it was determined to build upon any nascent or incipient hegemony that had developed around the nationalist and developmentalist ideologies to which both state and the majority of society adhered.

From the beginning, however, the newly formed *Government of National Unity (GNU)* faced severe challenges. In particular, the existing social disparities based on race were exacerbated by class inequalities in which a dominant white settler class of owners of production coexisted with subordinate classes of poor black workers and marginalised peasants. The ruling party had made election promises to redress the extreme inequities that were the legacy of the racist policies of the Rhodesian government, and after winning power it continued to reassure the poor black majority that it would honour its commitment. Its first economic policy document, for example, clearly stated that the government would address the problems of:

economic exploitation of the majority by the few, the grossly uneven infrastructure and productive development of the rural and urban and distribution sectors, the unbalanced levels of development within and among sectors and the consequent grossly inequitable pattern of income distribution and of benefits to the overwhelming majority of this country (which) stand as a serious indictment of our society (Government of Zimbabwe, 1981:1).

However, while the government was declaring its intention to improve social services in areas of housing, health and education, to promote rural development and to create employment in all sectors of the economy, *et cetera* (Sachikonye, 1995: 184), it acknowledged that improvements in social equity would be realised only as a result of rapid economic growth (MacGarry, 1993). Therefore, there was an attempt to strike a reasonable balance between maintaining the vitality of the predominantly white productive sector and meeting the basic needs of the black majority.

Raftopoulos (1992a:64) observes, however, that the government "... had no fundamental control over the productive forces in the country (and, therefore) had to rely on the investment decisions of private capital to ensure adequate economic growth." Consequently, in order to gain some control over the means of production during that period of extreme social and political needs, the government sought to become an active participant in the economy.⁵

Economic interventionism was consistent with the ruling party's commitment to socialist 'developmentalism' and its declared intention to create a one-party, Marxist-Leninist state. Therefore, it was a disappointment and even somewhat of a surprise to some that socialism never became firmly consolidated in Zimbabwe (Astrow, 1983).⁶

⁵ For example, early into its mandate, the government founded, bought out or acquired shares in a variety of enterprises, including the Zimbabwe Tourist Development Corporation, Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation, Zimbabwe State Trading Corporation, Minerals Marketing Corporation and the Zimbabwe Industrial Development Corporation (ZIDCO).

⁶ Sachikonye (1995: 181) argues that ZANU-PF became infused with the "ideology of developmentalism" and that the latter superseded the party's earlier

Yet, others concluded that the post-independence system of corporatist state-capitalism which developed was, if not inevitable, at least predictable, given that it had its roots in the historical processes and structures of the settler political economy (Shaw, 1982).

In essence, despite the change in leadership and the new socialist rhetoric, the type of power relations which developed within the post-independence state did not differ significantly from those which existed under its colonial predecessor. Under white rule the state had served as a buffer, both by protecting the white elites and workers from political and economic competition from the black masses and by attempting to lessen shocks to the small vulnerable economy from external pressures and threats. The government had been highly responsive to the business interests of the white elite (the most important industries in the country exerted considerable influence over the government through the Chamber of Mines and the Rhodesian National Farmers Union [RNFU]) and protective of white labour (various sanctions and laws prevented blacks from having equal access to jobs and wages).

In the post-independence period, such corporatist arrangements persisted. The main difference was that they were expanded to include certain elite groups of black Africans. These included a small yet growing black entrepreneurial bourgeoisie as well as the more numerous and influential state-based bourgeoisie. The rapid advancement of this group gives credence to Sachikonye's argument (1995: 182) that the proliferation of state

commitment to socialism. Because of the need for rapid development, he claims, the Marxist-Leninism of Mugabe and his colleagues became "muddled", "theoretical(ly) ambiguous", "compounded of a great deal of common sense as well as ideology" and, ultimately, "fraught with undemocratic, authoritarian connotations".

enterprises was not merely “an altruistic (or presumably, ideologically-based) strategy... to limit or pre-empt the expansion of the private sector (but was also/rather) a conscious attempt by the state-based bourgeoisie to carve a niche for itself for its own accumulation requirements”.

In sum, then, although Rhodesia’s state-capitalist system remained largely intact (Shaw, 1996: 80) following Zimbabwe’s independence, state-societal relations were re-aligned to some extent. Although the white agrarian and entrepreneurial bourgeoisie retained their privileged economic position and power, they lost their direct political access and control to a black state-based bourgeoisie. Second, the new ruling elite was aware not only of the necessity of accommodating the white business elite but, initially at least, it was also very sensitive to the needs of the subordinate classes of black peasants and workers. The latter, after all, had been the new rulers’ comrades in the liberation struggle and had provided ZANU-PF with its electoral victory (Dashwood, 1996).

As Sachikonye (1995) argues, however, the nationalist ideology around which state and societal interests converged during the liberation struggles proved to be an insufficient source of legitimation upon which the hegemony of the new regime could be established. And, since the government’s support for social programmes was not based on a true or singular commitment to socialism but instead was but one thrust in a pragmatic, but essentially contradictory, dual-objective development strategy, there was little hope for the eventual consolidation of a hegemonic consensus. As the next section explains, when the economic growth on which this policy of ‘growth with equity’ was precariously

'balanced' was not sustained, both the policy itself and the prospects for a democratic polity in Zimbabwe became increasingly threatened.

Economic and Social Policy 1980-95

Phase 1: from 'growth with equity' to ESAP

According to one viewpoint, Zimbabwe's economic record in the 1980s was "dismal" (Naude, 1996). This negative evaluation is based on statistics which show a growth rate that hovered around 3% per annum (as opposed to a projected 8%), low net investment levels (3.6% average), a steady decline in gross fixed capital formation and an increase in the budget deficit (due to the costs of emergency drought relief as well as significantly increased expenditures on social services) (Raftopoulos, 1992a: 64-5). A brief boom-period in 1980-81 which had contributed to the financing of large initial increases in social spending was followed by a recession in 1981.⁷

As the conditions continued to decline over the 1980s, an increase in minimum wage levels which had contributed to the early boom⁸ became unsustainable: the

⁷ The latter prompted the government to seek assistance from the IMF and to agree to an initial, early set of conditionalities which included devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar, a reduction in government subsidies and liberalisation of the capital account to attract investment. However, by 1984, it was deemed impossible to comply any longer with the IMF programme; therefore, it was terminated and economic policy reverted to direct government control (Raftopoulos, 1992a: 65).

⁸ Other reasons for the initial boom was the release of a long-term pent-up demand following the period of war and of trade sanctions (Chiszo, 1993: 10; Raftopoulos, 1992a: 64) and the loan assistance provided by international donors who

significant real growth in wages which was registered in the first two years following independence for workers in mining, manufacturing, agriculture and domestic employment leveled off as early as 1982 and began to decrease thereafter. By 1990, they were approaching 1980 levels (MacGarry, 1993: 12).

Clearly, Zimbabwe experienced serious economic problems during Africa's "lost decade" of the 1980s.⁹ However, given the magnitude of the problems which confronted the country at independence, the progress which was made in social development during this period was nothing short of spectacular. In implementing the *Growth with Equity* policy introduced in 1981, the government significantly increased expenditures on social services. For example, in health there was a real dollar increase of 33% in 1980/81 and 20% in 81/82; in education, there was a 60% increase in 1980/81 and then 5% per year until 1990/91. Largely, it would appear, because of these higher spending levels, there were impressive improvements in health statistics during the 1980s, including a drop in infant mortality from 88/1000 to 61/1000, a decrease in under age five mortality from 104/100 to 87/1000, and a similar fall in rates of maternal mortalities (Government of Zimbabwe/UNICEF 1993, 1). In education, school enrollment grew from 1.2 million in 1980 to 2.1 million ten years later (*ibid.*) and, according to MacGarry (1993: 7), the

were strongly supportive of the country's 'democratic' potential and promise.

⁹ "The 1980s are often referred to as the 'lost decade', as many of the basic indicators of development showed regressive patterns: infant mortality was up and nutrition levels plummeted in many countries. Austerity measures prompted public riots that were often met with authoritarian repression" (Plewes, *et al*, 1996:215).

increase was due largely to the elimination of primary school fees and the construction of large numbers of new secondary schools.

By any standards, such improvements in BHNs are impressive, but at least one analyst (Stoneman, 1993) goes further to praise the early economic policy generally, as being “surprisingly successful” considering the constraints involved. As Stoneman (1993) points out:

Zimbabwe diversified exports in the direction of manufactures, repaid its debts without resort to rescheduling, expanded education and health services, created food security sufficient to enable it to ride out the devastating drought of 1987 without imports - and all this in face of a daunting battery of constraints, including destabilisation, rigged export markets, donor hostility and four drought years. To emerge with an average growth rate of 4 per cent may not seem remarkable until one considers what might have been the growth rate in the newly industrialised countries, the world's great success stories of the 1970s and 1980s, had they suffered similar constraints.

Stoneman's assessment helps to set the economic record of Zimbabwe's first decade in appropriate comparative perspective. Yet, it is impossible to dispute that the country faced serious economic difficulties during the 1980s and that performance definitely fell short of the government's high expectations. Moreover, even the 4% growth rate noted by Stoneman - which was considerably less than the 8% anticipated by the government (Raftopoulos, 1992a: 64) - was impossible to sustain mainly because the country relied for 60% of its export earnings on basic commodities with low demand elasticities.

Efforts by the government to encourage productivity and to diversify export production produced unspectacular or contradictory outcomes. In the case of agriculture,

incompatible policies were a problem: measures to reduce impediments to the sale of grain to marketing boards did increase peasant farmers' sale of maize and cotton, but the lack of progress on land reform limited the extent to which peasant production could increase (*New African Yearbook 1991-9: 396*). Meanwhile, the manufacturing sector, despite being well-developed and having been given a boost by the release of pent-up demand in the post-independence period, was seriously hampered by its uncompetitive position internationally following years of an external boycott of Rhodesian exports (*ibid.*). In mining, any potential gains achieved through domestic policy were pre-empted by the external reality of the low metal prices which persisted on the international market during the recession years of the 1980s (UNDP, 1994). Moreover, attempts to modernise equipment, which was a necessary requirement for reasserting Zimbabwe's competitiveness after years of neglect, resulted in increasing the debt.

Ultimately, it was the debt - incurred both to encourage greater productivity and to establish comprehensive social programmes (the two prongs of the *Growth with Equity* plan) - that became the major impediment to the policy's sustainability. Measured either as a percentage of GDP or of export earnings, debt increased steadily from 1980 to 1987. And, although a favourable balance of payments reversed the trend briefly in 1988 and 1989 (MacGarry 1993, 16), Zimbabwe ended the decade heavily dependent upon imports and short of foreign exchange.¹⁰

¹⁰ Although not as severe as in many cases, Zimbabwe's debt problems in the 1980s are typical of those encountered by 'Third World' countries generally. There has been considerable debate as to whether the causes of this apparently ubiquitous phenomenon are better explained by rational or policy choice or by world system or

Table 1: Zimbabwe's Debt

year	1981	1984	1986	1988	1991	1992	1993	1994 (e)	1995 (e)
debt, Z\$ m	992.7	3462.4	3926.6	4611.0	3436.0	4006.0	4200.0	4368.0	4410
as % GDP	22.4	54.1	49.7	49.6	54.8	79.3	74.2	75.7	68.3

Sources: MacGarry, 1993:15; Barclays Country Report (July 1996)

On the basis of this record, and in spite of the positive aspects of the *Growth with Equity* policy which Stoneman identifies, most analysts agree that the Zimbabwean government was obliged at this point to change the direction of its economic policy. Yet, there is considerable disagreement on the nature and degree of change which was required, especially as social conditions have seriously deteriorated since the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) was introduced in 1990.¹¹

Phase 2: The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme, 1990-1995

ESAP was implemented in 1990 as a 'home-grown' initiative of the Zimbabwean government. However, it did not differ significantly in content from the general SAP format of the IMF. Hence, the hallmarks of ESAP were devaluation of the currency,

international political economy theories. My position supports the view that transnational structural factors set the parameters in which states perform, but that the latter's ability to offset or take advantage of changes in the external environment are determined in large part by historically determined conditions of state-society relations; ie. issues of state form and political culture.

¹¹ ESAP was introduced in an *Economic Policy Statement* (1990) and presented in full detail in 1991 statements entitled *Zimbabwe: A Framework for Economic Reform and The Second Five-Year National Development Plan (SFYNDP)*.

deregulation of prices, removal of subsidies and of trade restrictions, sale of parastatals and reduced spending in health, education, social services and infrastructure.

Over the five years which covered the first installment of ESAP, some sub-sectors of the economy benefitted from the programme¹², but overall the effects were not particularly positive, as even the programme's strongest supporters concede.¹³ Direct results of the economic policy include high interest rates and falling domestic demand. These have led in turn to deindustrialisation, high rates of unemployment and decreases in wages (Sachikonye, 1995: 193; FMB, 1995). As well, aside from the problems which derive from ESAP, there have been serious additional pressures to the economy. These include the severe drought which ravaged the country in 1991, war in neighbouring Mozambique and a residual refugee problem, the full-scale entry of post-apartheid South Africa into the Southern African regional economy¹⁴ and a short-fall in the amount of

¹² Sachikonye (1995) lists "the mining industry and cash crop producers (mainly tobacco and horticulture rather than food production)" as the chief beneficiaries.

¹³ See, for instance, various editions of the *Quarterly Guide to the Economy* published by the First Merchant Bank (FMB) of Zimbabwe Limited.

¹⁴ The future of South Africa's economic role and its relationship with other countries of the Southern African region is the subject currently of a great deal of debate and uncertainty. While the land-locked state of Zimbabwe continued to have some economic involvement with South Africa even during the years when sanctions were imposed against the latter by the Front-line States, the relations were limited. However, following the end of apartheid, there has been an unprecedented flood of goods, services and people across the Zimbabwe-South African border and it is not yet clear what the effects of the changing regional economic relationships will be on the Zimbabwean economy. Much will depend ultimately on the nature of regional economic union and therefore on the energy and initiatives of organisations such as SADC (Southern African Development Community), SACU (Southern African Customs Union) and COMESA (Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa) and institutions such as the DBSA

external investment interest compared with over-estimations which were made at the time of ESAP's implementation (Chiszo, 1993; MacGarry, 1994; UNICEF, 1994).

Zimbabwean workers have been hit hard by ESAP. For example, in the public sector, real wages fell by an estimated 20% between 1991 and 1994 and many workers have been (or have faced the threat of being) retrenched.¹⁵ Meanwhile, workers in the private sector have not fared any better. In a study done in 1993 by the Textile Workers Union, workers complained about "(s)hort time work, demotions, retrenchment, poor working conditions and inadequate pay relative to cost of living changes." Many reported supplementing their incomes with informal sector activities although most of these found that, even with extra jobs, their standard of living continued to fall.¹⁶

High rates of unemployment and declining real wages (see Table 1, above), combined with increased prices of commodities and services (due to the de-subsidization

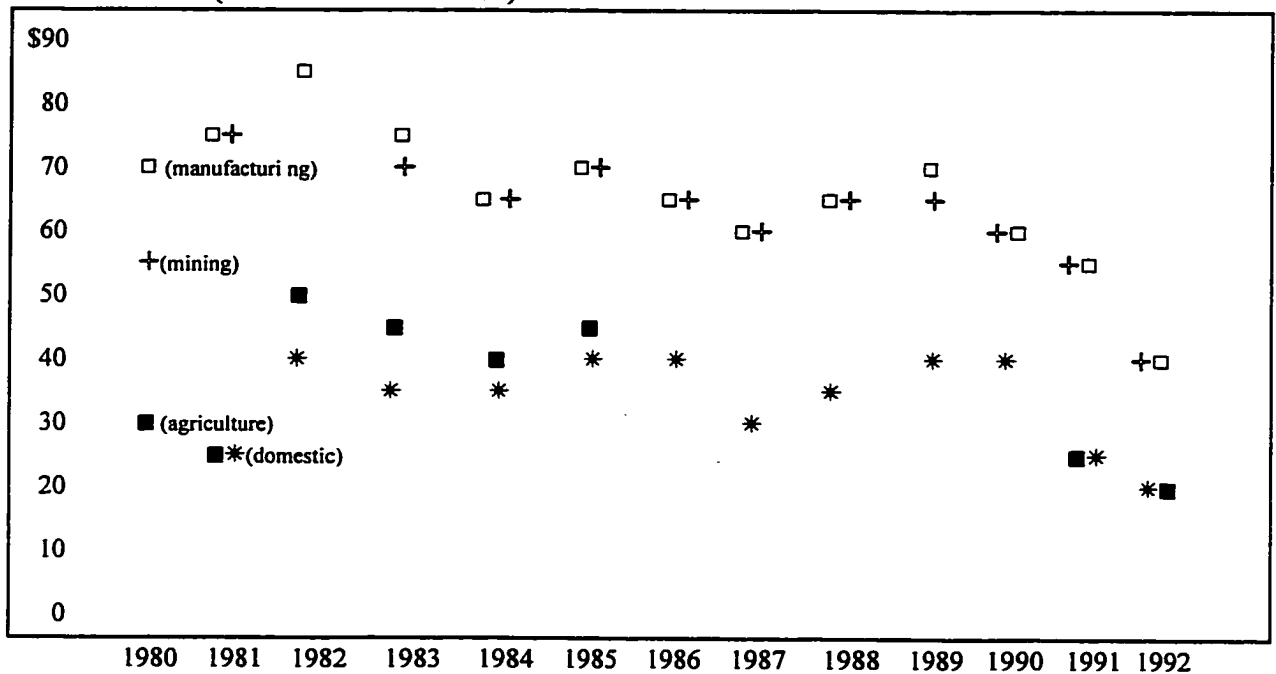
(Development Bank of Southern Africa) (See Shaw, 1996; Oden, 1993).

¹⁵ Not surprisingly, worker demoralisation has escalated in Zimbabwe since the implementation of ESAP. At least one report has speculated that public sector workers' dissatisfaction is so intense that it is adversely affecting the efficiency and performance of the civil service, generally. This, together with the rapid shrinkage and restructuring of the latter, has resulted in an inability of ministries to adapt quickly to lower funding and has contributed to a loss of "capacity of line ministries to manage the adjustment programme" (Chizro & Munro, 1994).

¹⁶ 50% of the people who were interviewed said they had reduced their food consumption to one meal per day - a dramatic increase over the 14% who had made similar statements in 1991. In 1993, 49% of workers walked to work, most reporting travel distances of between 9 and 18 km. In 1991, only 21% had walked. 71% reported having difficulty in meeting health care costs, 74% could not afford the medicine they required and 74% had to cut elsewhere (on food, transportation, clothing, medicine) in order to pay school fees (Zimbabwe Textile Workers Union 1993).

of housing and food, devaluation of the currency, and introduction of user fees) have had a serious negative effect on social conditions. And, given that the high inflation rate and the pressures to curb government spending have led to severe cut-backs in health and education,¹⁷ it is not surprising that several recent studies report that there has been a significant deterioration in human needs statistics in Zimbabwe since 1990 (MacGarry 1994; Chiszo & Munro 1994; Chiszo, 1993; see also Tables 2 & 3, below).

Table 2: Zimbabwe Monthly Real Wage by Sector, 1980-92
(in constant 1980 Z\$)



Source: MacGarry, 1993: 13

(Agriculture statistics not available from 1986-1989)

¹⁷ From 1990-95, the government continued to make nominal spending increases in the health and education sectors, but in real dollar terms, the growth rate has been negative (down 34% in health and welfare and 16% in education) (Chiszo & Munro, 1994).

Table 3: Zimbabwe Consumer Prices 1995-96 (All Items)

CONSUMER PRICES	August 1996 Index	One month back	Three months back	One year back	Year from August 1995 to August 1996
Foodstuffs.....	538.9	-0.6	1.3	+20.8	+32.1
Drinks & Tobacco.....	431.8	+0.1	+2.5	+10.7	+19.4
Clothing & Footwear.....	267.7	+0.5	+2.7	+11.0	+10.2
Rent, Rates & Fuel.....	336.9	0.0	+2.1	+16.6	+25.9
Furniture & Household Stores.....	352.7	+1.2	+3.1	+16.9	+20.5
Medical Care.....	676.0	+0.2	+0.8	+32.9	+17.2
Transport & Communicatons.....	366.5	+1.6	+8.5	+15.0	+15.4
Recreation.....	363.9	-0.1	+12.6	+21.3	+28.1
Education.....	299.1	0.0	+0.6	+12.3	+14.4
Misc. Goods & Services.....	307.2	+0.1	+3.7	+20.8	+18.0
All Items.....	407.9	0.0	+1.4	+17.7	+23.8

Source: First Merchant Bank of Zimbabwe Limited (September 1996)

Such studies show that the cause and effect relationship between ESAP and deteriorating social conditions is multi-factoral and -dimensional. For example, the deleterious effects produced by the decreased spending on health are increased not only by the introduction of user fees for medical services, but by an intensifying 'brain drain' of medical personnel to Botswana and to post-apartheid South Africa. Also, health conditions have deteriorated because of indirect causes such as declining standards of nutrition and sanitation, the latter exacerbated by over-crowded living conditions.

Worsening mortality and morbidity figures¹⁸ and an increase in disease rates, especially

¹⁸ Chiszo (1993) reports that in Harare Central Hospital, maternal death rates rose by a startling 88% between 1989 and 1990, then by 27% and 39% in the next two years . At the same time, the average hospital case load is declining, indicating that user fees are a deterrent to people seeking the services they require.

of opportunistic diseases such as tuberculosis, attest to the deteriorating conditions and also add more challenges to a system already severely burdened by the growing AIDs epidemic (Chiszo, 1993; The Herald 1993, personal communication with medical personnel in Zimbabwe, 1995).

Just as health conditions have deteriorated during the period of structural adjustment, education standards have also declined. The introduction of school fees and examination charges have produced a decline in enrollment at the primary level and an increased drop-out rate among older students, yet student to teacher ratios are increasing because of an exodus of teachers reacting to real wage losses (Chiszo 1993, 8). Besides the 'push factor' of higher fees, many Zimbabwean children are being 'pulled' from school in the 1990s because their parents require their assistance in earning money in the informal sector. And the more fortunate Zimbabwean youths who stay in the educational system are finding that jobs are extremely scarce, even for highly trained and skilled university graduates.

Obviously, deteriorating social conditions have varied impacts on different sectors, regions, generations and individuals within Zimbabwean society. Generally, however, women are more adversely affected than men.¹⁹ And it is worse yet for children who are at least as vulnerable and even more powerless than women. Many children are being forced into very dangerous, degrading and unhealthy lifestyles on the streets.

¹⁹ See, for example, the results of a study done on the high-density suburb area of Kambuzuma, reported in Kanji & Jazdowska (1993).

Meanwhile, of those who remain at home, most have few and difficult choices: sadza²⁰ or school! (Zimbabwe Textile Workers Union, 1993; *The People*, 5-6; UNICEF, 1994).

In general, if Zimbabwe's ESAP 1990-95 is evaluated in terms of its impact on the country's citizens, the results indicate that the programme has had a negative effect on prospects for sustainable social development. With respect to the macro-economy, future prospects are uncertain at best. Clearly, the present situation is not favourable: the more optimistic projections which accompanied the implementation of ESAP have not been realised and any positive prognoses for the long-term are extremely tentative and speculative (see Tables 4 & 5, below). ESAP supporters tend to attribute the poor record to the government's unwillingness to adhere strictly to the adjustment programme, but several scholars as well as many of the adversely affected Zimbabweans feel that ESAP itself is primarily responsible for their deteriorating living standards.²¹

Table 4: Structural Features of Zimbabwe

	Average 1981-90	Estimates 1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Population Growth (annual % change)	3.0	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8
Agriculture (as a % of GDP)	13.9	14.0	11.4	16.1	16.0	14.5
Industry (as a % of GDP)	30.4	35.6	35.5	32.2	33.4	32.0
Services (as a % of GDP)	44.2	50.4	53.1	51.7	50.6	53.5
Domestic Savings (as a % of GDP)	20.2	11.9	2.3	6.1	7.0	4.0
Domestic Investment (as a % of GDP)	20.0	23.8	21.7	19.9	19.0	18.0
Export of Goods & Services (as a % of GDP)	27.9	31.7	37.2	35.4	41.4	38.9
Real GDP Growth (%)	3.4	4.3	-6.2	4.2	5.1	-3.0
Regional Growth (% change)	2.5	1.9	0.8	0.7	2.7	3.7

Source: Barclays Country Report, Zimbabwe (July 1996)

²⁰ Sadza is the national food staple: a type of porridge made from corn.

²¹ Graffiti found in public places around Harare is one of the best indications of popular feeling about ESAP, as the following 'informal' translations of the acronym indicate: Earn Short and Perish; Extended Suffering of African People; Eat Sadza After Porridge; Even Sadza is a Problem; and Extreme State Applied Poverty.

Table 5: Zimbabwe National Statistics

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Domestic Income											
(GDP- Z\$million)	5649	6503	7408	8019	10183	12165	14615	18964	22647	25277	3228
(GDP-1980 prices)	3540	3803	3861	3861	4143	4332	4426	4615	4327+	4399	4575
Gross Fixed Capital Formation	618	505	518	601	686	727	835	688	722	n.a	n.a
Rate of Inflation	16.4	9.2	14.2	11.9	7.1	11.6	15.5	23.3	42.1	27.6	22.2
Annual Ave No. Employed (000)	1036	1055	1081	1083	1131	1166	1192	1223	1236	1240	1275
External Trade											
Total Exports(\$m)	1453	1796	2170	2371	2966	3167	4231	6319	7776	10611	15143
Total Imports(\$m)	1201	1446	1640	1742	2043	3438	4528	7443	9083	9635	13259
Manufacturing Vol. Index(1980=100)	100.7	112.2	115.4	118.1	123.9	130.8	139.1	143.0	129.9	119.3	131.0
Agriculture											
Maize (000 T.)	941.6	1827.8	1594.3	402.5	1196.7	900.2	779.2	605.9	13.1	1349.9	314.6
Horticulture (**)	1489	3006	6229	9426	11672	13146	13071	16910	17996	22017	40605
Tobacco (Z\$ sales)	247.1	283.4	338.2	278.9	471.3	558.5	1868.2	1969.1	1630.2	1752.7	2388.1
Mining (Vol. Index)	97.0	96.9	99.3	103.3	102.5	106.8	107.6	108.9	107.0	104.3	109.0
Tourism (No. Visitors , 000)	278	320	346	404	396	411	527	587	630	596	132
B. of Payments (\$m..)											
Current Accounts	-101.9	-159.2	15.0	81.5	210.5	0.5	365.9	1064+	n.a	n.a	n.a
Capital Accounts	266.2	362.7	60.4	152.2	-30.5	-119.3	345.3	88++	n.a	n.a	n.a

Source: Zimbabwe Financial Holdings Limited (Finhold) (January 1995)

n.a = not available;
++ = approximate

The Political Economy of Development in Zimbabwe

The debate on whether the Zimbabwean government was 'pushed' by the World Bank or whether it 'jumped' into stabilisation and adjustment (Cliff, 1991) is not easily

resolved. Although much of the critical analysis of structural adjustment argues (and, indeed, empirical evidence supports) that most, if not all, 'developing' countries such as Zimbabwe have very little choice but to follow the dominant trend toward liberalisation (Schuurman, 1993: 10-11), some scholars point out that the Zimbabwean regime was not exactly coerced to accept adjustment (eg. Sachikonye, 1995; Dashwood, 1996). As Dashwood (1996) argues, an "ideological shift and change of development strategy" was occurring within the Zimbabwean government at the end of the 1980s which was somewhat independent of, albeit compatible with, the changes at the global level. This shift, continues Dashwood, was due partly to an emerging consensus among the policy-makers in government on the merits of a market-led development strategy. More important as a contributing factor in the shift, however, was the growing "embourgeoisement" of the state-based elite, the latter "facilitated (by) a process of elite accommodation, which occurred between the ruling, entrepreneurial and agrarian elites."

The increasing 'Africanisation' of the Zimbabwean bourgeoisie has provided a justification of sorts (as well as a class incentive) for a 'market-first' strategy. Indigenisation of the economy has been one of the corner-stones of the government's development policy both as a concession to anti-colonial sentiment, and as a mechanism to establish a more racially equitable economic balance. By pointing to an increasing number of successful black Zimbabwean business-persons and entrepreneurs, the government could claim some success for its indigenisation policy while arguing that the latter requires a business-friendly economic environment. However, as only a few black businessmen continue to get rich under the indigenisation programme while ordinary

Zimbabweans are bearing the burden of ESAP, such explanations are becoming increasingly less accepted. As Andrew Meldrum (1995: 30) reports:

To many observers, 'indigenization' appears to be merely a slogan to popularize government policies which are intended to replace a white elite with a new black elite...(Moreover), (t)he preferential treatment of black entrepreneurs is open to abuse, particularly as preference appeared to be given to companies with good connections to the ZANU-PF party.

And, if the government finds it increasingly difficult to defend ESAP and its application of the indigenisation policy, it is having problems meeting other early commitments. The land redistribution programme has been a particularly contentious issue. At independence, large tracts of land which were then held by white settlers were scheduled to be purchased (after ten years and at fair market value) for resettlement by peasants who were living in sub-standard conditions in communal areas. The programme was never implemented on schedule. However, while previously it was impeded by lack of funds (including those promised, but not delivered by international donors), a more recent threat to its success has been government corruption.

The so-called "Land Grab Scandal"²² of 1992 alerted observers to an alarming new degree of official avarice. Following the implementation that year of the Land Acquisition Act, which gave sweeping powers to the government to acquire land at prices designated by official decree rather than by market demand, it was discovered that several government officials had benefitted handsomely from land sales. Although Mugabe

²² Details of the land deals in question were reported first by an independent Zimbabwean journal, *The People's Voice*.

eventually announced that several leases of state-owned farms would be cancelled, the damage to the government's reputation was irremediable. Under the circumstances, the government's resurrected commitment to the resettlement policy (accompanied by anti-white rhetoric) just prior to the last two elections is considered by many to be a cynical, inflammatory, and increasingly less convincing ploy to gain majority black votes.

Overall, with several of its leading members heavily involved in the economy (through both legitimate and corrupt practices), the government has become increasingly isolated within a state-corporatist structure which excludes the majority of civil society. Such exclusion has clearly eroded any hegemonic alliance among the government, the peasantry and the working class which emerged out of the shared goals formed during the struggles for independence. And any measure of hegemony that grew upon the government's apparent early commitment to social development faded over the 1980s as the economy declined and has been further eroded by the severe constraints of ESAP.

Yet, while the estrangement of state and society appears to have increased during the first five-year period of ESAP, the latter is only partly responsible for the growing popular disenchantment with the government. Disgust with growing bureaucratic corruption is a major contributing factor as well, especially when it is perceived that ruling elites and their friends are benefitting while ordinary people are suffering severe hardship (Makumbe, 1994). Moreover, while ESAP is consistent with the general global economic trend, it is a mistake to see it merely as an externally imposed policy. Instead, the governing elite of Zimbabwe did not merely succumb to IMF pressures against their socialist will, but by 1990 were themselves becoming sympathetic to a more market-

oriented strategy, and between 1990 and 1995 have tried to incorporate (albeit with increasing lack of success) the dominant neoliberal ideology into their own state corporatist model of governance.

Civil Society's Role in the Development of Corporatism

While corporatism is a useful theoretical framework for understanding state-societal relations in much of Africa, including Zimbabwe,²³ the classical definition of its political or empirical form places responsibility for its development on the state. For example, Stephan (1978: 46, cited in Bratton, 1995: 11) claims that corporatism is:

A set of policies and institutional arrangements for structuring interest representation...the state often charters or even creates interest groups, attempts to regulate their number, and gives them the appearance of a quasi-representational monopoly along with special prerogatives. In return...the state claims the right to monitor representational groups ...to discourage the expression of 'narrow' class-based, conflictual demands.

In this definition, the state is clearly the dominant actor in setting the terms of state-societal relations.²⁴ To be sure, in Zimbabwe, as in much of Africa, it is the state which has led in setting the conditions and terms in the establishment of any mutually beneficial arrangements with certain groups in society. Yet, even in such situations where

²³ One of the first and most comprehensive treatments of corporatism in Africa is provided in Nyang'oro and Shaw (1989).

²⁴ Corporatism is not always presented as a statist model: Schmitter (1978) distinguished between the latter and the less authoritarian 'societal' version. However, he argued that the latter existed only in industrialised countries.

the power differential is obvious and explicit, civil society is not powerless to exert some influence over the conditions of its relationship with the dominating state.

Moreover, as Michael Bratton (1994) argues, even in authoritarian societies corporatism develops not only as a product of the will of powerful elites but also as a reflection of the political culture of the society. According to Bratton (1994):

People therefore get the governments they deserve: where they associate readily, govern themselves democratically, and assert independent opinions, they can contribute to the construction of sustainable democratic institutions, even at the macro-political level; where people eschew self-organization in favour of establishing personal ties to powerful patrons and by deferring to entrenched authority, they help to reproduce at all levels of the polity the patterns of rule that already prevail within the state and the broader society.

Bratton's central argument is an improvement over analyses which exclude or underestimate civil society's role in the construction of corporatist systems of governance although his opening aphorism which holds citizens responsible for the form of government under which they live is overly-deterministic, even somewhat pejorative.

In the article from which the above quote was taken, Bratton (1994) provides empirical findings to support his claim that the consolidation of democracy at the macro or national level of society requires that 'micro-democracy' be established as a precondition. Or, in other words, *formal, institutional democracy rests on the foundation of democratic civil societies*. In Zimbabwe, claims Bratton, the consolidation of macro-democracy is impeded by the presence in some associations at the micro-level of anti-democratic, neopatrimonial linkages and practices.

Based on a case study of the three main farmers' unions of Zimbabwe he argues:

1) that for many years the unions were able to successfully resist the government's corporatist efforts to consolidate a merger of the unions; 2) that when union finally did occur in 1991, it was not so much because the government finally triumphed in its efforts but rather that union officials felt that it was an opportune time to benefit themselves by merging; 3) even though the merger was eventually completed, the government did not achieve all of the corporatist ambitions it sought to gain; and 4) the merger had little support from the union membership and therefore it lacked legitimacy and ultimately effectiveness.

Bratton's observation that the actions of farmers' unions had the effect of diminishing rather than strengthening opportunities for democracy in Zimbabwe contradicts the pluralist argument that the existence of voluntary associations, in and of itself, "provides protection against autocracy" (*ibid.*: 32). Moreover, this case supports his argument that civil society plays an important role in the development of corporatist structures of governance and it suggests, even if it does not prove, that the consolidation of democracy is impeded by the structural quality of civil society as well as by the nature of the government. Yet, even in political cultures where the predominant traits and characteristics do not encourage the establishment of democratic practices and institutions, there are likely to be, as Sylvester (1995) argues, 'interstices' in which more democratic forms of 'fugitive opposition' may germinate and flourish. Political cultures change and evolve. Or, in other words, civil society is a contested terrain in which opportunities and incentives for democratic action coexist with obstacles and barriers.

The remainder of the chapter seeks to discover how the nature of (and changes within) civil society has affected the building of democracy in Zimbabwe. It seeks to describe both the characteristics which limit the establishment of a formal, institutional democracy and to locate the ‘interstices’ in which informal as well as formal democratising ‘oppositions’ exist or may yet emerge. In short, it places the analysis in the context of the argument set out in chapters one and two that democratisation (and the promotion of sustainable democratic development) involves interrelated factors of political culture and economy as well as of policy choice and governance. It focuses first on indigenous actors - labour, students, professional organisations as well as NGOs - and the links between them, then proceeds to discuss the implications of (and for) North-South NGO partnerships in the democratising processes identified.

‘Traditional’²⁵ Social Movements

Civil society in Zimbabwe is well-developed in the sense that various non-state organisations representing a variety of social interests have been in existence for several decades. However, many of the various organisations of which it is comprised have tended to be neither autonomous from the state nor particularly democratic in their internal operations or objectives.

‘Traditional’ social movements such as labour are a case in point (Wood, 1988). In Raftopoulos’ (1992b: 57) words, “... the labour movement in Zimbabwe has been

²⁵ See page 33, above for criteria by which ‘traditional’ and ‘new’ social movements are distinguished.

weak, and characterised by divisions on racial lines; sectionalism; low national density; political factionalism; and elitist and undemocratic structures.” At independence, the several trade unions which existed were weak and uncoordinated so when the new government undertook to consolidate five of the main ones under one central Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), there was little resistance from workers. During the early 1980s the government was able to assert considerable influence over labour through its control of ZCTU, even going so far as to designate the union leaders. However, as the decade progressed, declining purchasing power became an increasingly forceful mobilising incentive and members gradually gained enough strength to take over the management of ZCTU.

Over the last decade, the labour movement has grown significantly, its leadership has become ever more accountable to its membership, strike action has increased and, especially since the introduction of ESAP, workers as a group have become much more outspoken in their criticism of the government and its economic policy (Sachikonye, 1995: 194). However, as Raftopoulos’(1992b: 60) observes, the labour movement possesses little power; it is afflicted by a lack of education among its members and inadequate communication networks as well as by the labour-shrinking/weakening neoliberal policy agenda and the increasing threat of violence and/or coercion from a state which can no longer rely on the tactics of cooptation and persuasion to maintain its corporatist relations.

The ever-present threat of state violence constrains the students' movement²⁶ as well, although at times this other traditional source of potential opposition to the state has been stirred to action by the latter's oppressive measures. Indeed, Zimbabwean university students, perhaps more than any other group in society, have been strongly and openly critical of the state. To date, the tear gas and other repressive tactics which the government has used against students may have quelled specific demonstrations, but they have not distracted Zimbabwean youth from their long-term goal of achieving free expression. Nevertheless, even though "the national university is robustly pluralistic" (Sklar, 1988: 281) and vociferously oppositional to the state, the student movement is not powerful enough on its own to gain significant liberalising concessions from the government. However, although members of ZINASU (the Zimbabwe National Student's Union) have participated along with workers in public demonstrations, the solidarity links between students and labour (or any other groups in civil society) are not well developed.

Yet, incentives for establishing closer associations between historically separate social movements and/or between different class fractions appear to be growing because of the effects of ESAP. Sachikonye (1995, 195) reports that "...the broad thrust of ESAP has resulted in the alienation rather than the cooptation of articulate sections of the middle class, especially the intelligencia". As a consequence, associations of professionals such as teachers and doctors have begun to establish ties with labour. Such ties are similar to those between students and labour in that they are based on similar grievances against the

²⁶ The student movement draws from the student bodies of five universities and to some extent from high schools.

state and against economic constraint rather than mutual class interests or a shared commitment to an ideological position. However, although the lack of a common philosophy might prevent these groups from establishing a partnership that would support a sustainable democratic alternative, on the solidarity-building basis of their present dissatisfaction, they may yet devise a collaborative oppositional strategy with sufficient coherence to dislodge the existing regime or at least prompt some reversals in policy.

NGOs

As noted in chapter three, NGOs are frequently considered to be important vehicles by which links are forged among disparate groups in civil society. Some Zimbabwean NGOs (which will be discussed below) do appear to be fulfilling this role. However, as a democratising force, the NGO community as a whole is constrained by the country's corporatist political system and a political culture in which voluntary associations have had a limited degree of autonomy from the government. Moreover, as there is extreme diversity among NGOs in Zimbabwe as elsewhere, the degree to which cohesion or solidarity based on common development objectives or ideology has developed (and perhaps can develop) is limited.

NGOs Formed Prior to Independence

Slightly over half of the approximately two hundred and sixty indigenous organisations which currently operate in the country originated before independence²⁷. Of

²⁷ The 1992 *Directory of Non-Governmental Organisations in Zimbabwe*, published by the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations lists 297

those, nearly one-half again are welfare and relief organisations. Additional types (as approximate percentages of the total) include organisations which are involved in church-related activities (15%), job/skills training (10%), women's 'development' (6%) rural/community development (5%), professional associations (3%), environment (2%), illness-support (2%). The remainder consist of a wide-variety of single-interest groups.²⁸

NGOs Formed After Independence

A typology of the NGOs which were formed after 1980 is similar in many

NGOs operating in Zimbabwe. Of the 262 which have headquarters in Zimbabwe, at least 132 were founded before 1980 (founding dates are not provided for twelve organisations. (Among the 35 with headquarters in other countries, 10 are Zimbabwe chapters of international organisations - the International Red Cross, Save the Children Fund, the World Conservation Union, Lutheran World Federation, United Methodist Church, Business and Professional Women's Club, Young Men and Women Christian Associations, Girl Guides, St. John's Ambulance, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The remainder are various national NGOs - eg. the Conrad Adenour Foundation [Germany], the Coopibo Organisation [Belgium], the Netherlands Development Organisation, and the World University Service of Canada).

²⁸ The approximate percentages are computed from information provided in NANGO's 1992 *NGO Directory* (see previous note). According to that publication, the 132 existing Zimbabwean NGOs which had been formed before independence included the following: **Welfare** - 59 (treating aged-13; children-17; needy, destitute-8; handicapped- 17; 'charity' - 4); **Promotion of Church Interests** - 20; **Job Training/Skills Development, Adult Education** - 14; **Women's Advancement, Fellowship** - 8; **Community/Rural Development** - 6; **Professional Organisations** - 4 (law and medical societies, university women, police wives); **Illness-support groups** - 3 (diabetes, multiple sclerosis, alcohol and drug abuse); **Environmental/conservation groups** - 3; **Miscellaneous** - 15 (single organisations involved in marital counselling, citizenship training, consumer information, helping unwed mothers, food security, improving medical services, rehabilitating legal offenders, teaching music, providing civic information, home care, animal rights advocacy. Also listed is a National Ballet, a blood transfusion service, a youth hostel, and a league to promote breast-feeding).

respects. The largest single group of post-independence NGOs (40%) is comprised of organisations formed to meet the welfare needs of children, the aged, the destitute and the handicapped. Among the rest, 10% were created to provide skills/ job training or adult education, 9% to deal with community development, 8% with women's issues, while 4.5% are illness-support groups, and 3.5% are professional/worker organisations. Despite the similarities, however, there are some obvious distinctions from the pre-independence NGOs. A significant difference is the introduction of at least seven welfare organisations treating AIDs issues. Moreover, 'street children' and homeless people are new sub-categories of 'needy' as are ex-combatants and their families. Pre-independence women's NGOs tended to be concerned somewhat vaguely with 'improving women's condition', while post-independence groups are concerned with 'gender' and with specific issues of human and legal rights, business training, credit provision. Other differences include the decline in the number of organisations which have formed to support church activities (2%), the increase in the number of environmental NGOs (5%) and the introduction of human rights (3.5%) and research organisations (2%). Particularly noteworthy was the formation of 'linkage' organisations (4.5%) to link NGOs with each other and with government.²⁹

²⁹ Again, the percentages here are approximate and computed from the descriptions of NGOs provided in the 1992 NANGO directory. The numbers of NGOs in each category are as follows: **Welfare**: 50 (children-13; aged-6; needy/destitute-7; disabled/handicapped-17; HIV-afflicted - 7); **Skills/Job Training** - 13; **Women's Groups** - 9; **Community/Rural Development** - 7; **Environment** - 5; **Illness-support** - 5; **Professional Organisations** - 4; **Human Rights** - 4; **Saving/Credit Organisations** - 3; **Research Institutions** - 3; **Church-related** - 2; **Liason** - 5 [including IRED (Development Innovations and Networks) (1982) "to strengthen local Third World

Prior to independence, many of the 'charity' and welfare organisations were formed by individuals/groups/churches from outside the country or by members of the white settler community (Jiriwa, 1989). Following independence, the membership of blacks in the leadership of NGOs has increased exponentially, but class divisions have persisted and, significantly, the close relationship which was established between the organisations and government during the colonial period is still evident.³⁰

NGO-Government Relations

The history of the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO) illustrates this point. Known until 1988 as VOICE (Voluntary Organisations in Community Enterprise), this national umbrella association was constituted out of the 41 welfare organisations which had comprised the Rhodesia Council of Social Services. Both the latter, which had been formed in 1962 and its successor, VOICE, had explicit mandates to promote liason and cooperation among NGOs but also to facilitate and

partners", ACDI (Africa Community Based Development Initiatives) (1990) to establish linkages for participatory development, SACNET (Southern Africa Co-operative Network) (1989) "to promote networking among co-operatives in the region, Women's Forum (1986) "to act (in part) as transmission/liason/networking channel between NGOs, government and other relevant bodies", and KDCA (Kajiwa Development and Co-ordination Association (1989) to co-ordinate grass-roots groups and link the latter to local authorities]; **Other** - 8 (organisations concerned with such diverse issues as forming links with Mozambique, traditional faith healing, in-vitro fertilisation, unplanned pregnancies, and refugees).

³⁰ Approximately one-half of the NGOs listed in the NANGO directory are dependent upon foreign aid for financial support and slightly more than one-fourth of these are totally on external funds. Of the NGOs which do not receive international aid, approximately one-half generate at least some income through some form of productivity. However, most supplement this income through donations and fund-raising efforts and approximately one-fourth receive grants from governments.

promote cooperation between NGOs and government (Jiriwa, 1989).

NANGO continues to operate with the stated intention to foster cooperative relations with the government (interview with NANGO official, Zimbabwe, 1995), although some of its NGO members have begun to question whether oppositional strategies might be more effective, especially in promoting broader democratic and developmentalist objectives as opposed to individualistic, single-issue goals (interviews with officials in NANGO membership organisations, Zimbabwe, 1995). This view was reinforced last year by the enactment of an amendment to a government bill³¹ which was designed to give the government greater access to and control over the operations of private voluntary organisations. Many NGO members, including some NANGO officials, viewed this document as a declaration from the government that the period of cooperation was coming to an end (interviews with various NGO personnel; *ZimRights News*, December 1994). It may also indicate that the government is feeling (and resisting) democratising pressures from NGOs (see below).

A cooperative relationship between NGOs and the government such as the one which had existed in Zimbabwe might be interpreted as an indication of the presence of *hegemony* as Gramsci described it. However, the relative harmony between the state and NGOs in Zimbabwe seems rather to be a form of corporative collaboration which has met

³¹ The Government of Zimbabwe's *Welfare Organizations Bill, 1995* amends the *Welfare Organizations Act [chapter 93]*.

the interests of the leadership of many NGOs as well as of the ruling elite.³² Just as the state form which emerged following independence was similar to its colonial predecessor, so also has the form of the relationship among many of the indigenous NGOs followed the historical colonial pattern.

Relations within the NGO Community

This pattern follows with respect to class in that the majority of Zimbabwe's NGOs are urban based organisations with predominantly middle-class memberships.³³ There are notable exceptions, including the rural-based ORAP (see chapter 3) and the environmental NGO known as the Campfire Project³⁴ which make concerted attempts to involve their beneficiaries in the operations and decision-making processes of the organisations: ie, supporting "participation at the lowest and weakest level of society". Moreover, several efforts are being made within the NGO community to strengthen 'partnerships' between various types of NGOs (see below). Yet, many of the 'middle-

³² Various officials of several Zimbabwean NGOs acknowledged during interviews that a close and cooperative relationship existed between NGOs and elected officials and/or the government bureaucracy. As well, several indicated that they either had worked previously in the government bureaucracy or that they were currently active members of ZANU-PF.

³³ Approximately two-thirds of Zimbabwe's NGO headquarters are located in the capital city of Harare. Roughly half of the remainder are in Bulawayo, the second largest city in the country and the centre of Ndebele territory. Aside from a few isolated cases, the rest are divided almost equally among Mutare in the Eastern Region, Gweru in the Midlands Region and Masvingo in the South.

³⁴ The Campfire Project attempts to protect biodiversity in communal areas by involving communities in the sustainable utilisation of the wildlife within their locales (Child, 1993).

class' NGOs which are based in the capital city of Harare maintain few and tenuous connections with the rural poor in particular, but in some cases even with the urban poor or with other NGOs which work at the grass-roots level. All individual organisations are connected to an extent through NANGO, since they cannot be legally constituted unless they are members of that national umbrella organisation. However, although NANGO provides frequent opportunities for collaboration through meetings, workshops, *et cetera*, the membership is by no means a homogeneous or cohesive group.

NGOs, Political Culture and Civil Society

The fact that a portion of the NGO community does not have deep or extensive roots in the grassroots of society is only partly due to corporatist interests or entrenched institutional conventions of the middle and upper classes. Prevailing norms, values and attitudes at the grass-roots are a contributing factor as well. Indeed, several scholars have argued that the traditional political culture of Africa has prevented the development of robust civil societies. Some go so far as to claim that African civil society does not exist at all or that it exists in some rudimentary or pre-political form. For example, Gyimah-Boade (1996: 128-9) argues that in Africa:

Some of civil society's weakness is internal. Associational life is dominated by traditional ascriptive, and kin-based groups. These include clans, tribes, and ethnographic formations...these traditional and neotraditional groups tend to be preliberal or illiberal and to subscribe to gerontocratic, extremely hierarchical, patriarchal, and otherwise undemocratic values. Their leaders are socially and politically conservative and often view democracy with indifference or hostility.

According to this view, the associational life of at least some African countries (or in some sub-national regions) remains enmeshed to varying degrees in familial and ethnic linkage groups and, in such instances, interest representation takes on personalistic and/or patrimonial forms rather than the secular, impersonal and bureaucratic characteristics which have been associated with traditional (liberal) conceptions of civil society. For *some* Africans, therefore, the concept of civic society may “appl(y) more to ethnic, cultural, hometown, women’s and other kinship based organizations rather than politically active and watch-dog students, professional, civil liberties and other civic organizations” (Osaghae, 1995: 194). But, while such groups tend not to challenge the state and often even circumvent or ignore it (Chazan, etc.), they are based nonetheless on civil society’s motivating principles of satisfying human needs through association and communal action.³⁵ Therefore, one might argue, civil society exists in Africa as elsewhere, even if its forms are more varied (and even, as was noted in chapter 3, if it is sometimes suppressed to the point of near invisibility).

To deny the presence of civil society in Africa is, as some African scholars have argued, “a clear misrepresentation which arises from the unqualified application of the Western connotation of civil society to the African situation” (Osaghae, 1995: 194: Ekeh,

³⁵ Cohen and Arato (1994) make a distinction between civil and political society which is useful here for conceptualising the difference between associational forms which are motivated by communitarian interests and those which are motivated by their position relative to the state. Because traditional definitions of civil society subsume the former in the latter, they cannot account for the unofficial but nevertheless distinctly ‘political’ nature of African associational life nor can they adequately account for the “new social movements” of the North as well as the South which do not necessarily direct their actions to changing official structures or patterns of governance.

1992). Yet, while it may advance theory to move beyond the notion of civil society merely in terms of its opposition to the state, to focus instead only “on the ‘traditional’ self-preservationist functions of civil society in Africa” (Osaghae, 1995: 195) ignores that the latter coexist throughout the continent with official, secular and state-conscious components.³⁶

The discontinuities which have been observed within and among the indigenous Zimbabwean social movements and NGO community may be manifestations of problems associated with attempting to merge disparate groups which do not possess a singular sense of citizenship identity within a similarly defined (or indeed, even the same) civil society. As Eboe Hutchful (1996: 71) observes:

....ideological responses to economic crisis and state failure in Africa have been extremely diverse, taking the form not only of political activism but also of magic and religious revivalism, retreat into ethnic and kinship solidarity, and other forms of parochialism...The question then of whether a new and coherent political morality is emerging is at the moment unanswerable, since we have little insight into the actual discourses and agenda of these groups.

Hutchful’s comments underscore the observation made in chapter one that civil society is a terrain of contestation. During the “lost decade” of the eighties and into the nineties, it appears that the level of contestation has intensified in African countries, making it increasingly more difficult to construct a “shared moral vision” based upon “widely shared beliefs and attitudes” by which “civil society might be animated and

³⁶ It should be noted that the associative groups which comprise civil society co-exist with personalistic associational forms in Western liberal societies also, although the proportions of each might be reversed in Western and African societies.

sustained” (*ibid.*, 56). On the other hand, some scholars point to the possibility that a virtuous cycle may derive from the current adversity. For example, Sandbrook and Halfani (1993) observe that:

(when) faced with stagnant or declining incomes, collapsing infrastructure and services, and indifferent or capricious bureaucrats and security personnel...(e)mpowerment...is simply a matter of survival with dignity. Do people in such circumstances have any other option but to develop themselves - to promote community and self-reliance, build organizational capacity, and back political liberalization?

In short, while Hutchful is prudent to postpone judgement on the extent to which democratisation is presently occurring within African civil societies, the best hope for a better future probably rests with the people themselves and the NGOs which are working on their behalf. Therefore, to expose the efforts which some African NGOs are making to advance democratisation and “promote participation at the lowest and weakest levels of society”, the following sections will examine the activities of some which are operating on different fronts to secure greater political liberalisation and a ‘deepening’ of democracy in civil society.

NGO Partnerships: Establishing Democratic Connections

Since the World Bank first began its drive to correlate political and economic conditionalities in Africa, several scholars have pointed out that one of the major limitations of the prescriptions is the over-emphasis on institutional reform and ‘electoral

democracy'. Yet, while many now recognise that the implementation of multiparty elections is not the equivalent of democracy, few deny that it is a necessary feature. Some, such as Michael Bratton (1995: 7) acknowledge that the more difficult 'consolidation' period involves changes at deeper levels of society and requires "independent legislative, judicial, and investigative bodies within the state, plus interest groups, civic associations, and political parties within society, all of which are empowered to hold political executives accountable". Others would go even further than Bratton to argue that a democracy which is truly meaningful in peoples' everyday lives involves extending the principle of equitable legal and human rights beyond relations with the state but to the realm of civil society as well. But, in either case, few would deny that the establishment of a system which allows for the freedom of citizens to choose among electoral candidates who are fairly selected is a prerequisite feature of the 'transition' to sustainable, democratic democracy.

'Interstices' for Electoral Reform

Zimbabwe's most recent election in April 1995 left little doubt that ZANU-PF controlled a *de facto* one-party state despite the constitution's provision for multipartyism. Although the sense among many informed observers in the country was that opposition to the government was growing, the incumbent party was returned to power when it captured 82% of the vote. Although only one-half (or less)³⁷ of eligible

³⁷ Sylvester (1995) reports the turnout figure was 57%. However, the much lower figure of 31.7% was reported in an article in the *Africa Research Bulletin* (March 1st-

voters turned out, ZANU's success is not attributable merely to apathy nor to an electoral boycott by its critics.³⁸ According to most observers, ZANU-PF won the election because there was no other alternative.

Several factors prevent the development of opposition parties in Zimbabwe. To a large extent, these factors fall within "a chronicle of intimidation and violence" which has characterised the country's electoral history (Zimbabwe Human Rights Association, 1994). In the elections held every five-years since independence, ZANU-PF supporters have used various forms of intimidation ranging from accusations and charges of illegal activity, to threats of injury and/or death and, in at least one case, a violent physical attack against an individual who had declared as an oppositional candidate.³⁹ Moreover, various constitutional provisions have either given undue favour to the incumbent party, have been ignored by the government or have been interpreted in such a way as to increase the latter's electoral advantage (Ncube, 1994; Moyo, 1992). Of these, the one which has had

31st, 1996).

³⁸ Another alternative for the low voter turnout is intimidation of the latter by ZANU-PF supporters. Although, there have been few public reports of this in the last election, several such incidents occurred in 1990 but were not immediately recorded (Moyo, 1992).

³⁹ Some reports of intimidation during the latest election period were registered, including death threats against Margaret Dongo, a popular former member of the ZANU-PF caucus who ran as an independent. However, the most notorious cases of abuse occurred during the 1985 campaign when several candidates representing the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) were assaulted at political rallies by government security forces. The most serious assault was inflicted upon Patrick Kombay who was shot and permanently disabled after he dared to challenge the then sitting Vice-President, Simon Muzenda.

probably the most impact makes public funds available to parties for electoral purposes only if they have acquired a certain number of seats in the previous election. But the aforementioned constitution-fixing and intimidation tactics, together with gerrymandering, a 'first past the post' voting system and tight control over national radio and television has ensured that ZANU-PF is the only party which so qualifies.

Yet, despite ZANU-PF's apparent stranglehold on the electoral process, support for the party is hardly secure, even in the rural areas where it is most evident. Neither, according to some observers, are votes for ZANU necessarily based on any genuine commitment to the government or its programmes. For example, echoing Moore's work on ZANU's violent recruitment of peasants during the liberation war, Meldrum (1995: 63) reports that much of the support from rural voters has been forced through "intimidation by the far-reaching party network". However, Sylvester (1995: 410) believes that rural voters are driven more by practical considerations than by fear: she claims that they vote for ZANU-PF in order to receive patronage pay-offs. As evidence, she quotes one rural ZANU supporter who remarked that "(t)he politics of patronage is all... We don't love ZANU so much as everyone wants something from it... (And) the opposition parties have nothing to give out" (*ibid.*, 410).

On the surface, such comments appear not to bode well for prospects of deepening democracy in Zimbabwe. Yet, as Sylvester argues, the anti-government attitude from which they spring provides an opening - an "interstice" - in which forms of "fugitive opposition" may take root. In her view, there are several examples of the latter to be found in Zimbabwean civil society. These include: strategies designed to get around

government regulation; the existence of collective cooperatives which continue to follow a socialist line despite the dominance of the philosophy of the market; the use by women workers of government time and/or equipment for personal sewing in protest of injunctions against baby-feeding breaks; the flourishing of women's organisations, in spite of "masculinized political forces"; political identification with village development committees (VIDCOs), that is, with local rather than centralised political power; informal sector trading; and the already discussed student opposition (*ibid.*: 409).

The antipathy toward the government which engenders such forms of "fugitive opposition" does not register as electoral rejection of ZANU-PF. Yet, one interesting phenomenon which was observed during the last election suggests that an increased level of opposition is nevertheless finally being felt at the official level of politics as well as at the unofficial, informal or "fugitive" level.⁴⁰ In the primaries leading up to the election, a large number of the incumbent government members were rejected as candidates. Indeed, although the election did not produce a change of party, there was a major shake-up in the membership of the caucus. Moreover, a growing rift has been detected within the ranks of ZANU-PF. It may be, as several commentators have postulated, that the strongest force of opposition to the government is growing within the ZANU-PF party itself (*ibid.*; Knight, 1992; *ZimRights News*, December 1994; *The Herald*, 6 March 1995; *Sunday News*, 5 November 1995).

⁴⁰ Leading Zimbabwean scholar, Ibbo Mandaza, has also argued in various fora that a well-developed unofficial opposition exists in the country (reiterated in personal interview, March 1995).

'Interstices' for Deepening Democracy in Civil Society

Augmenting the democratising efforts of the growing 'fugitive opposition', several Zimbabwean NGOs are now working to advance the development of an official opposition. Among these, church groups generally have played leading roles (Sklar, 1988: 281), but specifically, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace has stood out as a staunch and effective promoter of the democratic cause. In the interest of promoting free and fair elections, for instance, this organisation joined forces with ZimRights, the Legal Resources Foundation, and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches prior to the last election to hold a major conference on electoral reform that was attended by representatives from a wide cross-section of the population (*ZimRights*, August 1994). These same organisations, both collectively and individually, also regularly hold small workshops on voter education and ZimRights, at least, has outreach programmes to bring information and expertise directly to targeted groups of poor and marginalised Zimbabweans. Moreover, all of these organisations have been outspoken critics - occasionally of the government and certainly of the democratic limitations of the present constitution and, as many of the board members are well-known and highly regarded legal experts, they speak with considerable authority.

This group of NGOs' might be viewed as a nucleus in an extensive network of indigenous and international NGOs, academics, 'enlightened' media and research institutes which are all working in one way or another to extend democracy, either directly or indirectly and at more informal, as well as institutional, levels of society.

Other such 'nuclei' are also identifiable, an important one being a growing, outspoken group of critical journalists and artists. Chinijera Hove, whose comment on Zimbabwean democracy opens this chapter, is a good example of the latter. Widely respected and celebrated for his literary excellence, Hove is no less appreciated in Zimbabwe for his critical political stance. And, although he has displayed obvious personal courage in personally opposing the government, he has had considerable support from the Zimbabwean Writers' Union.⁴¹

Hove and other artists have an increasing number of allies among those who publish and write for a group of publications which are becoming much more openly critical of the ruling elite. It has only been in the last few years that there has been any degree of press freedom in Zimbabwe and the government's position is clearly still dominant within the national newspapers, the daily *Herald* and the weekly *Sunday Mail*. Moreover, the national radio and television networks are strongly supportive of the present regime since they, along with the two main newspapers, are controlled by the Zimbabwe Mass Media, an enterprise which supposedly is independent but in practice is

⁴¹ For the most part, the Union has confronted the government on issues of freedom of speech and censorship. For example, within the past year, it publicly opposed President Mugabe's censorship of homosexual material at the annual book fair which is held in Harare. And Sklar (1988: 281) reports its protest earlier of the prohibition by the Minister of Home Affairs under Emergency Powers Regulations of a play with political overtones.

controlled by the government.⁴² However, cracks are appearing in the barriers to free expression.

The strongest demands for democratic change tend to be found within the publications which are used as advocacy tools by specific NGOs, such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association's *ZimRights News* and *ZimRights Bulletin*. However, more traditional forms are often equally direct, if not always as bold in their criticism (Sklar, 1994). For example, the weekly newspaper, *The Financial Gazette*, frequently carries critical evaluations of the government's economic policy and practices. And among several political journals, two stand out - the "non-profit, independent, quarterly publication" entitled *The Journal of Social Change and Development*, and the long-established Catholic monthly journal of public affairs, *Moto* - for the articles they include on such issues as structural adjustment, democracy, human rights, *et cetera* which are clearly oppositional and alternative to the official position.⁴³

Many of the members of the emerging oppositional press have connections with other critical elements in Zimbabwean civil society: NGOs dealing with legal, human

⁴² Upon its formation, the Mass Media Trust was declared to be a compromise between direct state and private ownership. However, as might be expected, it has been firmly controlled by the Ministry of Information. Besides the two newspapers which were listed, the Trust also holds controlling shares in the national news agency, the regional newspaper project and the country's largest chain of bookstores (Ronning, 1994).

⁴³ Note, for instance, an article in *Social Change and Development* by UZ Professor, John Makumbe (1994b), entitled "What Alternatives to ESAP?" in which he suggests the following alternatives to ESAP: promoting regional trade (as opposed to the SAP approach to open poor economies abruptly to the competitive global market); promoting the transfer of technology (presumably through international agreement); and promotion of South-South trade.

rights, and women's issues, 'radical' academics and certain village organisations.⁴⁴ As well, they often have informal links with local information-gathering institutions such as the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) and international ones such as the Canadian wire service, *Africa Information Afrique*. As members of 'partnerships' and networks, the latter organisations and the media increase popular awareness of the existence and relevance of other important, but relatively new, 'nuclei' in Zimbabwean civil society, including several environmental NGOs and an array of AIDs advocacy and support groups which help to demonstrate the need (and often the manner by which) to draw conceptual (as well as functional) linkages between the national and the local and global. (These NGO connections will be discussed in more detail in chapter seven which focuses on the emergence of a transnational civil society and its relevance for sustainable, democratic development).

An Exemplar

One NGO that might stand on its own as an 'nucleus' of democratisation and development in Zimbabwe is WLSA (Women and Law in Southern Africa). Formed by legal scholars to examine women's rights in Southern Africa, it quickly acknowledged

⁴⁴ One individual whom I interviewed was a very outspoken member of the editorial board of a NGO which had been frequently (and very publicly) critical of the government. Yet, at the same time, this person was an active member of a local unit of ZANU-PF. He claimed that although he had anticipated silencing pressures from the latter, as of March 1995, he had experienced none. He felt the dual connection was very useful not only in securing information as a journalist, but also for providing access to the impressive infrastructure of the party that exists at the village level to help change the party from within.

that issues of law are deeply embedded in the social structure and therefore that the proposed research required the expertise of various social scientists. As a result, WLSA's membership now consists of political scientists, sociologists, and historians as well as lawyers. Furthermore, its mandate has been extended beyond research to bringing legal information and assistance to grass-roots women. For example, one of WLSA's central areas of research is concerned with the interaction of traditional and constitutional law and how the dual systems which exist in Southern African impact upon the treatment of women in the law and in society. WLSA endeavors to make the results of that research available to ordinary women, both by providing information through printed material, workshops, community meetings, *et cetera* and also by helping individuals involved in specific legal cases.

The civil society connections through which this NGO carries out its work are extensive - numerically, geographically and functionally. While centered in and around an academic setting, the organisation reaches deeply into the community both through the type of research in which it is engaged and through its provision of legal information and counselling. In these ventures, it deals with individuals directly, but also with various other NGOs, and especially women's, human rights and other legal institutions. It is regionally based, thereby providing not only a valuable comparative element to the research but also opportunities for broadening the range of possible 'partnerships' to other organisations throughout Southern Africa, hence contributing to the development of a 'regional civil society'. And, finally, WLSA is connected internationally through 'partnerships' with international NGOs which provide funds and by scholars from abroad.

In short, through the various lateral and horizontal linkages it fosters within civil societies, WLSA is at the core of an extensive network with strong democratising potential.

Some Contradictions

WLSA is only one of several NGOs in Zimbabwe which are largely staffed by and committed to women's issues. Several others, including the prominent Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF); the Zimbabwe Women's Bureau (ZWB); and the Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN) are also committed to the feminist principle of ridding society of gender inequities as well as to the broader societal issues of democratisation and development. Moreover, within 'women's issues' NGOs, there is a strong emphasis generally on identifying the myriad interconnections which contribute to women's subordination (and to Zimbabwe's lack of democracy and development). Also, there is a widespread commitment to establishing 'partnerships' for devising solutions to the problem.

As Sylvester (1995: 409) notes, the proliferation of women's organisations within an environment in which the dominant "political forces" are "masculinized" is remarkable. Moreover, 'women's issues' organisations have a high profile within the NGO community, with their officers and board members often holding prominent offices in networking organisations and/or serving as representatives of the NGO community at various international meetings and conferences. However, according to some members of NGOs working on more traditional welfare issues, the high profile of many of the

individuals in these women's organisations is not due to their contributions to the local community but rather is conferred by international donors. The argument is that the prominence which currently is given to women's issues in grants by Western funding agencies has, in effect, created the growth in such 'yuppie' NGOs. And, according to their critics, their commitment is to the 'international' ideals and lifestyles of their Western funders and not to the development of women at the grass-roots of Zimbabwean society (personal interviews with Zimbabwean NGO members).

The criticism that some individuals within various women's NGOs are more interested in securing travel miles than in serving local, and especially rural, interests may be valid in some cases, but there may be other more substantive reasons behind the criticism. First, the work of NGOs which operate primarily at the intersection between the national and international is not particularly transparent or well-understood. In many instances, it is much easier to witness the considerable value to the Zimbabwean community of the work of such energetic local organisations as the National Council of Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe (NCDPZ) or the Musasa Project which treats cases of rape and family violence. Moreover, on the basis of long-standing societal norms as well as empirical evidence, it is generally accepted that benefits accrue to society from long-standing international connections among NGOs such as the International Red Cross, the Young Women's Christian Association of Zimbabwe (YWCA) or churches such as the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. However, NGOs which claim to be making a positive difference based on 'new' transnational ideals or connections have no traditional discourse and little concrete evidence as yet to support

their claims. Moreover, the highly charged debate that has surrounded gender and feminist issues for some time has become increasingly infused with a North-South dimension: any hint that Northern forces are imposing their standards for gender behaviour on the South through the NGOs they support engenders immediate antagonism.

This does not mean that NGOs which work primarily on abstract issues of development, physically remote from the grass-roots, do not contribute to the democratising process of civil society. It does indicate, however, that because such NGOs tend to have less apparent or immediate outcome measurements, they need to pay extra attention to trying to identify and to communicate how international partnerships are connected to basic local needs concerns. For example, a Zimbabwean women's group which accepts funding from an external donor to send a representative to an international conference might work more effectively with locally- and nationally-focused counterparts if its members: (1) made a deliberate and careful effort to explain how the changes being sought in the international forum would affect conditions in the home communities; (2) set up preliminary fora in which local 'partners' could question/rebut/add to the proposals which are to be put forward; (3) made a concerted effort to make transparent and accessible all the details regarding all the activities leading up to and involving the conference; (4) if possible and appropriate, gave local NGO 'partners' at least some responsibility for choosing the delegate(s); (5) followed up the international meeting with local debriefings and, more importantly, with concrete actions (after consultation with local 'partners'). In short, working in harmonious 'partnership' with each other requires

diligent attention by NGOs to the issues of accountability and responsibility discussed in chapter 3. As will be argued in chapter seven, such efforts by NGOs operating on relatively new political frontiers to extend democracy at local, national international levels simultaneously offer some prospects for promoting sustainable 'people-centred' development.

Conclusions: prospects for Zimbabwe's democratic development

The present state of democracy and development in Zimbabwe is a function of the historically determined configuration of its state-societal and local-national-inter/transnational relations. Political compromises made at the time of independence were reflected and perpetuated in constitutional limitations to democracy. The country's peripheral position in the world economy and key position in the volatile political economy of the region have imposed major constraints on economic development. The latter combined with Zimbabwe's settler-colonial past and its complex indigenous political culture contributed to the development of a state corporatist system of governance. Two decades after Zimbabwe gained its independence, prospects remain dim for the consolidation of a democracy in the near future which upholds the constitutional right to multiparty elections, freely and fairly contested. They are even less auspicious for a deeper 'people-centred democracy' which "means participation at the lowest and weakest levels of society" (Hove, 1994).

Nevertheless, despite pessimistic projections for the short-term, in the long-term alternative scenarios are possible, not all of which are negative. To a large extent, the outcome will be determined by the contradictions which emerge from the IMF-style structural adjustment programme which was introduced in 1990. At least partly due to the latter, basic needs are no longer being met for a large number of Zimbabweans, gaps among have and have-not groups in society are growing and neglect of human resources and of national infrastructure is likely to have long-term detrimental effects on productivity. Democratising forces appear to be consolidating, albeit slowly, and civil society is exerting increasing pressures on the government both in response to the increased threat to human security/basic needs and in reaction to government corruption. There are also signs of increased repression by government against those who oppose its measures. Hence, at present, it remains uncertain whether the outcome of intensifying state-societal struggle will be in the direction of democratic reform or greater authoritarianism.

One directional change that seems clear is that the degree of corporatist control which the state had been able to exert over various aspects of society is lessening - due, it seems, to both pressures from the market and from civil society. The government experienced 'pressures from the market' most acutely in the past year when the IMF turned down its request to finance a second five-year phase of ESAP. The second-phase installment was denied because the government had failed to carry out its commitment to public sector reform. However, following a suspension of loans by multilateral creditors and an immediate need for credit (Barclay's, 1996), it seems quite certain that the

government will make a concerted effort to comply with the IMF's conditionalities. As the latter include directives to reduce the public sector and, in particular, to dismantle various parastatals, they will have a significant degenerative impact on the resources available for maintaining the present corporatist structure.

Yet, while the present state-corporatism appears to be threatened, and while increased government authoritarianism is one possible alternative, it is not impossible that a new corporatist formation, more reflective of the growing plurality of civil society, will emerge out of the present conjuncture. This is especially true if favourable predictions regarding Zimbabwe's long-term development potential are accurate (Barclay's, 1996). In particular, if the South African economy does not falter and there is a movement toward the consolidation of democracy in that country, the impact on the region is likely to be positive, especially if efforts to achieve greater regional integration are achieved.

In general, the outcome of democratic development in Zimbabwe will be influenced significantly by the country's future economic competitiveness, globally and regionally - a factor which is, at best, only partially within the national government's control. But, the waning of state power - under direct and dialectical pressures from economic liberalisation - provides civil society with a conjunctural opportunity to push for democratic reform. Zimbabwe's NGO community figures prominently in the determination of the possible future scenarios of increased democratisation, greater authoritarianism and revised corporatism. NGOs can help to determine that the direction of the outcome will favour 'people-centred development' by identifying the areas in which democratisation processes are possible and where institutional and participatory

conceptualisation of democracy merge. Strategic linkages among indigenous NGOs are necessary to further the democratising processes, but associations with external NGOs may be equally important. Therefore, the next chapter examines the 'development' activities of Canadian NGOs in Zimbabwe and analyses the effect that partnerships between the latter and Zimbabwean organisations may have upon sustainable, democratic development in that country.

Chapter 6: Effects of Canadian Aid Policy on NGO Partnerships in Zimbabwe

Northern NGOs and their southern counterparts must draw closer together. Promising beginnings have been made in this area. The credit-access mechanisms furnished, with the assistance of Northern NGOs, to rural women in Tanzania and Zimbabwe have, as have similar experiences in Bolivia, Haiti, and Nicaragua, the possibility of making real differences to rural women, who not only feel the brunt of existing insecurities but are, as the United Nations has just recognized, the best hope for security in the developing world. These efforts need to be augmented by assistance in a multiplicity of areas, of which, probably, children's health is the most important. This will not only foster greater North-South contact but also encourage the transfer of skills and expertise. This would enhance the growth of vibrant civil societies throughout Southern Africa, empowering people against the preponderance toward the power of individual states.

- Vale, 1996: 388

Introduction

The prospects for the transition and consolidation of a sustainable multiparty, *developmentalist* democracy in Zimbabwe depends upon a synergistic convergence of several factors. Yet the achievement of such a confluence need not be entirely serendipitous. Instead, even if the process may be slower, more complicated and/or less unilinear than was initially hoped during the early days of Africa's "third democratic wave", an extension and/or deepening of democracy may yet be realised in Zimbabwe and/or in some countries largely because of the growing impetus for change within civil societies throughout the continent. But, as the opening lines by Peter Vale suggest,

international actors also have a role to play in cultivating and maintaining any democratic momentum. In national contexts, the main role is a supplementary, supporting one of helping to build capacity and strength in local organisations and assisting them in efforts to forge mixed-actor liaisons which are functionally efficient and politically strategic.

In this chapter I employ a case study of Canadian-Zimbabwean NGO partnerships to investigate their possible impact on prospects for sustainable democratic development. It notes that 'partnership' is seen both as a necessary mode of operation and as a developmentally-sound objective by most NGOs from both countries (see chapter three, above) mainly because the concept implies relationships between equals, thereby suggesting the dismantling of traditional inequitable North-South power hierarchies which contributed to the 'crisis of development' outlined in chapter two. The chapter argues, however, that the practice of partnership among NGOs in Zimbabwe falls short of the rhetoric for two main reasons: (1) most Zimbabwean NGOs are heavily dependent upon Northern donors for their survival, and (2) most Northern donors (including Canadian NGOs) are dependent upon (and, by their compliance, help to maintain) the present official development structure.

I argue further that the latter condition applies - at least with respect to the national Zimbabwean context - even to 'progressive' NGOs (which support "an explicitly political strategy of empowerment" and "the relative autonomy of the local NGO") as well as "mainstream ones" (which are characterised by "instrumental participation",

foreign agency paternalism” and/or “limited local linkages”).¹ Although the idea of partnership would seem to advance the ideals and strategies associated with ‘progressive’ NGOs, in practice most of the partnerships which have been formed have not contributed significantly to the empowerment and/or autonomy of indigenous NGOs. The reasons for the latter are explored in the separate contexts of Zimbabwe, Canada and the international system.

The analysis begins in Zimbabwe, with a brief history of Canadian NGOs’ involvement in Zimbabwe and a description of the organisations which currently work in/for ‘development’ in that country. It proceeds to a discussion of the differing evaluations of partnership expressed by Zimbabwean and Canadian NGO representatives, suggesting that the divergence is a function of their respective positions in an aid structure which maintains North-South hierarchical divisions. Hence, the behaviour of both Zimbabwean and Canadian NGOs with respect to their partnerships is strongly conditioned by CIDA policy. Not only has ‘partnership’ become a new conditionality for NGOs seeking funds from the latter, but the extent to which the concept can be used to modify traditional development practices and/or inequalities is limited by NGOs’ dependence on the agency.

Following reviews of Canada’s policy on NGOs and its aid policy in Southern Africa, the chapter argues that the adoption in the 1980s of neoliberal policies by the Canadian government has caused a serious threat to aid quality as well as quantity to

¹ The typology is provided by Macdonald (1995b: 120) (see chapter three, above).

Africa. In particular, the notion of 'partnership' is becoming increasingly associated with market objectives and less with the empowerment and/or autonomy of Third World NGOs or people generally. In short, the global hegemony of neoliberalism is reflected in national policies and discourses which affect local behaviours and conditions.

Emerging practices of 'partnership' among NGOs are likely to be further strained by the policy changes, especially the cut in aid funds. However, I conclude that the discourse of partnership nevertheless allows some possibilities for struggle against entrenched structural inequities, and further that 'partnership' as a new paradigm for popular global struggle advances the possibilities of promoting sustainable democratic development.

Canadian NGOs in Zimbabwe

Voluntary associations from Canada have operated in Zimbabwe for several decades. Some church groups, for instance, have connections within the country which date back to Rhodesian times. However, several NGOs became involved in the country later, through their support for the liberation coalition's struggle for independence. And, subsequently, as international condemnation of South African *apartheid* intensified, some NGOs established their regional base of anti-apartheid action in neighbouring Zimbabwe. Others, dealing with the results of war in Mozambique and Angola, occasionally used Zimbabwe as a secure headquarters. Finally, organisations which have a regional focus

have frequently (at least until the end of apartheid in South Africa) located in Zimbabwe, to some extent because of its central geographic location, but also because of its political stability and well-developed infrastructure and communications system.

By the 1990s, although the number of Canadian NGOs which maintained offices or full-time workers in Zimbabwe was not particularly large, there were several organisations from a wide range of operational types which had direct links of some kind with a variety of developmentalist activities. These include:²

Canadian branches of international welfare or service organisations - CARE Canada, OXFAM Canada, the Canadian Red Cross Society, World Vision Canada (WVC), Foster Parents Plan of Canada, Young Men's and Women's Christian Associations (YMCA & YWCA), Girl Guides of Canada, Salvation Army;

Canadian development organisations - Canadian Organisation for Development through Education (CODE), World University Service of Canada (WUSC), Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO), Development and Peace, Canadian Crossroads International (CCI), Inter Pares, Canadian Hunger Foundation, the United Nations Association of Canada, MATCH International Centre;

international development arm of national or international professional/labour organisations - Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA), Canadian Labour Congress, Steelworkers Humanity Fund, Canadian Auto Workers' Social Justice Fund, Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA), Canadian Mental Health Association, Canadian Rotary Committee on International Development, Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO);

church-sponsored organisations - United Church of Canada, Anglican Church of Canada/The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, Catholic Organization for Joint Financing of Development Projects, Canadian

² This list was compiled from the CCIC's 1992 *I.D. Profile*, PAC membership lists and the UNDP's *Development Cooperation Report*, 1992. Not all of the NGOs listed here have offices or representatives permanently located in Zimbabwe. In fact, the majority support Zimbabwean 'development' directly through grants to Zimbabwean NGO 'partners' or indirectly through regional programmes which include Zimbabwe as a focus country rather than by interventions by personnel 'on the ground'.

Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, Jewish Association for Development, Presbyterian Church in Canada - Presbyterian World Service and Development, Adventist Development and Relief Agency Canada, Mennonite Central Committee;

communications organisations - Africa Information Afrique (AIA), International Development Education Resource Association, Centre d'information et de documentation sur le Mozambique et l'Afrique australe;

regional/institutional initiatives - Save the Children Fund of British Columbia, Manitoba Council for International Cooperation, Saskatchewan Linkage Committee, Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation, various university-to-university programs;

networking organisations - Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) (of which many of the above NGOs are members).

While it is possible to compile a fairly accurate list of the Canadian NGOs maintaining some 'development' connection with Zimbabwe during the first half of the 1990s, it is difficult to get an exact picture of which organisations were actually 'in the field' at any particular time.³ Compendia of NGOs tend to list them according to their countries of origin (ie. where they are registered) and do not usually include countries of operation. Inventories of member organisations which are provided by networking NGOs such as Partnership Africa Canada often do include such information, but they do not include all the nationally registered NGOs working in a particular country at a particular time. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) office in Harare supplies a useful and up-to-date list of the CIDA Programmes and Canadian NGOs in Zimbabwe that are being funded by CIDA under the agency's Southern Africa Regional

³ For example, see the UNDP (1992), for a description of the difficulty in getting complete and accurate information on NGOs for the *Development Cooperation Report on Zimbabwe*.

Programme.⁴ However, the list does not include organisations which are involved in Zimbabwean development projects/programmes from headquarters in Canada rather than from offices in Zimbabwe.⁵

If it is difficult to establish with absolute certainty which Canadian NGOs are working in Zimbabwe at any given time, there is also a problem to distinguish clearly or completely between the projects of nationally-based voluntary organisations and those of CIDA.⁶ NGOs are supported financially to various degrees by the bilateral agency but most rely heavily on the latter for funding. And, although individual NGOs usually enjoy a fair measure of autonomy in their day-to-day operations, to acquire CIDA's support,

⁴ For Zimbabwe, the list includes: a CIDA Field Support Unit (FSU), the CIDA Canada Fund, CIDA In-Country Orientation Programme (SADC), CIDA Women's Small Project Fund (CIDA/WSPF), Canadian Association for the Private Sector in Southern Africa (CAPSSA), Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA), CARE International in Zimbabwe, Canadian Organisation for Development through Education (CODE), Canadian Executive Services Organisation (CESO), Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO), SADC AIDs Training and Education Programme (SATEP), SADC Energy Management Project, Geo-Scientific Data Management Project, School of Dental Therapy, School of Mines, Zimbabwe Natural Resources Management Programme, SADC Tree Seed Centre, World University Service of Canada - Zimbabwe (WUSC), Zimbabwe Canada General Training Facility (Z-CGTF), Canadian Crossroads International, Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).

⁵ While in Zimbabwe, I contacted Canadian NGOs which were identified through lists compiled by CIDA, CCIC, and PAC. From people I interviewed, I heard of other Canadian NGOs supposedly working in that country. However, although I occasionally found evidence of their existence (individuals who claimed to know members, vacated offices with vague directions to new locations, even telephone numbers), I was not able to actually locate or make contact with any of them.

⁶ Interestingly and perhaps significantly, the CIDA 1994 Directory for the Southern Africa Regional Programme does not distinguish between projects in Zimbabwe which are managed by CIDA and those managed by NGOs.

they must participate in increasingly rigorous competition and submit to stringent auditing procedures. Second, many of the projects which originate with CIDA itself do not differ significantly in objective, form or choice of indigenous partners from NGO-initiated projects. Third, even when the project originates with CIDA, often several NGOs are involved in fulfilling the mandate, thereby making it difficult to establish where the final responsibility lies for completing the operation.

To further cloud the picture, the developmental efforts of Canadian NGOs in Zimbabwe are not always clearly distinguishable from those of other countries - at least from the perspective of their indigenous partners. Occasionally, a Zimbabwean NGO worker might indicate that CIDA's projects differ in some respect from those of SIDA (the Swedish equivalent of CIDA), for example. But, for the most part, any distinctions which are made between individual NGOs are on a functional rather than national-character basis. Indeed, according to many workers in indigenous organisations, NGOs from different countries are virtually interchangeable; that is, if a CIDA (or CIDA-backed) programme comes to an end (or should the CIDA funds be withdrawn from a multi-donor project), SIDA or HIVOS (the Swedish and Norwegian bilateral agencies) or some other national agency and/or the NGOs they support can usually be counted on to pick up the 'partnership' (ie. funding) responsibilities.

Development Approaches of Canadian NGOs in Zimbabwe⁷

Almost all the members of Canadian organisations (both NGOs and CIDA programmes) in Zimbabwe which were contacted as part of the research for this thesis⁸ claimed to be working either directly or indirectly for the promotion of democracy and/or development in that country. Furthermore, the discourse surrounding these objectives was strikingly similar within the organisations; for example, almost universally, capacity/institution-building, gender sensitivity/equity, environmental sustainability and partnership were featured as the key principles by which the operations were guided. However, the approaches by which these issues were to be addressed varied among the organisations - in terms of development strategy and priority, issue area, sectoral/class emphasis, program complexity, and ideology.

⁷ The Canadian NGOs discussed here are those with field offices and staff in Zimbabwe (at least during the period of research between January and March, 1995). Canadian NGOs which were involved in Zimbabwean development but which had no operating headquarters or permanent staff in that country were not included because their relationships often tend to be more suggestive of 'sponsorship' than 'partnership'.

⁸ The information on NGOs in this section was derived mainly from key informant interviews conducted in Zimbabwe from January to March, 1995 with at least one operant from each of the NGOs discussed. The latter include the Canadian organisations with offices and staff in Zimbabwe at that time. Statistical information from publications supplied by the various NGOs and by data compiled for directories published by NGO consortia such as the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) (1992) and Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) (various years) was used to supplement and/or corroborate the information provided in the interviews.

Examples of Programs

CARE is quite unique among the Canadian NGOs in Zimbabwe in seeing its role as a 'catalyst' rather than as an initiator of projects. Early in the 1990s, it deliberately attempted to cultivate cooperative relationships with both the Zimbabwean government and with groups in civil society in order not only to facilitate the smooth operation of its mission but, as a first step, to establish where the most pressing development needs were. On the basis of that information and after careful assessment of where the organisation might be of most use without duplicating the efforts of other actors, CARE established that its most valuable development 'niches' were (1) in an effort to engender community support ('ownership') for a dam project which had been initiated by the government and (2) in providing credit to the informal sector. In the first case, contractual arrangements were coordinated by CARE among the various 'partners' which included the government, several community groups whose cooperation was vital to the project's success, and some indigenous NGOs which were 'hired' to provide seeds, seedlings etc., as part of a land reclamation component of the project. On the credit initiative, CARE negotiated terms with the Bank of Zimbabwe, a women's credit organisation and a rural area credit organisation to provide affordable credit to informal sector operators.

Few NGOs are as 'strategic' as CARE or as deliberately flexible in the type of projects in which they are willing to be involved. Some organisations are active in different initiatives (simultaneously or consecutively) on issues from welfare to women's or human rights, and while the areas in which they choose to be involved may be decided in consultation with Zimbabwean associates, more often the decisions are made in

Canada. The type of programming which emerges from this approach may involve combinations of advocacy, public education, community 'development' projects, welfare provision *et cetera*. There tends to be wide variation in the degree to which the strategies applied have been carefully considered, in the level of over-lapping with other actors, and in the degree of expertise and levels of cooperation or consultation that are exercised. Many church-sponsored activities are of this multi-foci type although there are church groups such as the human-rights NGO, the Catholic Organisation for Development and Peace, which are formed to meet very specific objectives.

Most NGOs which have offices in Zimbabwe (as opposed to the several which support Zimbabwean NGOs, causes or projects from an extra-Zimbabwean base) have very specific initiatives in mind when they enter the country. CODE, for example is a Canadian NGO committed to increasing the level of literacy in Zimbabwe. To that end, it supports both the local publishing industry and indigenous 'partners' who provide community literacy programmes.

The Canadian Public Health Association's SADC AIDs Training and Education Programme also has a specific agenda; in this case, to support community groups in the education, support services and care issues surrounding AIDs. However, it is also concerned with the broader, related issues of "community self-help and development, community impact reduction, and gender and human rights advocacy". This NGO attempts to be a 'capacity-builder', providing technical education and training for its numerous community-based 'partners' as well as assisting in advocacy training for various AIDs and associated organisations. Also, it seeks to establish collaboration

between NGOs and government on AIDs issues and among various NGOs at a regional level.

Other specific-issue Canadian NGOs situated in Zimbabwe include Canadian Crossroads International which attempts to break down cultural barriers in the world by sending young Canadians to work and learn abroad, World University Service of Canada which has focused on providing educational services in Zimbabwe, Africa Information Afrique which has established a wire service to bring information on development issues in Southern Africa to Canada (and to other NGOs in the region), the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) which provides credit to “the poorest of the economically active” to promote small business development, and the Canadian Cooperative Association which supports the National Association of Savings and Credit Unions of Zimbabwe (NASCUZ) and the Housing People of Zimbabwe (HPZ) mainly through ‘capacity-building’ to improve management techniques, accounting skills, etc.

Most of the CIDA projects in Zimbabwe also tend to focus on single issues. For example, the Canadian Association for the Private Sector in Southern Africa (CAPSSA) which was set up to promote ‘partnerships’ between Canadian and Zimbabwean businesses for the mutual benefit of both participants. The direct inclusion of Canadian interests is not typical; more commonly, CIDA’s projects are designed to favour indigenous ‘development’, usually by ‘building capacity’ in some way. The Zimbabwe Canada General Training Facility (Z-CGTF) for instance, concentrates on providing courses on management, accounting, *et cetera* within government ministries. It also gives assistance to NGOs and government institutions which offer short-courses in these areas.

Other technically-oriented programs which focus on ‘capacity-building’ include the SADC Energy Management Project and the Geo-Scientific Data Management Project in the energy and mining sectors, and the SADC Tree Seed Centre in the area of ecology. A somewhat different approach to ‘capacity building’ is evident in CIDA’s Women’s Small Project Fund (CIDA/WSPF). Although a major emphasis is placed on ‘institutional training’, it is indigenous women’s groups who decide upon the type of training needed and the type of projects which should be initiated. And, while CIDA maintains control by deciding which projects will be funded, the projects themselves are designed and carried out by Zimbabwean NGOs.

Ideological Differences

The variety of programmes in which Canadian developmental organisations in Zimbabwe are involved partly reflects the different views on ‘development’ among the group. Hence, a CIDA programme such as CAPPSA (see above) which deliberately supports Canadian as well as Zimbabwean business, upholds a view that ‘development’ is essentially a ‘neutral’ economic process - the positive sum result of the free transactions of ‘equal’ international actors. This viewpoint is consistent with a neo-liberal ideology and is supportive of policies aiming to redirect the development focus from the state to the market through structural adjustment. Among the NGOs, MEDA most strongly shares this ideological position. In describing its target group as “the poorest of the economically active”, and itself as a “profit-motivated rather than aid-based” organisation, MEDA reveals a philosophy which equates ‘development’ with economic

growth and which assumes (or hopes) that the poorest of the poor who are not necessarily economically active will eventually prosper through a 'trickle-down' of economic benefit.

According to the criteria provided by Macdonald (chapter 3) that distinguishes between 'mainstream' and 'progressive' development organisations, these examples would seem to fall more within the former camp in that they essentially support the neoliberal hegemony. However, both work within relationships which draw on the strength and expertise of their Zimbabwean associates, thereby "promoting the relative autonomy of the local NGO". Moreover, either or both may be effective in meeting their respective objectives, and may help to promote economic growth and improvement in the standard of living of their target population, thereby supporting a "strategy of empowerment". Yet, as was argued in chapter two, there are limitations to the assumptions upon which this development strategy rests, particularly with regard to a necessary link between political and economic liberalisation.

In the more economic neoliberal definitions of development, the state's role is confined to setting and enforcing rules or guidelines and providing infrastructure within which individuals (and the market) may freely operate. However, for NGOs which define development in terms of political and social participation as well as economic growth, there tends to be more emphasis placed on the state's provisionary responsibilities beyond supplying the minimal public goods. Thus, NGOs such as CARE deliberately attempt to engage and/or support the state in development initiatives. In other cases,

involvement with the state is more adversarial and the strategies used involve direct advocacy and/or the political empowerment of civil society or segments thereof.

At least one Canadian NGO effectively uses both strategies. The Southern African AIDs Training Programme (SAT) not only supports efforts to change the government's conservative attitude and legislation on homosexual rights, but also supports women's groups which are attempting to change attitudes in society that reinforce inequitable gender relations. Other NGOs which support political and/or social change include those which give financial or institutional support to human and legal rights groups such as the Legal Resources Foundation, Zimbabwe Human Rights Association, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, Women and Law in Southern Africa, *et cetera* (see preceding chapter) or those which support Zimbabwean NGOs such as the National Council for the Disabled that strives to achieve greater rights (eg, in job equity, infrastructure provisions) for its members.

External NGOs are obviously vulnerable when engaged in political or social activism since they tend to remain in the country conditional upon the host government's approval. And most of the representatives of the Canadian NGOs who were interviewed indicated that they attempted to establish and maintain cordial relations with the Zimbabwean state. Therefore, while CODE, as an example, might give financial support to the Book Publisher's Association, it is unlikely to be directly involved in protests such as those for homosexual rights and freedom of speech which occurred during the 1995 fair. Similarly, while the Women's Small Project Fund run by CIDA has accepted a mandate to work for change in gender relations, it is unlikely to publicly acknowledge or

explore the radical potential inherent in the achievement of the project's objective.⁹ In short, even among Canadian NGOs who define 'development' less as an economic process and more in terms of its association with participatory, developmentalist democracy, there is a limited capacity for forcefully promoting that ideal.

Moreover, although there are important differences among Canadian NGOs in terms of the societal group they target in their operations, their size and functional capacity, and the development ideology to which they adhere, Canadian NGOs in Zimbabwe as a group tend not to be particularly radical or 'progressive'. A case in point is the community's tacit acceptance of structural adjustment. 'Off the record', some individual members of Canadian NGOs are quite critical of the effects of structural adjustment on Zimbabweans, yet few Canadian organisations publicly assert such views.¹⁰

The restraint, as already noted, is partly due to the vulnerability of non-nationals

⁹ This observation underscores the need for careful outcome evaluations, partly to expose a tendency in many 'development' projects to list currently popular objectives such as *gender* equity as primary goals without acknowledging the radical origins or inevitable outcomes of ideas which have political and social transformative potential. See Fowler (1996) for an excellent discussion of evaluation criteria by which such social 'development' might be measured.

¹⁰ Among the representatives of NGOs who were interviewed, there were mixed responses regarding the appropriateness of ESAP. A few individuals expressed regret for the social hardship that was associated with ESAP, but felt that the government had really had no other option but to implement it. Others felt that the price being paid by the poor was too high to justify even if the policy should be responsible for encouraging a future period of solid economic growth. While such opinions usually appeared to be consistent with the development ideology of the NGO for whom the individual worked, it was interesting that this was not always the case.

to sanction by host governments. However, the politically neutral profile which is cultivated by most Canadian NGOs in Zimbabwe is conditioned by external actors as well. First, most are heavily dependent upon CIDA for funding. Hence, the latter's policy on Zimbabwe (and Southern Africa, generally) is a strong determinant of NGOs' level of activity in the country and an influential force in deciding the direction that any activity will take. Second, the similarities of discourse and practice among all the Northern development agents in Zimbabwe suggests that they are guided by a single paradigm that largely determines the nature of external assistance. As the next section argues, the influence of CIDA and the broader DAC development community on Canadian NGOs has affected the nature of the 'partnerships' they form.

NGO Perspectives on 'Partnership'

North-South NGO relationships in Zimbabwe as elsewhere¹¹ are described and influenced by the discourse of 'partnership'. This term has been adopted by many NGOs in Zimbabwe within both the indigenous and Canadian communities as the signifier of a potentially progressive and sustainable step in the nature of North-South relations (Chari, 1994; personal interviews).

¹¹ For example, Postma (1994) also found that 'partnership' was the underlying discourse that conditioned relations between national and non-national NGOs in Mali and Niger.

The Canadian Perspective

It is usual for members of Canadian NGOs or CIDA programs to refer to any Zimbabwean voluntary association with which they have any operational connections as a 'partner'. In general, the Canadians interviewed regarding these relationships tended to have a positive view of 'partnership'. In most cases, the primary measure of a successful partnership involved the degree to which 'control' within their organisations had been turned over to Zimbabweans. In some instances, sharing control meant that the manager or co-manager of a project was a Zimbabwean; in others, considerable effort was being made to bring Zimbabwean NGOs into the decision-making, implementation and evaluations stages of projects/programs. In at least one program, the person in charge was Zimbabwean, all the components initiatives of the project were being contracted out to Zimbabwean NGOs and, according to an individual who worked on the project, it was the indigenous groups who decided what the strategies of the program would be. This case is hardly typical of most 'partnerships', but according to many of the Canadians who were interviewed, genuine efforts were being made by their organisations to build capacity in Zimbabwean organisations so that more of this type of control-transfer could occur.

The Zimbabwean Perspective

Like their Canadian counterparts, Zimbabwean NGO personnel tended to use the term 'partner' in referring to the former's (and other Northern) organisations, although as discussions progressed, it became quite clear that the term is commonly used interchangeably with the phrase 'Canadian/ Northern donor'. In short, from the

Zimbabwean NGO perspective, a 'partner' referred to a Northern organisation which provided operating funds. Yet, it also became evident that while most used the language of 'partnership', there were few who felt that they were close to fully actualising the concept and several were sceptical about Northern organisations' sincerity on the issue.

The main difficulty which the Zimbabweans had with 'partnership' may be summarised as frustration with the realisation that "control of the funds means control of the project/program". Specifically, NGO workers complained that:

- 1) Southern NGOs must adhere to an overly doctrinaire and/or regimented protocol set by the Northern 'partner'/funding agent;
- 2) 'accountability' is a one-sided proposition; ie. the same standards of 'transparency' which are expected/demanded from Southern organisations do not apply to Northern partners;
- 3) 'partnership' does not necessarily include listening by Northern donors;
- 4) any inconvenience or disparity arising from the relationship is more likely to be borne by the Southern partner.

Complaints about a doctrinaire attitude and/or an over-regimented protocol were the most frequently and consistently raised. In particular, NGO representatives resented the three-year limit which exists on most funding agreements. They claimed that, given many unforeseen set-up problems, often a project/program has just begun to operate effectively when funding ends. The consequence of this is that the NGO leadership is forced to spend considerable time seeking funding bridges or new 'partners', leaving little to spend on actual 'development' work.

A second complaint was that Northern 'partners'/donors demand compliance with accounting procedures which are too time consuming, rigid, rigorous and/or excessively

'Western'. Several NGO representatives were concerned about the time and labour involved in complying with accounting requirements, and one stated that Northern donors would not accept that cultural and/or lifestyle differences should be taken into consideration in accounting for expenditures. To illustrate the point, an example was given of an NGO worker who had been reproached by the Northern partner/funding agent for spending project funds to provide lunches for the children of participants in a particular project. Yet, according to the individual recounting the incident, given the socio-economic conditions of the participants, it is unlikely that they would or could have taken part had the lunches not been made available.

Northerners' emphasis on strict accountability is especially resented when it is perceived that the principles are not rigorously applied in both directions. For instance, at least two respondents mentioned that often little is done to make amends for projects/programs which have been ineffective or even harmful to the Southern recipients. And, according to two other critics, frequently the Southern NGOs or communities involved are not consulted on what they perceive to be appropriate accounting and/or evaluation measures.

A lack of consultation in general was a major source of complaint. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, and even despite Northern strategies designed to include Southern 'partners' in decision-making, the latter frequently feel that their concerns and ideas are under- or disregarded. For example, one member of a Zimbabwean NGO claimed that her organisation had attempted to establish a meaningful dialogue with the

Canadian funding agency, but “after five years (of discussion) we still talk about exactly the same things”.

Finally, miscellaneous complaints by individuals who work for Zimbabwean NGOs referred to a generalised disparity in the relationship. One worker was annoyed that Zimbabwean NGOs were required to work according to their Canadian partner’s annual time schedule; for instance, they were encouraged to take vacations during the Canadian summer months rather than during the times when most Zimbabweans would be on holiday. Another felt that it was an imposition that the Canadian partner would send representatives to consult at times which were convenient to the Canadians often with little regard or deference to their Zimbabwean partner’s schedule or preference. Yet another felt undervalued and exploited when he discovered that a Canadian who had previously filled the position he now occupied in a Canadian organisation had earned a considerably larger salary.

Overall, most individuals from Zimbabwean NGOs who were questioned on their perceptions about the nature of North-South NGO ‘partnerships’ felt that few of the criteria by which achievement of the ideal could be measured had been reached. A standard list (by Chari, 1994) of the characteristics and/or requirements of ‘partnership’ usually includes:

1. Common goals and objectives;
2. Commitment to the enterprise;
3. Involvement in the enterprise;
4. Mutual trust, respect and confidence in your partners;
5. Sharing power and responsibility over the enterprise;
6. Interdependency and mutual exchange of goods and services;
7. Mutual benefit.

According to the majority of Zimbabwean NGO workers interviewed, the relationship between Canadian and Zimbabwean NGOs fell short on all of the last four points.¹²

Nevertheless, despite their obvious dissatisfaction with the associations which existed at the time of the interviews, most of the Zimbabweans who were interviewed felt that 'partnership' was still a worthwhile objective which could be achieved if only the Northern 'partners' would share control. In short, the majority placed the issue within the context of 'will' on the part of the Northern participants. Moreover, most implied that any positive change toward true 'partnership' would be on the initiative of the latter. In general, Canadian NGOs as well tend to place the impetus for change on the Northern 'partner'. Few individuals from either Southern or Northern organisations offered any suggestions regarding strategies or measures by which Southern NGOs could help to bring this about. In particular, representatives from only two NGOs (both Zimbabwean) mentioned the need (and described their own organisations' efforts) to diminish their dependence on Northern funding, although almost all identified this as the major factor in the continuing disparities of their relationships.

¹² However, several claimed that "Canadians were better than most [Northerners]" in trying to equalize the relationships. Also, there were notable exceptions to the negative view. Members of two Zimbabwean NGOs felt that their organisations' relationship with their Northern partner were mutually supportive and equitable. And in two instances where I interviewed representatives of Northern and Southern NGOs together, I received positive comments from both partners. In the latter cases, I have no way of knowing whether the comments would have differed if the interviews had been conducted separately.

Accounting for Differing Perceptions on Partnership

It would come as no surprise to some analysts that Canadian and Zimbabwean NGOs evaluated 'partnership' differently. For these scholars, the contradictory viewpoints stem from the use of the term itself. It has not only been 'abused' by over-use, they argue, but more importantly, it is used to obscure the power relationships and maintain the existing disparities which exist in North-South relations (Macdonald, 1997: 134).

Clearly, the Zimbabweans' complaints about 'partnership' and their resentments against their Northern 'partners' are related to the issue of power disparities. Yet, most Zimbabwean NGOs have readily adopted the language of 'partnership'. Certainly, there is a strong incentive to do so since most Northern donors have made 'partnership' a conditionality of funding. Nevertheless, aside from such pragmatic considerations, most profess a genuine commitment to the ideal (even if they seem more cynically [realistically?] aware than their Northern counterparts about the limitations). In other words, it appears that Zimbabwean NGOs - no less than Canadian ones - find the concept of partnership to be at least potentially useful.

Partnership as an Empowering Discourse

One possible explanation for the apparent contradiction between Zimbabwean NGOs' upholding of partnership as an ideal and their negative evaluation of it in practice

is related to the political aspect of discourse. As one commentator argues, “(t)he words we use are critical. They define limits, and reinforce the quality of relations” (Murphy, cited in Macdonald, 1997: 134). Therefore, it is possible that simply by using a term to signify a worthwhile goal, expectations are raised and strategies are devised to try to meet the objectives which are outlined. In this case, the idea (as distinct from the practice) of ‘partnership’ helps to justify as well as reinforce indigenous NGOs’ demands for ‘empowerment’ in an environment dominated by the North.

Related to this is the growing consensus throughout the South in the criticism of partnership. The complaints raised by respondents in Zimbabwean NGOs closely resemble those which scholars have reported following research in other areas of Africa (eg. Postma, 1994) and the South generally. It is possible, of course, that the critiques are similar because the problems of ‘partnership’ are common to several areas; however, it seems equally plausible that the critiques against Northern ‘partners’ are similar because Southern NGOs are being influenced by the widespread publication and dissemination of information on the problems (and potential) of partnership. The political advantages which derive from the critique of partnership are enhanced by the growing level of solidarity on the subject among Southern NGOs. In short, the transnational discourse of ‘partnership’ is a source of leverage for counter-hegemonic forces operating in bi-lateral fora.

Limitations of Mutual Awareness

An alternative reason for the contradictory position held by the Zimbabweans involves the latter’s apparent lack of understanding about contemporary situations in the

North. During interviews, representatives of Zimbabwean NGOs frequently suggested that greed, a lack of generosity, and/or a 'will to power' on the part of Northern partners (or the North generally) were responsible for the problems they associated with 'partnership'. There seemed to be little knowledge or even curiosity about the conditions in Canada/the North (increasing dominance of market forces, state-societal relations, political culture) might influence the level of aid contributions or the conditionalities which might be attached to their donation.

This lack of understanding may be a result of the frequently-cited problem regarding the Northern partners' lack of 'transparency' (Malena, 1995). However, it seemed to stem as well from lack of effort or interest on the part of the Southern organisations. There is a certain irony attached to this observation in that one of the criticisms that is frequently raised against Northern partners is that they are unaware or inconsiderate of Southern experiences and customs. Yet, the inattentiveness to Northern conditions should not be entirely unexpected; it is consistent with a traditional view of development that sees the quantity and quality of Northern donations to be the source of the problems and key to improvements. If the views of Zimbabwean NGO members are typical, there is a tendency among many practitioners of 'development' in the South as well as the North to avoid seeing the current 'crisis of development' as a set of interrelated issues of democracy, human security and development that transcend national North-South boundaries.

A Limited View of Partnership

In other words, the discourse of 'partnership' may help to expose rather than obscure the power relations between the North and the South as Macdonald and others have argued. Indeed, the differing evaluations by Canadian and Zimbabwean 'partners' are typical of the traditional views associated with the power differential of Northern and Southern actors. Northern and Southern NGOs continue to see themselves as patrons and clients or even, in some instances, as antagonists rather than as "colleagues and protagonists in a common political project" (Murphy, 1993, cited in Macdonald, 1997: 135).

For example, when questioned during interviews about 'mutual benefits' which is one of the defining characteristic of 'partnership', none of the Zimbabweans supplied a reason why 'partnership' would be of benefit to a Canadian organisation, other than the cynical suggestion that Canadian salaries provided a high standard of living in Zimbabwe than in Canada. Similarly, most of the Canadians interviewed seemed to feel that they were there mainly to assist the Zimbabweans and, like their Zimbabwean counterparts, few could articulate what benefits the North received from 'partnership'. Some reflected on the personal satisfaction of living in another country and culture and others felt that contact between individuals from different parts of the world helped to reduce cultural barriers to understanding and friendship, and some believed that their (Northern-inspired) development projects would not be successful unless Southern beneficiaries of aid had a sense of 'ownership' with regard to projects/programs. Few placed 'partnership' within the context of a development paradigm in which disparities, inequities and insecurities

are features of a global as opposed to North-South problem and one, therefore, in which Northerners as well as Southerners stand to gain from interaction.

On the other hand, several individuals provided suggestions that would help to diminish disparities between Northern and Southern NGO partners. Most of these (for 'two-way' transparency, better communications between NGOs, etc.) were given as means by which 'partnerships' (as a mode of operation) would function more efficiently. However, several individuals, usually but not exclusively from Zimbabwean NGOs, mentioned the need for greater coordination among Northern donor agencies in conjunction with Southern NGOs - a measure that has important implications for 'partnership' as a development paradigm (see chapter two).

At any given time Southern NGOs frequently have more than one Northern donor/partner. These organisations tend to have little professional contact with each other, at least with regard to specific programmes, and when they do meet it is unlikely to be in the presence of their Southern colleagues. Consequently, the latter are often forced to comply with dual or multiple sets of conditionalities, accounting standards or procedures, and schedules. In many instances, this leads to programme redundancies, over-laps and uncoordinated and inefficient use of funds. According to those who discussed this issue, it would be to the advantage of all participants (and to the practice of 'development' generally) to establish cooperative 'partnerships' among Northern NGOs and donor agencies centred around their respective relationships with their Southern 'partners'. In short, the needs of the Southern NGO would determine the conditions of the partnership. The relationship thus established has the likelihood of increasing the working

capacity of the Southern NGO, the efficiency of the programme, and the degree of cooperation at the operational level among international donors.

Although the DAC agreed in 1993 that there was a need for a coherent policy approach to development among OECD members (German & Randel, 1995: 17), there has been little attempt to date to coordinate policy at the programme level. However, recent cutbacks to development aid funds among the majority of DAC members may have - along with obviously detrimental consequences for programmes - the unintended but positive effect of encouraging greater cooperation in programming among Northern donors.

In short, one of the more positive prospects for establishing effective development partnerships may emerge from the recent neoliberal shift in the international aid community. Yet, as was noted in preceding sections, the neoliberal agenda has not, in general, been conducive to forming North-South NGO partnerships that promote sustainable democratic development. To explore in more detail the effect that the donor agency has in the construction (or destruction) of effective partnerships, the following sections examine the changes in CIDA policy toward NGOs and Africa and the implications that they have for Canadian NGOs and their Zimbabwean partners.

CIDA and Canadian NGOs ¹³

The Politicisation of Canadian NGOs

Many developmental organisations came into being in Canada following the Second World War. Since then, as has been the pattern of NGOs elsewhere, increasing numbers of Canadian organisations began to concentrate on ‘development’ issues rather than on charitable ventures (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley, 1988: 12-17). In the post-Cold War years, however, welfare issues have once again become the major focus for a large proportion of NGOs, although now usually in connection with complex emergency and peace-keeping operations.

During the 1960s and 70s, several Canadian NGOs were formed and/or became ‘radicalised’ as part of a growing support for various political struggles around the world. For example, some NGOs became politicised as they sought to alleviate the suffering of people caught up in political upheaval or misadventure (Biafra, Bangladesh). Some supported liberation movements (in Rhodesia, South Africa, Algeria), while others protested against the interventionist foreign policy of the US (in Viet Nam, Cambodia, Nicaragua, Cuba, Chile, Dominican Republic) (Murphy, 1991: 170).

The ‘progressive’ or ‘radical’ stance taken by these NGOs has been inconsistent

¹³ “(V)oluntary action makes up a significant component of Canadian cultural life and of socio-economic activity within the Canadian society”, although only about 220 of the “tens of thousands” of voluntary organisations qualify as international developmental NGOs (Murphy, 1991: 165). Among the latter are the various types which were listed above in association with Zimbabwean development as well as a group of *development education organisations* which work in Canada to inform Canadians about development issues.

with the more 'politically cautious' approaches of the majority of the welfare and relief organisations which have tended to support the liberal internationalist view which dominates mainstream Canadian political culture. Yet, while these differences create some tensions within the NGO community (Micou, 1992), they tend to be largely overlooked by the Canadian public which has been rather indiscriminating in its support of developmental NGOs. The public's tendency to homogenise the developmental NGO community probably reflects its attitude toward 'development' generally. According to studies on the subject, there is general support for CIDA and for a Canadian aid program among Canadians, but there is also a tendency to over-estimate the amount of aid which is actually contributed. Furthermore, many people are poorly informed about development issues and, perhaps as a consequence of this, the majority of private donations tend to support emergency relief operations rather than long-term development strategies. In short, there appears to be a social consensus that supports an ideal of humanitarian/redistributive internationalism but it is a consensus built as much on a myth of generosity as on informed or rational choice.

Under the circumstances, Canadian NGOs have had an uphill struggle to bring information about development to the general public and therefore to increase the level of popular support for 'third' and 'fourth' generation policy directions. At the same time, however, the low level of public interest in development has given NGOs a considerable degree of autonomy and many developmental Canadian NGOs have received public funds while supporting causes and adopting stances which have not necessarily reflected the mainstream social discourse.

An example of one such NGO is the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC). The latter was founded in 1968 as an umbrella organisation mandated to be an advocate in Canada for its members' position and a conduit through which closer, more effective liaisons could occur with Third World organisations. It was formed during the aforementioned period of expansion and politicisation (and, in some instances, radicalisation) of many Canadian NGOs. Consequently, from its inception CCIC has contained a strong critical, reformist element (Brodhead & Pratt, 1994: 93). Yet, despite the organisation's opposition to the government on some issues, the latter has provided CCIC with most of its operational funds.

A Symbiotic Relationship?

Brodhead and Pratt (*ibid*, 94) explain that such sponsorship has posed no real threat to any government because the lack of ideological consensus within the NGO community,¹⁴ and therefore within CCIC's membership,¹⁵ has prevented the organisation

¹⁴ Based on ideology, Brodhead and Pratt (1994: 94) differentiate among three main types of Canadian NGOs. Besides "mainstream liberal" organisations which "enjoin caring towards the poor, but within a context set by the powerful presence of liberal economic values", they identify "reform" and "solidarist" or "radical" NGOs, "with the former seeing the need for major international intervention to promote more equitable international political and economic relationships, and the latter seeking fundamental transformation of Western values and societies as prerequisite to real development in the South."

¹⁵ Indeed, the range of views held by its members has been responsible for a fair degree of dissension within the CCIC. The controversial position which CCIC has taken on some issues (such as in 1970 on the Berger Commission inquiry into Canada's McKenzie Valley Pipeline) has caused some members to leave the organisation. Also, its deliberate political advocacy stance dissuaded some large organisations (eg. UNICEF,

from promoting radical positions very forcefully or for very long. However, the government's supportive attitude may relate as well to the fact that the CCIC has been very useful to CIDA in informing the latter's development dialogue. If, as Thérien (1994: 328) argues, "Canada is recognized worldwide for its highly progressive (development) rhetoric", the CCIC membership (and NGOs generally) may share some responsibility for the image. "For example, the importance of gender issues, of human rights, and of institution-building, and the continuing priority of Africa's needs were advocated initially among NGOs and then taken up by CIDA" (Brodhead & Pratt, 1994: 96).

While it might be expected that CIDA would be especially supportive of those NGOs which adhered to the state's dominant liberal internationalist ideology, the relationship between CIDA and the more reformist or radical of Canadian NGOs has been mutually supportive, or perhaps paradoxically symbiotic. In return for major funding support and a considerable degree of autonomy in carrying out their operations, these NGOs have provided CIDA with a progressive image and 'enlightened' rhetoric (as well as some substantive projects) to support the 'humane internationalist' image which Canada has traditionally sought to project on the world stage. At the same time, however, the political and economic interests which are served by the Canadian aid structure have never been seriously undermined by the concessions given to these 'radical' streams, because the latter have never been dominant within the NGO community (or the larger Canadian society).

Red Cross) which operated on a principle of "politically-neutrality" from joining (Brodhead & Pratt, 1994: 93).

From 'Partnership' to Estrangement

From the 1960s until the 1990s, CIDA's relationship with NGOs has been notably cooperative. In 1968 an NGO division was created within the agency and a generous matching formula for funds raised from public donation was established. Later, in 1981, the Institutional Cooperation and Development Services (ICDS) branch was created to administer a growing number of grants awarded by CIDA to non-governmental institutions (NGIs) such as cooperatives, universities and community colleges (*ibid.*, 91, 92). Also, in the early 1980s, CIDA gave considerable control over to NGOs when it began to provide funds to the latter on a three-year program basis rather than on a project basis (*ibid.*, 97). Moreover, CIDA has frequently responded to advice and pressure from NGOs in setting its policy and has charged coalitions of the latter with responsibility for implementation in certain countries such as Cambodia, Angola and Mozambique or in certain regions (eg. PAC in Africa) (*ibid.*, 96).

The close cooperation between CIDA and the NGO community was further strengthened in 1987 by the emphasis placed on 'partnership' in the major policy document, *Sharing our Future*. Although the exact meaning behind CIDA's use of the term in that document was somewhat ambiguous,¹⁶ by identifying NGOs as future 'partners', it was implied that they would be given greater autonomy, responsibility and voice in the development process. That this was the intended direction was made more

¹⁶ On the one hand, CIDA referred to the importance of 'partnership' between "Canada's people and institutions and those of the Third World". But, it also "identified international financial institutions, governments, NGOs and the business sector as potential partners for the Canadian aid effort" (PAC, 1989, 12).

explicit in a 1991 paper in which the agency declared that it would become more “partnership-oriented in the sense of using partners more in conceiving and delivering our programs” (Smillie, 1993).

It was asserted in the same paper that “a paradigm shift in [CIDA’s] current attitudes and operational methods” would be required before real partnership would be achieved. But, as Smillie (1993) reports, “the paradigm shift did not take place” or at least not the one that was implied in the document. Indeed, a shift did occur, but it did little to strengthen the position of NGOs. The change in direction was first articulated in a report prepared by Groupe SECOR (1991), a consultancy firm hired to review CIDA’s management structure and patterns with a view to increasing efficiency and effectiveness in the agency’s administration. The *Strategic Management Review* or SECOR Report, as it is usually known, advised that “CIDA pursue means by which to free itself of many of its administering and financial responsibilities in programming....and improve its policy leverage by concentrating aid more selectively and in fewer countries, and by working with those NGOs and non-governmental institutions (NGIs) which were prepared to accept CIDA’s strategic goals” (Unger, 1994: 12). Perhaps the most graphic illustration in that document of the change that was occurring in the relationship between CIDA and NGOs was the use of ‘business-like’ terms to describe the new terms of their association. Since then, with CIDA’s ‘partners’ redesignated as ‘stakeholders’, the agency has interacted with NGOs in contractual agreements in which “there may be a degree of reciprocity ... but (which are) not the same as ‘partnership(s)’” (*ibid*, 7).

This drift into contracting arrangements is not unique to the Canadian situation,

but reflects the current attitude of bi- and multi-lateral agencies generally toward NGOs. As noted in chapter three, the tendency to regard the latter primarily as policy facilitators has grown among official development agencies along with the increasing dominance of neoliberalism. In short, the changes in CIDA's relationship with NGOs and the quality of the 'partnerships' it forms with the latter reflects a redirection in Canada's macro-economic policy which brings it more in line with the global neoliberal order.

The increased use of NGOs by official development agencies as contracting agents and/or policy facilitators (see chapter three) reinforces and is reinforced by the recent surge of interest in NGOs' roles in peace-keeping, refugee support and disaster relief. Yet, while more funds (multilateral, in particular) are being directed toward these activities, most bilateral agencies, including Canada, are cutting the budgets of their aid agencies.¹⁷ With reductions to CIDA announced in 1995, support for development NGOs dropped from \$244 million to \$199 million (18.4%) over-all and support for development education NGOs was cut altogether (Sanger, 1995).

In the 1990s, then, the generally cooperative relationship which existed since the 1960s between CIDA and NGOs has deteriorated and ideas about strengthening partnerships between CIDA and NGOs have lost their resonance (PAC, 1995b). Moreover, the shift in government (and IFI/IGO) policy, especially at a time of 'donor fatigue' in private as well as public sectors has serious negative implications not only for

¹⁷ Not only has there been a general shift in the types of NGOs and NGO activities which are being funded, but in CIDA's case at least, development funds are being redirected - away from NGOs and NGIs and toward the private sector through the Private Sector Development Initiative Fund (Brodhead & Pratt, 1994: 100).

the ability of NGOs to perform their intended functions but also for the degree of autonomy with which they operate. As Smillie asserts:

The growth of nonprofit dependence on government has meant that organizations - often created to provide a strong, independent voice in the social sector - 'cannot act as freely as if they were in some isolated market for services. Instead, they must weigh the consequences of their propensity to dissent from public policy, since non-compliance might threaten their continued well-being.

As already noted, the changes in CIDA's attitude toward NGOs are part of broader revisions in its aid policy. The latter, especially those concerning Canada's policy in Africa, have implications for NGOs working in Zimbabwe and therefore will be reviewed in the following section.

Canadian Aid Policy Toward Africa

Growing Interest in Africa during the 1980s

In the 1970s, the greatest percentage of Canadian aid went to South Asia with India and Pakistan receiving 29.0 % and 11.0%, respectively, of the country's total ODA disbursements (OECD, 1992: A-56). By the early 1980s, however, Canada was contributing the largest percentage of its aid budget to Africa - although at 38.6% of the total this was only slightly more than the 34.8% transferred to South Asia. By the mid-1980s, Africa was receiving 51.7% of Canada's total aid budget and considerably more than any other region (See Tables 1 & 2, below).

Table 1: Canadian Aid to Sub-Saharan Africa (% of total gross disbursements)

1980-81	1985-86	1990-91	1992-93
38.6	40.3	51.7	42.6

Source: OECD, 1992: A-15; 1994: Table 44

**Table 2 Canadian Aid Distribution Compared by Region
(% of total gross disbursements)**

	Sub-Saharan Africa	South Asia	Other Asia and Oceania	Middle East and North Africa	Latin America and Caribbean
1980-81	38.6	34.8	5.8	8.0	12.8
1985-86	40.3	27.5	11.5	2.8	17.8
1990-91	51.7	14.8	12.5	7.8	13.2
1992-93	42.6	18.8	17.6	6.0	15.1

Source: OECD, 1992: A-18; 1994: Table 44

This shift in aid flows in the 1980s resulted from the convergence of several factors which had heightened Canada's foreign policy interest in Africa. Public pressure was one of these; Canadians had been moved during the 1970s by incidents such as the Biafran crisis during the Nigerian civil war and the Soweto uprising in South Africa (Clark, 1991: 2) and in the 1980s by a disastrous famine in Ethiopia. The NGOs which had been formed or 'radicalised' at this time (see above) put pressure on the Canadian government to provide humanitarian support for the people and/or to use its international influence against oppressive regimes. Also during that period, the field of 'development'

was influenced by the discourses of 'dependence' and 'basic human needs' (see chapter 2) and there had been a shift in focus among the OECD donors toward helping the 'poorest of the poor' during the last half of the 1980s. Finally, the international community's antipathy to *apartheid* had grown and the repugnance of Canadians, generally, as well as the "genuine personal abhorrence of apartheid on the part of both (then Secretary of State) Clark and (then Prime Minister) Mulroney" (Clark, 1991: 46) contributed to Canada's increased interest in Southern Africa from the late 1970s into the 1980s.

A 'Special Fund for Africa'

Canada's growing interest in Southern Africa was reflected largely in support for the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) to assist the Front-Line States (FLS) in withstanding South Africa's destabilisation initiative against its neighbours in the region. Meanwhile, substantial increases in aid were made in the mid-1980s for relief efforts in the Horn of Africa. Canadian NGOs had rallied in response to the Somalian crisis, collecting over \$60 million (Can.) in relief money from the private sector and, for its part, the government announced the establishment of a *Special Fund for Africa*, a portion of which was designated to match the private donations. In all, including both direct and matched funding, the Canadian government contributed over \$110 million (Can.) to the Special Fund in 1984 and 1985. And demonstrating the cooperative partnership which then existed between NGOs and CIDA, 47 Canadian NGOs united in 1984 under the auspices of the CCIC to set up *Africa Emergency Aid (AEA)* to administer

the funds (PAC, 1989: 9).

In 1986, as a contribution to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD), the Canadian government established *Africa 2000*, a 15-year programme to provide assistance for Africa's recovery. One-half of the first five year tranche of \$150 million was allocated to NGOs to be administered by the new coalition, Partnership Africa Canada (PAC)¹⁸ (*ibid.*, 9). This commitment of a large amount of funds from the government (\$75 million over five-years) appeared to herald the advent of the new 'partnership' between CIDA and developmental NGOs involved in Africa. Moreover, that the government was committed to North-South as well as to CIDA-NGO 'partnerships' was made apparent by its endorsement of PAC's objectives: "to promote African development by supporting and strengthening African NGOs so that Africans themselves can become agents of their own development, and to increase the Canadian public understanding of and support for African development" (*ibid.*, 9).

The principles of indigenous 'ownership' of development initiatives, of popular participation and of 'partnership' which underlay PAC's objectives were reiterated in CIDA's 1987 document, *Sharing Our Future* (eg. see above). The latter's four main principles were set out as: (1) "putting poverty first", ie. assisting the poorest people in the poorest countries as a first priority; (2) "helping people to help themselves", ie.

¹⁸ PAC was formed in 1986 as a coalition consisting of most of the founding groups of AEA as well as several other Canadian NGOs (85 in total). It has since grown to over 100 members.

supporting capacity building and/or popular participation; (3) seeing that “development (as opposed to other foreign policy) priorities prevail in setting objectives for the ODA program”; and (4) recognising that “*partnership is the key to fostering and strengthening links between Canada’s people and institutions and those of the Third World*”. As priority targets, the document listed poverty alleviation, increased participation of women, environmentally sound development, food security, energy availability, *and structural adjustment*.

A Shift in Focus: away from Africa, toward structural adjustment

According to Marcia Burdette (1994: 217), the inclusion of structural adjustment as a priority “came as a surprise to many CIDA staff members”, even despite an accompanying caveat indicating that Canada would focus on the social and economic effects of adjustment. Indeed, structural adjustment appeared almost to have been an after-thought addition to the otherwise consistent policy statement based on the principles of ‘developmentalist democracy’. However, as Burdette observes (p. 217), structural adjustment, having gained a “toe-hold” position in *Sharing Our Future*, eventually became CIDA’s main priority, and in Canada as elsewhere in the DAC community, aid came to be seen as a ‘policy lever’ for persuading countries to adopt or adhere to SAPs.

If the government’s shift toward a greater focus on macroeconomic (im)balances has been reflected since 1987 in CIDA’s policy (Brodhead & Pratt, 1994: 100), it has become more starkly evident in the massive cuts to the ODA budget in the mid-1990s. The trend to curb spending on aid began in 1991/92 when ODA spending was capped at 3

percent growth per annum (Clark, 1991: 9) and from 1991 to 1994, ODA as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) remained relatively steady (German & Randel, 1995: 39) (see tables 3, 4 & 5, below). However, in 1995 “the federal budget announced a 20.5% cut to the International Assistance Envelope between 1995/6 and 1997/98 (with 70.5% of these cuts in the first year)” (*ibid.*, 39).

Table 3: Canadian ODA
(at 1990 prices and exchange rates) (\$millions)

	1980-81	1985-86	1990-91	1993	1994	1997
Total ODA	1798	2338	2480	3061	2350	2306 (projected)

Source: OECD, 1992: A-8; German & Randel, 1995: 39

Table 4: Canadian ODA as a % of GNP

	1970-71	1975-76	1980-81	1985-86	1990-91	1993	1995	1997
ODA as %	0.41	0.49	0.43	0.49	0.45	0.45	0.31	0.27 (projected)

Source: OECD, 1992: A-8; German & Randel, 1995: 39

Table 5: Composition of Canadian Aid

grant equivalent of total ODA as % of GNP	appropriation of aid as % of central government budget	multilateral ODA as % of GNP	of which: aid to IDA, IFAD, UNDP as % of GNP	aid to LDC* as % of GNP	aid to LLDCs** as % of GNP
0.51	1.97	0.14	0.06	0.23	0.12

Source: OECD, 1992: A 12

* low income countries
** least developed countries

The cuts are not evenly distributed across the ODA budget. For example, there has been an 18% drop in support for NGOs generally but a 50% decrease for international NGOs (*ibid.*; see also following chapter). There has been a 23% decrease in donations to multilateral programmes while bilateral programmes were cut by 17%. While the latter have been applied evenly over the three regions to which Canada contributes (Africa, Asia-Pacific and the Americas), Africa as the recipient of the largest proportional share of Canada's aid stands to lose the most in real dollar terms.

Overall, then, despite the fact that Africa has continued to receive a much larger share of Canada's aid donations than other regions throughout the 1990s, Canada's support for African development is declining. Moreover, there was evidence even before the latest aid cuts that the focus for Canadian aid in Africa had shifted when it was announced in 1993 that Canada would cut its bilateral aid programmes in seven of the poorest African countries.¹⁹

Clearly, the movement in Canadian macroeconomic policy toward the neoliberal trend has had significant implications for CIDA in its relations with NGOs and with the developing countries to which it contributes aid. In particular, the notion of partnership between CIDA and NGOs has become rather meaningless; and the continuation, much less furtherance, of North-South NGO partnerships has been threatened. However, beyond the effects of the current macroeconomic trend, inherent contradictions within

¹⁹ A declining interest in Africa is a consistent trend among DAC members generally. Also, as German & Randel (1995: 5) point out, even when aid to Africa as a proportion of the total budget remains constant, there has been a tendency among donors to shift the focus from the poorest to the richest of the African countries.

Canadian aid policy (in Africa and generally) have had implications for the NGO community in its ability to form effective, developmental ‘partnerships.’

Contradictions in Canada’s Aid Policy for Africa

Africa 21: An Ambiguous Vision for Africa

In the midst of speculations and concerns about aid cuts in 1991, CIDA introduced *Africa 21: A Vision of Africa on the path to sustainable development in the 21st century*, which announced a new direction in Canadian aid strategy that was “more united, more democratic and more entrepreneurial.” Regarding the “more united” component of the policy, CIDA referred in particular to the need to foster initiatives to build regional cooperation and/or integration as a primary development objective for Southern Africa. The emphasis on ‘democracy’ involved CIDA’s intention to encourage popular participation in the countries of the region. It referred also to the necessity of defining the term, ‘democracy’, broadly - beyond a focus merely on elections and with an understanding of the integrated nature of participation. In the effort to develop a “more entrepreneurial” programme, CIDA indicated it would spend 50% of its budget on research in areas of “sustainable and equitable development”, building research capacity in the South, enhancing partnerships with Canadian institutions and strengthening information systems (Erhart *et al*, 1993). Finally, in focusing on these three fronts, several principles for action were listed. These included the importance: of not imposing

a Western style of operations; of nurturing institutions within civil society; of encouraging “good governance” that is “not weaker but more responsive and accountable and efficient”; of helping governments/parties to accept electoral defeat; of coordinating efforts with other donors; and of avoiding “mixed messages.”

This ‘new direction’ announced in 1991 seemed to suggest that CIDA policy-makers had adopted the discourse of many African and Africanist scholars and NGO ‘practitioners’ who favoured first, a regional approach to development in Southern Africa²⁰ and, second, an indigenous, ‘bottom-up’ strategy - in short, a ‘participatory’ or ‘developmental’ democracy. And, the emphasis on developing capacity in information systems, *et cetera*, is consistent with long-term Southern demands for the transfer of technology from the North. Yet, it is interesting that CIDA described this process as one of making aid strategy ‘more entrepreneurial’ indicating by use of that term with its market-centric connotations that CIDA was also promoting the discourse of the dominant neoliberal agenda²¹ which, as was argued in part I, is hardly consistent with a discourse of ‘developmentalist democracy.’

²⁰ Informally, it was acknowledged that the funding cuts which CIDA faced at that time were also a factor in moving toward a more regional focus. It was hoped that by combining projects the organisation could maintain close to its former level of input in the area on a reduced budget.

²¹ The growing use of market-oriented language is significant. According to Gill (1994), “... (with globalisation),...the structure and language of social relations are more systematically conditioned such that capitalist norms and practices pervade the *gestes répétés* of everyday life” thus contributing to an extension and deepening of the “commoditization and monetization of social life” and the entrenchment of neoliberal norms.

The point here is not to argue that the promotion of entrepreneurial activity is necessarily inconsistent with sustainable development, but to note that the inclusion in the CIDA document of 'the language of the market', especially given the shifts in attitude toward NGOs, the cuts in funding, etc. which were described above, suggests that the 'language of participatory democratic development' in *Africa 21* may indicate an attempt by CIDA to merge essentially contradictory objectives.

A Policy Based on 'Mixed Motives'

Incompatible objectives in CIDA policy is not unique to its Africa programmes; Canada's aid policy in general has frequently been criticized for attempting to serve too many interests and trying to meet too many objectives (Carty & Smith, 1981; Nossal, 1988; Pratt, 1988; Rudner, 1985; Thérien, 1994). Such 'mixed motives' produce a policy which supports in principle a doctrine of 'humane internationalism' but which in practice seems more concerned with promoting Canadian commercial and political interests.

It is probably a mistake to underestimate the degree to which ethical interests have influenced Canada's previous policy decisions on Africa (*ibid.*, 204). Certainly, even the fact that approximately half of Canada's aid budget was allocated to Africa, where Canada's economic interests are minimal,²² suggests that ethical and/or humanitarian interests have been contributing factors. And, although the trade potential of South

²² However, beyond ethical considerations, Canada's political interests, especially as a prominent member of the Commonwealth, have undoubtedly been a contributing factor in setting its foreign aid policy toward Africa.

Africa, and to some extent, Zimbabwe, may influence Canada's policy toward those countries, Canada's strong support for Tanzania cannot be explained solely on the basis of national economic (or political) self-interest.

Nevertheless, Canada's actual aid policy has never been as generous or 'humane' as the imagery associated with it has indicated. For example, like most other DAC countries, it has not ever come close to meeting the objective agreed upon by DAC donors to provide 0.7% of GNP as aid. Furthermore, Canada, like other OECD donors, has frequently been criticised for adhering to the practice of 'tying aid' (in which aid is provided conditional on some project funds being used to purchase goods or services from the donor country).

Therefore, notwithstanding the positive connotations of generosity and benevolence usually associated with the strong strain of 'humane internationalism' that is evident in Canada's aid policy, many scholars argue that the ideal is rooted as much/or more in power relations as/than in altruism. According to some, for instance, Canada's 'middle-power' position in the international division of power has been the main determinant of its aid policy (Black, 1993). In support of the latter, 'statist' perspective, scholars occasionally refer to the similarities between Canada's aid policies (and foreign policy generally) and those of the 'middle power' Scandinavian countries.

Certainly, in stressing the importance of economic and social equity, CIDA's stated aid objectives and priorities tend to be similar to, indeed almost indistinguishable from, those of the Scandinavians and slightly different from the US emphasis on "free

markets” and “concern for the individual” (Fairclough, 1995).²³ However, if donor countries are compared on the basis of the amount of aid they give as a percentage of GNP, Canada falls in the middle of the field, lagging behind the ‘like-minded’ Scandinavians but showing more generosity than the other G-7 members, except France (Thérien, 1994).

Thérien and Noël (1994) argue that Canada’s position on this scale has more to do with political culture than the country’s international position - that adherence to values associated with state welfarism (but to varying degrees) accounts for both the similarities and differences found between Canada and the Scandinavian countries. Canada’s former commitment to the welfare state - “a liberal institutional arrangement coloured by elements of universalism” - has made it “a generous state among the group of less committed (G-7) donors”, but less generous than the more socialist Scandinavians (*ibid.*,555).

Thérien’s and Noël’s (1994) analysis helps to explain differences which are observed in the national aid policies of DAC members.²⁴ However, while the inclusion of political culture as a variable in explaining Canadian foreign policy introduces an important measure of complexity and nuance which statist explanations lack, it is

²³ However, the differences are very subtle. All DAC contributors generally now cite ‘democracy’, ‘economic growth’, ‘environment’ and ‘gender’ as priorities and the variations in policy statements may reflect historical continuities in respective national discourses rather any significant differences in practice.

²⁴ See also, Macdonald’s (1995b) attempt to embed Canada’s ‘humane internationalist’ strain in the country’s political culture, and particularly in “the discourse of imperialism” which derives from its “privileged position within the British Empire”.

important not to underestimate the importance of inter- and/or transnational factors. In particular, the obvious 'shift to the right' and significant cuts to the aid budget which have affected Canada's generosity are part of a trend that is occurring in almost all DAC members, including the Scandinavian ones (Norway being an exception) (Black & Thérien, 1996). Clearly, this indicates that the aid structures and discourses of the ODA donor countries generally are characterised by their similarities more than their differences (Randel & German, 1993).

From Mixed to Single Motive: implications for 'partnerships'

Considering the direction that Canada's aid policy has taken since the beginning of this decade, it may be less appropriate to search for a mixture of motives to explain it. Indeed, despite the adoption of a discourse replete with references to 'partnership', 'participation' and 'developmentalist democracy', Canada's aid strategy has moved further away from its humanitarian motives toward a greater support for corporate interests. In this, Canada is hardly unique; the changes in its aid policies are similar to ones which are being introduced in most other countries of the world by governments from the 'left' as well as the 'right' (German & Randel, 1995) (See table 6). In short, it is hardly surprising that there would be an impetus to make Canada's aid strategies 'more entrepreneurial'.

Table 6: Funds from DAC to Developing Countries in 1993

1993	\$ (millions)	% of total resource flows
ODA	55,963	42.7
Other official flows	7539	5.8
Aid from NGOs	5634	4.3
Privat Investment	61,956	47.3
Total resource flows as % of GNP	0.7	

Yet, neither perhaps is it surprising that Canada continues to freely use (and consequently to some extent abuse) the rhetoric of humanitarianism, despite the current preoccupation with competition and competitiveness. Not only is Canada's humane internationalism socially embedded, but as was observed in chapter 2, the aid policies of the DAC countries have always emphasised a motive of humanitarianism, even when the latter has clearly been subordinate to the political and/or economic interests of the donors.²⁵ Moreover, as several scholars have noted, there has been a convergence in the development policy of DAC members in that they do not emphasis only structural adjustment, but also "women in development, the environment, and human rights and democracy": in short, policies that favour "humanitarianism" and are central to a "people-first" development strategy (Black & Thérien, 1996; Plewes, *et al*, 1996).

²⁵ Moreover, as Helleiner (1995: 293) points out, while the present preoccupation with macroeconomics to the detriment of social programmes and 'democracy' has been exacerbated by globalisation, the tensions are not new. To illustrate, he recounts that during the preparation of the Bretton Woods Agreements, participants John Maynard Keynes and Harry Dexter White "argued that democratic governments needed to be protected from the disruptive impact of capital flows motivated by 'political reasons' or by a desire on the part of elite groups to evade the 'burdens of social obligation'."

DAC donor countries including Canada have also indicated in policy statements that they recognise that threats to security increasingly are of a global nature and hence the need for a more cohesive aid agenda. Yet, the policy statements are inconsistent with recent events. As German & Randel (1995: 14) observe:

For NGOs this recognition in an OECD study of a 'wider community of nations committed to a search to the solutions to common problems' is good news. But it contrast sharply with the actions of a majority of OECD donors whose cutting of aid seems to signal a reduced commitment to developing countries and shared human security.

The implications of the recent trends and redirections in aid are significant, if contradictory for Canadian NGO partnerships. The apparent policy convergence among the DAC members ostensibly in support of principles of 'democratic, sustainable development' and the continued reference to principles of 'humane internationalism' in Canadian policy statements creates an enabling environment for the *discourse of partnership* and for the notion of *partnership as a new development paradigm* (see chapter two) to be furthered developed. (For instance, as was argued above, aid cuts may promote greater cooperation among donor agencies at the operational level more effectively than rhetorical statements have done to date.)

Yet, CIDA's revised attitude toward NGOs - from development 'partners' and agents to 'policy (and market) facilitators'²⁶ - and its recent drastic cuts in funding to

²⁶ Brodhead and Pratt (1994:101) present an interesting account of CIDA's use of NGOs to further its interest in Southeast Asia in the early 1980s. Using contribution-matching ratios of 4:1 (for projects in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka) and of 9:1 (a few years later in Sri Lanka) compared with the normal 3:1, CIDA induced NGOs to become involved in the region. Hence, "NGOs were not providing local knowledge and grass-roots contacts that CIDA lacked but, rather, CIDA had identified the 'need', which had a

international NGOs are likely to have serious negative effects on measures to improve the *practice of partnership* between Canadian NGOs and their partners in bi-lateral programmes. This agenda will tend to force Northern partners to set the conditions, terms, accounting procedures and outcome measures of programmes and with even more attention to the 'bottom line' concerns of CIDA than the needs and interests of the Southern 'partner' than in the past. Distinguishing among 'partnership' as practice, as discourse or as paradigm has implications for the promotion of sustainable, democratic development as the following concluding section argues.

Conclusions: Implications for Democratic, Sustainable Development in Zimbabwe

The performance of Canadian NGOs is affected by the various connections and contradictions which characterise their relations with CIDA, the state and the broader civil society. Therefore, in assessing the impact of NGO partnerships on 'development' in Zimbabwe, it is important to treat Canadian participants, like their Zimbabwean counterparts, not merely as autonomous, rational decision-makers, but as actors embedded in over-lapping and contested systems of identity and power. Following that line of reasoning, it is possible to apply the term, 'partnership', to three distinct levels of

significant diplomatic and political purpose, and then induced Canadian NGOs which often had little knowledge of the country, to become involved".

interaction between Canadian and Zimbabwean NGOs. These are partnership (1) as practice, (2) as discourse, and (3) as paradigm. Each has implications for Zimbabwe's democratic development, but in obviously different ways.

Partnership as Practice - At the operational level, the term, 'partnership' might be appropriately applied to at least some Canadian and Zimbabwean NGO relationships which are conditioned by mutually cooperative efforts to improve the conditions of ordinary Zimbabweans. And the sincerity and dedication of many individuals in several NGOs to that objective should not be impugned, neither nor should their attempts to improve the character of their relations with their 'partners' be underestimated. However, from the interviews conducted for this research, it is apparent that few participants feel that meaningful partnerships between Zimbabwean and Northern NGOs yet exist.

More importantly, the achievement of 'partnership as a practice' between individual Northern and Southern NGOs is, by itself, insufficient to ensure the promotion of sustainable democratic development. It was argued in the preceding chapter that 'sustainable development' in Zimbabwe was inextricably related to the deepening of democracy in the country and that the latter would depend upon the establishment of strong networks of organisations throughout civil society which were strongly imbued with a sense of civic identity and responsibility. Consequently, partnership for development means more than cooperative working arrangements between contractual actors; the purpose for which those partnerships are formed is also important.

However, while one can point to obvious differences in style, objective, and degree of project success among NGOs, it is difficult to argue convincingly for or against

the developmental achievements of any particular organisation, especially when criteria for measuring performance are still being developed and debated (Fowler, 1996).

Obviously, the main measure of achievement according to the argument developed here is a change in power relations not only among Northern and Southern NGO partnerships but within social structures as well. As one scholar recently expressed it:

To the extent that NGOs challenge local power structures, the claim that they fashion change may be upheld. To the extent that power structures are left unchallenged, the danger for development activists is that of mistaking 'changing fashions' for real development progress. In the first instance, we can say that the poor have much to hope for. In the second, the prospect arises where NGOs may be used to 'manage' both the poor and the development agenda. (Devine, 1996: 15)

By this measure, few of the individual Canadian NGOs discussed above are likely to have an obvious, *direct* impact on the promotion of sustainable democratic development in Zimbabwe. As Fowler (1996: 58) points out,

....development - in the sense of sustained improvement in the lives and circumstances of people who are poor and marginalised - does not take place in a linear way under the influence of one single intervention. (Rather),...human development results from a complex mix of *non-linear processes* which are largely determined by *non-project* factors...NGO projects are only one part of larger processes of change.

Thus the practice of partnerships between individual NGOs from the North and South are important, but not so much for what they contribute to the success of individual projects, but how they fit into a larger systems of development and political economy. This is where *partnership as discourse* is most relevant.

The notion of **partnership as discourse** refers not only to the predominance of the topic in the current dialogue of development agents but the political use to which it is put.

In short, the idea of ‘partnership’ is used differently by various agents to preserve or improve the respective power positions they represent. In this sense, partnerships between Canadian and Zimbabwean NGOs are frequently the site of the on-going North-South power struggle. With some exceptions that will be treated in the following chapter, Canadian NGOs in Zimbabwe tend to represent the interests of CIDA and the Canadian government, even if not always willingly or even knowingly. And, as it has been argued, the Canadian government’s position (and therefore CIDA’s) on ‘partnership’ is now generally used to describe relations not between colleagues in collective efforts but as ‘stakeholders’ in an increasingly marketised environment.

In short, from the Canadian perspective, *the discourse of partnership* does not challenge existing power structures which contribute to the perpetuation of unequal relations, but rather is designed to reinforce them. As Laura Macdonald (1995b: 136) argues:

...‘the universalizing discourses of modern Europe and the United States assume the silence, willing or otherwise, of the non-European world’. The discourse of ‘partnership’ in Canadian aid policy would at first glance seem to constitute a significant exception to this claim. Although silent partnerships do exist, Canadian state and non-state actors have used the term partnership to indicate a new willingness to listen to the people of the South. This openness, similar to the period of indigenisation of the Canadian missions, conceals and legitimates continued profound inequalities between the partners in these relationships.

However, the ‘non-European world’ may not be as silent as is usually assumed or is implied by Macdonald’s analysis. While Southern actors, including Zimbabwean NGOs, are apparently willing ‘partners’ in various individual arrangements with Northern organisations, most have joined in a general discourse of complaint as a bargaining

strategy against the North's imposition and/or implementation of the concept. From the South's perspective, *partnership as discourse* justifies demands for greater empowerment and for more input on decisions on how the North might assist in strengthening their institutions (Postma, 1994) As well, there is developmentalist potential associated with the South's strategic use of the concept of partnership to request greater control over where and how aid funds should be spent. And, although there is considerable resistance within the greater aid regime of which they are part, some Northern NGOs like PAC are prepared to turn such control over to Southern partners.

Proposals for sharing responsibility and resources which are supported by NGOs like PAC may be described as promoting the idea of **partnership as paradigm**, to the extent that they are based on a new vision which displaces previously held notions of development as a practice or process based on donor-recipient or benefactor-beneficiary relations. A development paradigm truly based on partnership would involve

exchange (relations) in which both partners will benefit....(Moreover, in a full developmental partnership), 'both partners share an ideological perspective that recognizes the problem of development as a *global* (my emphasis) struggle for economic, political and social justice'... (Finally, it is important to) be clear about the goals and purposes of the partnerships we're engaging in - for what *purpose*. There must be a commonality of interests and a commitment to deal with *global issues which are at the root of the development problems* (my emphasis).²⁷

Few spokespersons for NGOs in Zimbabwe (Canadian or Zimbabwean) articulated a conceptualisation of *partnership as a new paradigm*. There was a tendency instead to

²⁷ These three statements are extracted from a set of comments by PAC members on the issue of 'partnership' (PAC, 1989: 14).

view the issue as a means of realigning power relations within the existing state and interstate orders. To the extent that this means that “power structures are left unchallenged”, it would seem not to bode well for the promotion of sustainable democratic development in Zimbabwe. However, as I argue in the following chapter, there are some optimistic signs in Southern Africa of a developmentalist momentum deriving from an emerging global civil society. The existence of the latter would provide support, finally, for the realisation of North-South partnership, that is partnership as a paradigm for the support of the construction of a global citizenship identity.

Chapter 7: Globalising Civil Society: promoting solidarity among diverse NGOs

Civil societies must view themselves in the framework of globalization, enabling each inhabitant to think about himself or herself as a member of the same planet earth. Above all, we members of civil societies must redefine ourselves as citizens of a globalized world. This is a greater task than would appear at first sight.

- Grzybowski, 1996: 20

Linking activists in Canada and southern Africa brings with it a need to displace an existing discourse and structuring of international relationships as 'funding partnerships' that had begun to emerge strongly in the 1980s.

- Marshall, 1994: 11

Introduction

To refer *only* to the national context in discussing the prospects of Zimbabwean democracy is inadequate, even somewhat misleading, in the present age of globalisation. Along with the 'internationalisation of the state', there has been a "rise of sub- and supra-state actors from internal as well as international 'civil society' - including NGOs and institutions and networks of 'diaspora' Africans " (Shaw & Adebisi, 1995-6: 22-3). Moreover, "(a)t the very moment when cultural globalisation is questioning not only traditional identities and values but also those of the modern nation-state" (Waterman, 1996b), an 'empowered' civil society is one that possesses the potential to stand not only against "the preponderance toward the power of the...state" but also against the

preponderant power of global capitalism and its contradictory universalising and differentiating forces. **Hence, to talk of the deepening and extension of democracy in any country is to refer to the necessity of simultaneous (re)vitalisations of national and transnational civil societies and to envisage the possibility of describing polities (and eventually establishing institutions) which accommodate different levels of citizenship and/or community identities.**

Yet, the main goal of most NGOs working in Zimbabwe is singularly related to the promotion of democratic development in that country and most discussions about the developmentalist (and/or emancipatory/democratising) role of NGOs continue to focus on the latter's demands and/or impacts upon the state. Moreover, as analysis in the preceding chapter indicates, despite a widely expressed disdain within the development community for practices which impose Northern/Western standards, values or conditions on the South, and despite efforts by participants on both sides to diminish the disparities in the relationships, 'partnerships' between Canadian and Zimbabwean NGOs still tend to operate on a principle of Northern donor/Southern recipient rather than interdependence or reciprocity.

Because of the tendency among African/ist NGOs (and scholars) to focus exclusively on the acute internal problems (if not necessarily internal causes)¹ of African development, few analysts have made attempts to identify the emergence on the continent

¹ Indeed, there has been a major debate on whether the primary cause of Africa's political and economic problems were the result of internal conditions or external influences.

of what Peter Waterman (1996a) has termed “a global solidarity culture”. Seen as an emancipatory response to the insecurities and people-displacing properties of globalisation worldwide, ‘a global solidarity culture’ within a ‘global civil society’ “seeks to reorient the direction of development in the North as well as the South” (Hunter, 1996: 202).

It is not particularly surprising, given the present conditions on the continent of “utter despair and anomie” (Shaw & Adibe, 1995-6: 1), that scholars would regard development problems in Africa to be of much more pressing concern than is “reorient(ing) the direction of development in the (relatively wealthy and politically stable) North. And certainly, even the level of social distress that has been associated with structural adjustment in more affluent African countries like Zimbabwe, much less the human misery which has attended several recent crises (eg. Somalia, Rwanda and Zaire) and the aftermath of wars (eg. Angola, Mozambique), make any quantitative or qualitative comparisons of Northern vs. Southern ‘development’ problems or measures inappropriate, even ludicrous. However, no such attempt to compare respective levels of BHNs or (in)security, etc. is implied here. Rather, the notion of situating the problematic of development in terms of the North as well as the South refers to its structural - international, but also, increasingly global - dimensions. Moreover, although problems of basic needs, human (in)security, etc. in the North are not of the same scale of intensity or immediacy as in Africa, the changes and perceptions of change for increased numbers and groups in the North is related to the same structural issues - the globalisation of capitalism and the hegemonic position of neoliberalism (see part one, above).

As Hunter (1996) and Waterman (1996a) suggest, a global civil society is emerging out of common and increasingly interactive, if not necessarily coordinated or cooperative responses in both North and South to the insecurities associated with globalisation. The establishment of a civil society beyond the level of the nation-state portends considerable revision in the practices and thinking about international 'development' and therefore has significant potential consequence for the future of African countries, even if the current extent and impact of transnational civil society appears to most analysts to be less salient than the internal dynamics of and international reactions to various national crises.

Indeed, just as "one cannot 'treat contemporary developments in Africa without evoking the specific constraints imposed by the globalization of the economy'" (Shaw & Adibe, 1995-6: 11), it is becoming increasingly apparent that one cannot discuss the prospects for sustainable democratic development at national levels without considering the importance of the establishment of a democratic civil society and a democratic system of governance at the global level. Furthermore, the concept of democracy applied to sub- and supra-state levels implies increased prospects for the *law of humanity* to take precedence over the *law of the state* (see chapter four).

This chapter investigates the extent to which behaviors and intentions to support 'global democracy' and/or 'the law of humanity' have advanced (or may be advanced in the future) within the NGO community in Zimbabwe and the surrounding region. In

short, it focuses on the transnational and regional² factors relating to NGOs' and NGO partnerships' contributions to sustainable democratic development following the emphasis on national contexts of the previous two chapters.

It identifies certain Canadian and Zimbabwean/Southern African NGOs - particularly, PAC (a Canadian NGO consortium), MWENGO (a Zimbabwe-based, regional NGO network) and FAVDO (a continent-wide network of African NGOs, based in Senegal) - which seek to promote a new level of global awareness within the NGO community and thereby may be contributing to the development of a 'global civil society'. It also investigates the possibility that other organisations, which may or may not be deliberately engaged in building global 'solidarity', are nevertheless contributing to the project by establishing contacts and links within and across civil societies upon which a global communal identity is being built. It argues that especially those NGOs which are closely associated with 'new' social movement concerns for human rights, gender equality, environment, etc. are contributing in this way. However, certain community-based and -focused organisations (ORAP in Zimbabwe, the 'civics' in Southern Africa) make significant contributions as well by changing the social structures

² The regional context is salient here, not only because regionalism has emerged as an important feature of globalisation (Hettne, 1994; Mittelman, 1997; Shaw, 1996), but because many of the NGOs which are attempting to build transnational and/or global linkages give considerable attention to building regional operational structures. Also, as was argued above, Zimbabwe's 'development' has been heavily influenced by its position in the Southern African region and the uncertainty of the RSA's political and economic future, in particular, ensures that the regional dimension of development will continue to have significant impact on Zimbabwe's development prospects.

and attitudes (at local community, regional and international levels) upon which the present state-centric system of development is situated.

Assuming that an increase in transnational connections among such groups in civil societies are, at least to some extent, responses to the insecurities which accompany the ascendancy of neoliberalism, the degree to which they promote sustainable democratic development will depend upon their counter-hegemonic force. Because there is no formal institution of global governance and few institutions at subnational levels in which to promote and protect citizens' interests and identities, it is argued that transformative processes are likely to occur and be first observed in 'interstices'³ - small openings in society or in political proceedings in which 'global solidarity forces' may develop. Presently, the most obvious interstices exist in international organisations, although it is in the interrelatedness of global, regional, national and local conditions and activities that the impetus for action in international fora originates.

To a large extent, any sense of global identity which now exists has grown out of linkages which were established as part of national struggles and/or international relations. Moreover, given the nascent state of global networks and the non-existence of formal global political and legal structures, transnational actors rely on national and international institutions as important, and sometimes the only, venues for their interaction. Hence, the following section examines 'leftist solidarity' links between Canadian and Zimbabwean movements and NGOs in the 1970s and 1980s and argues

³ The term is borrowed from Sylvester (1995) who uses it in referring to informal spaces for democratic activism in Zimbabwe (see chapter five).

that although the nature of and basis for cooperation has changed, new 'global solidarity forces' are being built to some extent on these earlier connections.

Canadian-Southern African Civil Society Connections: from transnational solidarity to cosmopolitan democracy

The Canadian Context

For several decades, international linkages among civil society associations and movements have been important to struggles for liberation, democratisation and development in Southern Africa. Besides providing material backing for the liberation campaigns, education of the home population and campaigns to gain support from corporations and governments were usually important components of the Northern organisations' initiatives. Hence, not only did the networks which were formed contribute to social change in the Southern countries involved, but also in the countries of the Northern participants. For instance, with respect to Canada, Marshall (1994: 9) claims that:

(w)hen TCLPAC formed in 1972 as the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Portugal's African Colonies, there was insistence that solidarity politics was as much about Canada as about Southern Africa. TCLPAC saw itself as part of a broader, independent left, complementing the nationalist movement's analysis of Canada as both colony and colonized. Liberation support work was an integral part of building a social change movement in Canada.

As TCLPAC had actively petitioned for greater involvement by the Canadian government in Southern African politics, the increase in Canadian aid to Africa and,

especially the support to the Frontline States through funding for SADCC in the 1980s (see preceding chapter) would appear to have been a positive development for the solidarity forces. However, Marshall (1994: 11) claims that the increasing involvement of the government, and especially its growing 'partnership' arrangements with NGOs, had a deleterious effect on the leftist solidarity movement - both by weakening the connections among Canadian groups (native associations, women's movement organisations and poverty groups) as well as by diminishing North-South linkages which were forged on "a critique of the workings of international capital. The TCLSAC did remain actively involved in anti-apartheid struggles in South Africa, but increasingly the majority of its members were brought into the official aid structure and "instrumentalized to service (the latter's) agenda" which upheld the workings of international capital (*ibid.*, 11).

The growing incorporation of political-activist NGOs into the Canadian/DAC structure coincided at the start of the 1980s with the well-documented 'crisis of the left' world-wide, manifested in the collapse of centrally-controlled economies, the decline of Keynesianism, and a widespread rejection among leftist intellectuals of Marxism's overly-deterministic economism. However, rather than being a feature of either an 'end of history' or a 'lost decade' scenario, the weakened conditions of the solidarity movement during the 1980s in at least Canada appears instead to have been a period of regrouping. Indeed, in the 1990s, evidence of renewed vigor among at least some 'left-leaning' organisations is emerging (Hunter, 1996; Parkin, 1996). In the 1990s, however, the emphasis has shifted significantly.

Previously, solidarity movements tended to coalesce around the achievement of national political power. And, while the critique of international capitalism brought Northern and Southern actors together, it was usually informed by a version of underdevelopment theory which understood North-South relations within an inter-state context. By contrast, movements are now forming in response to the new (and new types of) insecurities associated with globalisation and control of or influence on the state is only part of their political focus. Of equal importance is a concern to affect changes at local and international (or global) levels of polity as a counter-measure against unaccountable global policy-making processes which are replacing traditional state-centred forms of decision-making (Hunter, 1996: 205).

In Canada, much of the recent action of the left has centered around opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with a coalition of labour unions, environmental, women's, indigenous and religious groups forming the Action Canada Network (originally the ProCanada Network) (Hunter, 1996: 203). While this coalition seeks to gain national electoral support for its position, it is also concerned to form inter-regional linkages to exert pressure on international agencies such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) either directly or through state institutions (*ibid*). A resurgence of leftist solidarity around a focus on international agencies was evident as well in the organisation in 1995 of the Halifax People's Summit to coincide with the meeting of the G-7. While the *immediate* political impact of the latter appears to

have been modest, “the excitement it generated within the community of social justice activists suggests it was an event of some importance” (Parkin, 1996: 2)⁴.

And, even if individual events such as the People’s Summit “did not (or do not immediately) bring people together in the form of a well-organized and sizeable popular movement of opposition” (*ibid.*), traces of invigoration among forces of the left in Canadian civil society may have important implications for the future of ‘development’ relations. Groups in the North as well as in the South are susceptible to insecurities associated with globalisation. Therefore, a shared response to the perceived vulnerabilities would seem to provide a logical base for the development of new forms of solidarity (Marshall, 1994: 13) as well as a site for the formation of mutually beneficial North-South ‘partnerships’.

Yet, while Southern activists reacting to SAPs and Northern women fighting NAFTA may both be responding to pressures of globalisation, challenges remain to show how mutual gains may accrue by forging alliances to simultaneously address the problems of both regions. The most obvious problem is that there is a tendency of those working on ‘development’ in the South to disregard the value of connecting with Northern activists who are working for globalist (as opposed to local or national) interests. And, it is even less clear to Southern counterparts how mutual benefits will

⁴ It is impossible to assess the long-term impact of the collaborative processes which were put in place or strengthened at the time. Certainly, coalitions such as the Halifax Initiative for global international democracy have picked up momentum subsequent to the meeting (PAC, 1996c).

accrue from linking with organisations such as labor unions or indigenous groups which focus their attention on domestic issues in the North⁵ (*ibid.*, 12).

Certainly, as noted in part one, above, burgeoning literatures have begun to identify the connections between Northern and Southern ‘development’ issues in the present period of globalisation - from broadly sweeping analyses of structural (world order) change (eg. Cox, Gill, Mittelman) to more narrowly focused treatments of institutional change (Archibugi, Held, Nelson, Weiss & Gordenker), ‘new’ security issues (T. Shaw) and NGOs and social movements (Edwards & Hulme, M. Shaw, Waterman) as well as ‘development’ itself (Escobar, Moore). At the level of praxis, however, the relatedness of these issues tend to be less obvious to people who are responding to apparently local crises or national policies. Moreover, institutions (such as the state) which were established to preserve the stability of the ‘old’ world order and the ideological and philosophical premises on which they were formed are resistant to change.

The Zimbabwean/Southern African Perspective

Indeed, in Zimbabwe (and Southern Africa generally) several entrenched institutions, notions and/or customs militate against the formation of North-South partnerships “premised on ‘solidarity action’ between strategic allies” (*ibid.*, 13). One of

⁵ A notable exception has been the interaction between the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa and indigenous groups in Canada on issues of human and land rights.

the most obvious obstacles is the problem identified in the preceding chapter of the persistence of a development agenda based on 'funding partnerships' which reinforce rather than diminish a donor/beneficiary status and mentality. There is not a strong potential to build linkages as a strategy for revising the present aid structure to deal with the problems and insecurities of globalisation as long as both Southern and Northern NGOs see and use the discourse of 'partnership' merely as a means for gaining or maintaining control over aid funds and/or projects.

A second problem might be classified as an essential incompatibility between the predominance of modern, statist interests in Southern Africa and of postmodern (or late modern) identities and concerns in the North. The capture of the state has been of primary importance to the struggles for democracy in the countries of the Southern African region and the main concern has been the consolidation of democracy at national levels and the development of civil societies which can serve as traditional 'watch-dogs' on the states. In the North, the accountability of the state is also an issue, but associated with a 'late capitalist' concern that transnational economic forces have supplanted the domestic constituency as the prime beneficiary of the state's protective authority. Therefore, while the withdrawal of the state in response to the pressures of globalisation is a phenomenon which is common to both the North and the South, the dominant agendas within respective civil societies with respect to their relations with the state are not necessarily similar or even complimentary (Amalric, 1996).

A third factor which impedes the development of transnational solidarity forces is the lack of connectedness among African developmental NGOs. This is not to say that

transnational linkages are not used or have not been seen as solutions to various political or basic needs issues by some Southern Africans. Certainly, connections among civil society groups from different countries have been important during liberation struggles and there is considerable transborder informal sector activity in the region. Yet, despite notable exceptions such as MWENGO and FAVDO (see below), it appears that transnational connections are not seen by most members of African NGOs as a solution to problems related to formal democracy and/or development. As Julius Ihonvbere (1996: 139) exclaims, “(i)t is amazing that contact between the FORDS in Kenya, the MFJ in Ghana, and the CD in Nigeria⁶, is almost zero”.

“However”, continues Ihonvbere (139) “they are all in touch with funding agencies abroad and election monitoring agencies in Europe and America, even with influential politicians abroad”. In short, transnational and international linkages are part of the reality of Southern African NGOs, even if the connections tend to be on a North-South rather than a South-South basis. Furthermore, despite the formidable constraints to their formation in Southern Africa, it is possible to discern the development of nascent forms of citizenship identities which are consistent with the emergence of a transnational civil society. In particular, such signs are evident among various NGOs that work in areas associated with the main concerns of the ‘new’ social movements - that is, environment, gender, human rights, security - and among these and others which form connections through international fora and global conferences. Also, recently NGO networks have

⁶ FORD is the acronym for Forum for the Restoration of Democracy, MFJ for the Movement for Freedom and Justice; and CD for Campaign for Democracy.

been formed in both the North and the South which are directly concerned with establishing partnerships and networks for the creation of a more equitable and participatory development agenda.

Partnership Africa Canada: promoting cosmopolitan democracy?

As noted in the preceding chapter, Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) is a consortium of Canadian and African NGOs established in 1986 with funds that were part of the Canadian government's commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD). CIDA's recent funding cuts have made PAC's future uncertain (see previous chapter and below), but it has been and may continue to be an important contributor to transnational linkages between Canada and Africa that promote the development of global democracy and humane governance.

PAC's guiding principles are ones which have become commonplace among NGOs and agencies in the current development decade; namely, "partnership and organizational strengthening, popular participation, gender and development, and respect for the environment". Yet, PAC is somewhat unusual, at least among the Canadian NGOs compared in this study, in that its commitment to North-South 'partnership' (around which the other guiding principles are centered) appears to have extended well beyond good intentions and/or rhetoric regarding equality and mutual benefit. From its inception,

PAC has focused on funding programmes designed to strengthen “the institutional capacity and accountability of (*both*) Canadian and African NGOs” (PAC, 1993). Moreover, PAC introduced the innovative practice of accepting proposals by African NGO networks directly and by local, national or regional African NGOs applying through Canadian ‘partners’ as well as by Canadian members working in partnership with African NGOs (*ibid.*). Finally, and significantly, PAC’s development objective has been “to work in partnership to promote sustainable human development policies that benefit African *and* Canadian societies” (PAC, 1996a). In short, PAC has operated on a principle of solidarity based on a vision of mutual benefit; or in other words, it has sought “to reorient the direction of development in the North as well as the South” (Hunter, 1996: 202).

Because PAC is a consortium of individual NGOs with varying functional and ideological approaches to development, its ability to promote a concept of partnership based on a sense of common global ‘citizenship’ is limited by many of the factors described in the preceding chapter. Most of the Canadian NGOs discussed there, for instance, are PAC members, ostensibly committed as such to the establishment of creative working relationships with each other. Yet, except through their membership in the consortium, there tends to be little direct professional contact (at least with respect to operational matters) among many of them. Also, although PAC members agree “to develop collaborative efforts between Northern and Southern NGOs in order to speak a common language”, it appears that individual Northern and Southern NGOs in Zimbabwe continue to use the discourse of ‘partnership’ for quite different purposes.

However, the varied views and practices regarding partnership among its membership have merely complicated and not determined PAC's position; it does have a set of guiding principles and a degree of autonomy as a separate NGO with its own identity. Utilising that capacity, it has promoted a 'North-South solidarity' concept of partnership on two separate fronts: first, in the establishment of rather precise guidelines for "planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation" of the initiatives it has funded; and, second, in the role it has played in policy and advocacy issues on both national and international fronts.

Evaluating Projects and Performance

PAC lost its ability to fund new projects in the recent budget cuts. However, in its past programming strategies, it had been innovative in establishing criteria for determining which NGO proposals it would support. Clearly, its evaluation standards were influenced by the current concern within the aid community about issues of efficiency and accountability (see chapter 3). However, for PAC, the determinants of performance have focused more on issues of identifying suitable forms of intervention by involving appropriate community actors and achieving high levels of popular participation rather than on measurements of technical or material transfer.

According to Fowler (1996: 59) measurements of performance based on "tangible or physical elements" - "wells built, credit provided, trees planted, buildings constructed and so on." - provide less information about contributions to sustainable development than "intangible factors of human and organisational processes and capacities".

Admittedly, the process of assessing 'contingent' development change is much more complex (and, at this stage, less clearly explicated) than one which involves 'linear progress'. But the former has the potential not only to provide a more accurate assessment of NGOs' impact on development as "sustained improvement in the lives and circumstances of people who are poor and marginalised", but the process of evaluation is in itself a means by which power balances are reordered among the development actors.

PAC's approach to evaluation has been to assess 'contingent' rather than 'linear' change. Therefore, while it has set out stringent performance and accounting criteria which must be met by the NGOs it funds, they have not been merely or primarily a concession to the economic, 'bottom line' definitions of accountability which tend to predominate currently in the development assistance community (and which, incidentally, contributed to the negative reviews of 'partnership' by respondents from Zimbabwean NGOs discussed in chapter five). Rather, they have been a component of PAC's overall development strategy of building solidarity and creating meaningful partnerships. Hence, in assessing initiatives designed to promote popular participation, questions have been concerned with: How the concerned population is involved in identifying the appropriate programme? What benefits are foreseen by the beneficiaries? What mechanisms ensure an equitable distribution of the latter? What are the respective responsibilities of participating NGO partners and involved populations in the implementation and monitoring processes? (PAC, 1993: 9).

Advocacy Initiatives

Despite having made positive contributions to development programming and evaluation procedures, a recent PAC document (1996a: 1) laments that a decade after its formation, “in the face of continuing reductions to development assistance in Africa, (the organisation) has been transformed into a Canadian-African coalition working on policy and advocacy issues”. Made in the aftermath of the CIDA’s termination of PAC’s funding operations, the statement suggests a major reorientation in the organisation’s strategy. However, while policy and advocacy were not the primary foci in the past, they have always been important components of the organisation’s approach to development. Moreover, these activities have been carried out in compliance with PAC’s commitment to African-Canadian partnerships. Hence, when PAC was invited by the Canadian government to prepare a brief for the 1994 Foreign Policy Review, it ensured that the voices of several African partners were included in the document which was presented (*Canada and Africa: grasping the opportunity*). As well, a representative of FAVDO, an African NGO network and partner of PAC, was invited to address a Canadian Special Joint Committee hearing as part of the review process (PAC, 1996a: 3). Finally, in somewhat of a reversal of the traditional North-South roles, spokespersons from African NGOs have petitioned Canadian government representatives to reconsider the funding cuts and/or made representations in support of PAC in Canadian publications (PAC, 1995).

The determination shown by PAC’s members to build upon the expertise gained in such initiatives for a second phase of operation not only augers well for the

organisation's continuing existence, but it indicates a new resolve by the membership to increase the level of solidarity with its African partners. To that end, in one of the first initiatives of its revised mandate, PAC undertook to work with the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries (OSCAL) and the UN Non-governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) to bring together key NGO networks from the North and the South to carry out a mid-term review of UN-NADAF (PAC, 1996b).

As part of its effort "to strengthen the capacity of members, especially in policy analysis so that members can engage with policy-makers on their own turf" (*ibid.*) such initiatives indicate that one unanticipated benefit of the funding cuts to PAC may be the development of a new depth of critical acumen in the organisation. And, if the organisation proves to be sustainable in the future without significant financial support from CIDA⁷, it will not only serve as a prototype for members of the NGO community who are concerned about their increased incorporation in the official aid structure, but it will have greater autonomy and presumably more freedom to take a critical stance on official policy.

On the last point, a recent article by PAC (1995: 4) on Canada's aid and human rights policy indicates that it presently maintains an independent position, from which it presents views on development which are alternative to the mainstream. In response to a Department of Foreign Affairs and International Affairs statement which claimed that:

⁷ The ability of PAC to exist without substantial support from CIDA is uncertain. For the time being, PAC remains operational due to a new funding contract with the latter which is effective until March 1998.

“Economic development, bilateral trade and business partnerships can improve the climate and accelerate progress in ensuring respect for human rights”, PAC questions the apparently blithe acceptance that an explicit connection exists between economic liberalisation and an increase in the observance of human rights. Second, on the use of aid conditionalities based on human rights, PAC supports the position of a Ghanaian who argues that :

...a decision to withhold aid based on a lack of democratisation and human rights abuses should arise from the demands of the people at the forefront of the struggle; it cannot result from a universal desire enshrined in Canada’s laws.

And, to understand “the demands of the people” involved, consultation with grassroots African organisations is a necessary first step.

This case illustrates PAC’s conceptualisation of North-South partnership as a relationship which recognises and draws on the strengths of the Southern partner in situations where the latter’s expertise is clearly salient. This differs significantly from the tendency within official aid agencies to create ‘partnerships’ as an effective conduit for the transfer of Northern ideas, proposals and methods to the South. As the issue of NGOs’ ability to make statements which are independent from (and which may contradict) those of the dominant agents which fund them becomes increasingly topical (Bebbington & Riddell, 1996), the autonomy of organisations such as PAC is crucial if they are to use their voices effectively to encourage structural change.

African Networks in the Promotion of Global Solidarity

Among African NGO partnerships and networks, two of the latter which are consciously and actively involved in building the functional and ideological linkages of a transnational civil society are the regional NGO, MWENGO, and the continent-wide organisation, FAVDO (Forum of African Voluntary Development Organizations). According to its constitution, MWENGO⁸ exists for the purposes of defining a common development paradigm, of providing information webs for collecting and sharing information among members, of creating stronger advocacy positions in national and international fora through alliance and to foster connections between NGOs and other of civil society's agents for change such as research institutes or universities (MWENGO Constitution). FAVDO's main purpose is to bring together African NGOs and networks working on policy issues (PAC, 1996).

To carry out their respective missions, both MWENGO and FAVDO are concerned with establishing links with indigenous organisations involved at different levels of social action and/or intervention and, in turn, with international NGOs. The latter, and in particular research and information-gathering and disseminating institutes such as the indigenous NGO, SARDC (Southern African Research and Documentation Centre) or the Canadian organisation, Africa Information Afrique (AIA), are part of the interconnected networks of a transnational civil society, by function if not necessarily by

⁸ MWENGO is the acronym for Mwelekeo Wa NGO - Kiswahili for "NGO Direction/vision".

expressed purpose, through their commitment to building capacity within as well as connecting and informing NGOs from the grass-roots to the international level of operation.

Possibilities and Problems of African Partners: the cases of MWENGO and FAVDO

MWENGO is a network of African NGOs created in 1991 "to strengthen the capacities of NGOs in East and Southern Africa" in order that they might contribute more effectively to building civil societies in Africa. The range of activities by which MWENGO attempts to achieve these objectives includes "research, analysis, documentation, training, advocacy and networking" (MWENGO publications). Since its formation, it has organised or been involved in several regional and national conferences and workshops (usually supported, if not necessarily attended, by Northern partners). As well, it publishes a bi-monthly bulletin which includes up-to-date reports on NGO events and projects at local to global levels as well as editorial works on a variety of development-related topics.

On paper, MWENGO is very impressive as a networking African NGO. It compiles and disseminates relevant and timely information and commentaries by prominent NGOs, scholars and practitioners. Its bi-monthly publication, *MWENGO Policy Alert*, features reports of frequent meetings, conferences and workshops throughout the East and Southern African region either organised or attended by MWENGO members. Moreover, PAC, as one of MWENGO's Northern 'partners',

frequently provides details of the network's activities, comments favourably on its partnership skills and/or includes commentaries by its Executive Director.

In short, MWENGO has attained considerable status as an African advocacy NGO at an international level and has gained the respect of its Northern partners. However, it is more difficult to gauge the extent of its impact on individual NGOs, civil society or institutions of governance in Southern Africa and whether, in fact, it is helping to foster connections from *the local* to the international and/or global. Although MWENGO was founded in 1991 and its headquarters are now in Harare, few of the local NGOs interviewed early in 1995 had heard of it. Among the representatives of Zimbabwean NGOs who were aware of this embryonic regional network, most felt that membership in it would offer them few advantages in their development work. Several indicated that MWENGO duplicated services already provided by the national umbrella organisation, NANGO. Others worried that MWENGO was drawing away scarce (and now declining) resources from Northern donors which could be put to better development use at the grassroots. Even the most favourable views regarding MWENGO tended to be cautionary. A few individuals claimed that the idea behind MWENGO was a good one and that, in time, such a network might prove to be effective. In early 1995, however, most felt that few if any benefits had filtered down to their organisations (or to the Zimbabwean poor).

It is not entirely clear why there is such a discrepancy between the view of MWENGO held by those who participate with it on an international level and the one held by many in the local NGO community. However, the concerns raised by the latter

indicate that the problem is related, at least in part, to the issue of class differences among NGOs (discussed in chapter five with respect to Zimbabwean organisations). In short, MWENGO is seen (and, therefore, resented) as a creature of international funding sources, concerned with remote issues in far-away fora and unconcerned with the local development problems. The prevalence of this attitude indicates that organisations like MWENGO have been unable (or have not made sufficient effort) to convey to local organisations how advocacy activities in international settings are connected to local problems.

To some extent, the difficulty in communicating such information may be feature of the region's development position. In other words, issues of infrastructure and communications systems come into the equation. On the one hand, MWENGO is linked into (and certainly aware of the networking-opportunities associated with) the global communications system.⁹ On the other hand, it does not as yet have direct access to the internet and, after moving to its present location in mid-1994, it was still without a telephone or fax connection by March 1995. In short, its ability to communicate freely and easily with other NGOs in the region has been curtailed by the limitations on technological progress in Zimbabwe and the region as a whole.

Alternatively, the problem may relate to the relative newness of the strategy of networking among African NGOs, especially in the context of building global connections. In short, the ideation of concepts like global civil society or cosmopolitan

⁹ For instance, see *MWENGO Policy Alert*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (March-April, 1996) on the topic of "Information: a strategic resource for development".

democracy tend to be confined to a relatively small group of inter- and/or transnationally connected members of academia and NGOs such as PAC and MWENGO with which they collaborate and interact. This is not to say that such conceptualisations have preceded transnational processes in civil society; indeed, largely, they appear to have emerged as part of attempts to explain recent phenomena such as the proliferation of NGOs and new social movements. Yet, the relationship between theory and practice is dialectical and, at present, it seems that it is a small minority of individuals and groups within the academic and NGO communities who have taken the lead in identifying the forces for global solidarity within civil societal struggles for democratic change. They do so primarily by exposing and explaining the connections between global forces, local (re)actions and national and international institutional responses, and showing where civil societies can find interstices for change within this complex nexus.¹⁰ While various members of civil society are actively involved in these interconnecting processes, it may not be as conscious members of a global citizenry.

The deliberate construction of solidarity forces within a global civil society is limited in general, but there are additional obstacles which are particular to the South. For

¹⁰ In discussion following the presentation of his paper at a recent conference, Daniel Archibugi (1996) compared the current role of 'cosmopolitan elites' in helping to establish a sense of global citizenship and in promoting the need for corresponding changes in institutions of governance with the role played by a small group of intellectuals associated with Voltaire in the establishment of the state system in Europe. Archibugi argued that at that time, as in the present situation, associational activity in civil society preceded the development of institutions of governance, but it was the intellectuals who visualised and described the necessary and/or appropriate institutional forms to complement the social action which was occurring at the time.

example, a scan of the articles within the April 1996 edition of FAVDO's journal, *Echeos (sic) of FAVDO*, illustrates the contradictions which confront Southern NGO networks which are attempting to define and construct partnerships as part of an agenda of strengthened North-South solidarity. On the positive side, reports of FAVDO's representation at and work following the 1995 Social Summit in Denmark and the 1996 Beijing Conference on Women describe the international advocacy interest and activity of this pan-African NGO network. Several reports on the activities and events of various members are featured both as evidence of and a strategy for transnational networking. Commentaries and analyses on international summits, the World Bank and development relief programming are consistent with its ideals and objectives of North-South partnership and international advocacy. Yet, in the midst of these accounts of progressive and innovative action, one article stands out in stark contrast.

This article describes a FAVDO conference on democracy and governance which had been held in Douala, Cameroon in July 1995. The conference was designed to bring together grassroots community groups and NGOs to provide some feedback on the "African populations' views of democracy". Despite the currency of the issue, however, the organisers faced problems from the outset, when "all (the institutions contacted) welcomed the initiative, but were reluctant to support it concretely". Finally, with some assistance from a Dutch inter-faith organisation and by using its own programming money, FAVDO set the conference three and one-half years later than its first projected date of January 1992. The expense of transporting and housing the 138 delegates who

finally attended was onerous for the organisation, but logistical problems were even more troublesome. In particular, noted the commentator:

We tripped over communications (postal, phone, fax and air) problems before and during the conference...A letter from Dakar will take at least one month to reach Harare. Supposing the sendee should reply immediately, then two months would be needed to exchange information between Dakar and Harare. In the same way, it will take Dakar and Harare as well to exchange with London one week at most.

In some instances, postal communications with individual organisations were impossible, and invitations were extended through NGO networks in two countries. Because of problems with internal telephone lines in another, a FAVDO representative traveled to the country and went “from door to door” to find the people it intended to invite. In some countries, they were unable “to find any intermediary and no one could be invited.”

From the delegates’ side, obstacles to attendance were equally daunting.

Participants from several countries faced problems of interference from the state in the issuance of passports and visas. They also dealt with airline flight cancellations and delays. Once disembarked in Douala, the delegates found their living accommodations inadequate and uncomfortable (to the extent that three delegates from Zimbabwe returned home before the conference even began).

The description of the conference clearly illustrates the commentator’s point that it is much easier for NGO networks to coordinate activities with their Northern partners than with their Southern members and associates. However, inadequate infrastructure is not the only problem in coordinating African NGOs. An equal or perhaps even greater impediment to cooperation are the differences among NGOs.

Again, the description of the Douala conference is illuminating. For example, the distinction between popular or community-based organisations (POs/CBOs) and ‘professional’ NGOs¹¹ was a major source of contention, with the latter usurping leadership positions in the discussions, and even “alleging that people from grass-roots communities could not discuss such a tricky issue (ie. democracy and governance) ”. Another division in the group existed between French and English delegates who separated on issues of gender and human versus community rights. On the gender issue, the anglophone group argued for placing emancipation on the women’s agenda while the francophone group felt that women’s emancipation eroded other important social values. On human rights the former argued that individual human rights are “divine and natural” while the latter felt that “the community prevails over the individual”(p. 8).

On the issue of the emergence of a sense of global citizenship identity, it is interesting that the discussion on democracy appears to have focused almost entirely on African problems from national and regional perspectives. According to the commentator, the encroachment of the global economy was hardly discussed and even “(t)he problem of structural adjustment was touched upon but not deepened, probably because as its effects are felt, and often heard of during the NGO meetings, participants understand little of its mechanisms.” In short, no clear connections seem to have been made by the CBOs and other NGO participants regarding the international and global

¹¹ The term ‘professional’ is used here to refer to NGOs that are ‘mission-driven’ and comprised of volunteers and or staff that do not stand to benefit personally from the mission as opposed to CBOs that are formed to serve their members’ individual or community interests (see also chapter one, pp 6-7).

contexts in which the processes of democratisation and governance in African states are embedded. In such circumstances, it is unlikely that many would see their own suffering under structural adjustment as a feature that is in any way similar to the negative impacts of globalisation being experienced by Northerners. And, consequently, for the African grassroots, concepts of North-South *partnerships* or *solidarity* for *mutual* benefit are not particularly meaningful.

Therefore, it seems that FAVDO will have an up-hill struggle to explain its globalist ideals to the majority of its African NGO members. Clearly, FAVDO is using the language of North-South solidarity, as the following comment demonstrates:

The PAC's crisis really highlights the need to re-structure partnership. Thus, a new basis for cooperation between Africa and the Northern countries has to be defined: a cooperation which will not only benefit Africa, but Northern countries as well.

Yet, if practice is ever to match the ideal, means must be found for establishing effective collaborative linkages within African civil society organisations as well as between Northern and Southern associations. And, an important thrust of the cooperative effort will be articulating the connections which exist among issues of democracy, development and security at local, national, regional, international and global levels.

NGOs in the Interstices of Emerging Global Identities

Clearly, there are obstacles to identifying and conveying the connections and therefore to building the sense of global citizenship identity upon which North-South

solidarity and effective developmentalist partnerships depend. However, despite impediments, interstices for the emergence of global identities can be identified in Southern African civil societies. In particular, such openings are apparent in issue-areas of environment, human rights and gender - in short, in primary sites of involvement of the 'new' social movements.

The following sections examine NGOs which focus on each of these issue areas. While the majority of organisations within each group (ie. environmental, human rights or women's/gender NGOs) obviously concentrate their activities on the issue-area with which they are most closely associated and/or at the community or local level, it is the interconnections among these issues that offer the greatest opportunities for building collaborative NGO structures. As is discussed below, various NGOs and research institutions that are aware of these connections are beginning to form the 'bridges' through which practical action can be devised for treatment of interrelated complexes rather than single-problem issues. Moreover, these issue-areas and the horizontal connections among them are meeting points for forming vertical linkages among local, national, regional, international and global actors and institutions.

Environmental NGOs

Concern for the environment is probably the issue which is most easily conceptualised as a global problem of mutual (if not necessarily of the same immediate) interest to all of the earth's inhabitants. In Southern Africa, as elsewhere, ecology has become a concern, not only of official institutions but of groups in civil society as well

and the number of environmental NGOs in the region has proliferated in recent years. In most instances, the mode of operation takes the form of 'partnership' between indigenous organisations and inter- or trans-national NGOs. Increasingly, many of these partnerships are attempting to merge the globalist interests of the transnational environmental social movement with basic needs concerns of local communities.

For several years, environmental groups have warned that failure to protect biodiversity, to conserve natural resources and to prevent environmental pollution will have dire consequences for the entire planet as well as for the particular habitats which are directly affected. Moreover, it has become increasingly clear to many observers that the ecosystem is not only intricately interconnected biologically, but that the state of the biosphere is integral with the structures and relations of political economies. Hence, some very serious environmental problems which affect certain locations in Southern Africa are assumed by many environmentalists to have material, human rights and security implications for the entire region, for the continent, and ultimately for the world. Of all the pressing issues of international politics, ecology is the one in which the linkages between the local, the national, the regional and the global are most obvious and also one which presents an urgent case for levels of jurisdictional control beyond that of the nation-state. In short, pressures on the environment create the impetus and the need for actions that 'disperse sovereignty upward and downward' (see chapter 4).

Action that creates pressure to disperse sovereignty to the supra-state level is apparent in the various networking strategies among environmental NGOs, their contacts with research institutes and information centers, as well as their advocacy initiatives in

various regional and international fora. Actions which begin the process of dispersing sovereignty downward involve the connections made by these organisations with the several community-based organisations (CBOs) which attempt to increase the level of participation by ordinary people and communities in decisions which affect their livelihoods and health. “Programmes like Campfire in Zimbabwe (Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources), the Selous Conservation Programme in Tanzania, and Pilanesburg National Park in South Africa are examples of peoples’ empowerment at the local level, as are game farms and commercial hunting” (Swatuk, 1996).

Human Rights NGOs

Christopher Clapham (1996: 261) observes that:

Human rights organisations, with their profound universalism and distrust of the powers exercised by governments, had an especially significant role as agents of Western civil society in Africa.

In other words, human rights NGOs from the North have played a major role in enforcing a Western liberal ideal instead of offering support for a human rights agenda which is more consistent with Africa’s own cultural identity.¹² Such a view is consistent with the

¹² For example, Pollis (1996: 341) refers to Eddison Zvobgo’s description of the typical although not necessarily universal African human rights tradition: “there are no freedoms to or freedoms from anything, there are only rights *with*; they stem from interpersonal relationships. Although individual rights *qua* rights did not exist, obligations were paramount. These obligations operated on two society levels; the differential rights and obligations within the kinship group and the community’s (tribal) responsibility to all the members. The person was not a rational, atomized individual in pursuit of his self-interest, as in the West, but one enmeshed in multiple, cross-binding,

argument made in a previous chapter that, regardless of the ideologies and modes of operation of individual Canadian NGOs, over-all they support the philosophy and objectives of dominant Northern interests. However, in the preceding section it was observed that differences in perceptions about human rights was not merely a North-South division, but that they tended to separate African NGOs as well. It would appear, then, that human rights may not be an area which would be conducive to building global solidarities at this time when differences among cultural values and forms of identity have become particularly contentious (Cernea, 1994).

Nevertheless, while not underestimating the difficulties that these conditions pose for building solidarities, within the contested area of human rights, some interstices for the development of global citizenship identities do exist. At the very least, the debates and points of disjuncture are evidence of struggles to expose alternative visions of the political good life. And as such, they imply that previously silenced voices are at least being heard by those in central (usually Northern) positions of power. In terms of the North-South dialogue, this implies a higher level of reciprocity than formerly applied among the participants; in short, a step toward more equal partnerships.

Furthermore, it reinforces the idea that there is an increasing need in the emerging world order to accommodate various conceptualisations of rights.¹³ In an article about the

interpersonal relationships overlaid by the spirit of his ancestors. The life and security of members of the community was a shared obligation.”

¹³ Indeed, considerable progress has been made already in this area with respect to the ‘generations of rights’ (individual, economic and social) which have received international agreement and have been encoded in international law (Kim, 1991).

political economy of representation and meaning, Murphy and Rojas de Ferro (1995) argue that discourses of rights are embedded in the power relations which characterise particular spaces and times. Hence, in the twentieth century, the reciprocal strengthening of capitalism and the nation-state was legitimised by a discourse of citizens' rights. The dark side of the development of an individual rights regime in the West has been the concomitant tendency to assume that "an individual anywhere whose views and actions do not conform with the model of 'progressive', 'self-interested' and 'civilized' behavior" is a "barbarian" - "one whose difference is perceived as a threat" (ibid.68) . In recent years, competing discourses, including alternative perspectives on rights, have challenged the dominant liberal view. For people and institutions who set social policies, this has meant a growing challenge to find areas of compatibility between seemingly incommensural sets of rights.¹⁴ Yet, it is a project that many scholars and activist deems worthy, even crucial, for the furtherance of sustainable democratic development.

In Murphy and Rojas de Ferro's words:

A central task for a different political economy is to reject the universalisation of the categories of capitalism (and, presumably, rights) and to begin to see the world economy's various 'barbarians' through their own eyes. An emphasis on local interpretations not only brings to the surface the violence encouraged by dominant representations, it also lets us see the limits that globalized representations put on the strategies that the less-advantaged have used to cope with the expansion of the world economy. And reflection on local representations lets us see the mirrors in which the dominant self-other distinctions have been constructed.

¹⁴ This is certainly not confined to North-South differences. Note, for example, the dissension and lack of conclusion in North America around such issues as abortion/right to life; individual/community property rights; sovereign state/self-determination; sexual discrimination/affirmative action; and so on.

Some African human rights NGOs do help to bring local interpretations to the attention of Northern associates and policy makers, thereby furthering the dismantling of the presently constructed 'self-other' imagery. For example, the regional NGO, *Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA)*, which was discussed in an earlier chapter with regard to its efforts to promote democratic process at a national level, is interesting as well for its support of transnational democratising forces.

The organisation combines research with social activism, relates local needs to national policy, and connects regional gender/legal issues with transnational expertise and support. To some extent the connections with Northern 'partners' are founded on funding needs: not only those of WLSA for material support but also the need of Northern donor organisations to be part of the current gender-centric fashion. At the same time, however, its associations with Northern scholars are based on shared academic interests and feminist ideologies. In short, transnational interests and friendships as well as coalitions and networks which transcend national identities or specific legal or human rights issues are an important feature of WLSA's construction. Moreover, it attempts to identify and/or coordinate the actions of people and groups from local, regional and global levels of political and social identity. Most importantly, it takes seriously the traditional views of legal and human rights and attempts not to subvert them to 'modern' practices and views, but to find ways to interpret the latter so that they can coexist compatibly with the former.

Local to national, regional and global solidarities have been fostered as well by various human rights NGOs which have collaborated to resist *apartheid* and support

democratisation in South Africa. Indeed, civil societies' actions on human rights in that country have had a relatively long-standing dimension of regionalism as well as a broader transnationalism. This applies not only to the virtually unanimous international censure of *apartheid*, but to other areas of human rights also. In particular, various transnational connections exist among NGOs which are involved in issues of legal education and human, gender, land and electoral rights. While these transnational connections were forged for the establishment of democracy in South Africa, they also contribute to the building of a sense of global citizenship¹⁵ based on a shared commitment to democracy and the protection of human rights. For both normative and heuristic reasons, South Africa has been and continues to be a model for the world, informing the nature of and possibilities for democracy and democratic transitions within civil societies as well as within institutions of governance.

The implications of South Africa's future for its neighbours like Zimbabwe are obvious and significant. But mutual concerns with South Africa may be apparent in Northern countries also, Canada being a good case in point. Interested parties in both countries may have much to offer each other, for instance, on issues of devising constitutions or land claims by indigenous peoples. From these issues, it is a short step to extend the acceptance of the idea of partnership based on mutual concerns. As the representative of one Canadian NGO in South Africa exclaimed, "We need to level the

¹⁵ Incidentally, they also contribute to a sense of regional identity within civil society, which is an important prerequisite for the viability of an official regionalism which many observers believe is crucial to Southern Africa's future development.

playing field between ourselves and break the traditional model of ‘donor-recipient’ relationship”, but not only to further the development interests of South Africa but to link them “to the Canadian side of the struggle, where organizations are involved in housing, land, jobs and women’s struggles” (South Africa Reference Group, 1993: 11).

Gender/Women’s NGOs

As with the broader issue of human rights, the issue of women’s rights is complicated by conflicting views on entitlement and obligation within as well as between societies. Moreover, following the recognition by scholars that women were important development actors, and after various interventions by donor agencies designed to improve the lives of women in developing countries,¹⁶ there has been an anti-Northern backlash by feminist scholars and activists in the South. The latter claim that Northern feminist academics and development ‘experts’ have tended to evaluate the situations of Southern women through Western ‘lenses.’ In particular, they assert that there has been a tendency by Northerners to generalise the experiences of Southern women and to view them as hapless victims of male oppression (Mohanty, 1988), whereas “non-Western women have maintained that ‘the confrontational categories in which the Western

¹⁶ The interventions have tended to fall within one of three approaches: the liberal, USAID-initiated *Women in Development* (WID) approach which attempts to include women in productive economic activity; the socialist-inspired *Women and Development* (WAD) approach that begins from a position that women are productive actors in all societies, whether or not they are remunerated; and the materialist cum postmodern, *Gender and Development* (GAD) approach which analyses women’s and men’s positions in society in relational terms (eg. see Bakker, 1997).

feminist project places questions of the relations between the sexes are not necessarily intelligible outside Western contexts” (Persram, 1994: 283).

Such contention might indicate that women’s and/or gender issues are not a probable area in which to find the basis for strengthening a global solidarity movement. Yet, the level of sophistication to which the debate has been brought and the fact that Southern women have become active, vocal and *equal* participants in it are precisely the reasons why the women’s movement is central to any discussion of globalising civil society. Despite the lack of a unified ‘feminist vision’, there has nevertheless been a phenomenal increase in the level of dialogue among women around the world and between women and men at various levels of society and in several high-profile fora. In short, the underlying discourse is essentially democratising not only because it is founded on the project of women’s emancipation but also because it recognises the need to find accommodation in the midst of difference.¹⁷

The fact that women’s needs and productivity have become key factors around which official development policy has ‘converged’ has had a somewhat contradictory, but overall enabling effect on building global solidarity. Several UN forums¹⁸ and one UN

¹⁷ In effect, (particularly postmodern) elements within the women’s movement attempt to turn the potentially disintegrating effect of ‘difference’ into a symbol and base of equality upon which a stronger sense of global solidarity among women may be built. This initiative gives some resonance to Elise Boulding’s idealistic pronouncement that “the new transnationalism is a signal that we are entering an ‘axial age’ - a time when people, ideas, and cultural traditions from widely different regions come together in a great flowering of human creativity” (quoted in Cooperrider & Pasmore, 1991: 773).

¹⁸ These have include Mexico in 1975, Nairobi in 1985, and Beijing in 1995.

'decade' have been devoted to women's issues. Thirty percent of the World Bank's projects have specific gender-related components (Black & Thérien, 1996: 273).

Moreover, the centrality of women to development has been recognised as a guiding principle by the DAC, and for the bi-lateral policies of its members. Canada, in particular, has been instrumental in promoting women's issues; "it is increasingly financing several initiatives designed to strengthen women's organizations and networks" (*ibid.*, 274).

Therefore, even if, as was noted in chapter six, Northern support for (especially middle-class) women's groups in Zimbabwe is sometimes resented and has created a barrier to establishing effective collaborative linkages between organisations at lower and middle levels of civil society, the high degree of interaction between Northern and Southern women's groups and the meaningful exchange of views that has informed the feminist debate has contributed to the emergence of a globalist discourse.

Waterman (1996) has found evidence of a growing number of references in recent Southern African feminist writing to the need for African women to join in a global struggle for workers' rights, the end of violence toward women and control of the exploitative international system. There is also a growing recognition of the importance of connecting local, national, regional and global struggles. Moreover, even if, as one commentator claimed, the "... need to be networking around, for, and with women - activists, academics, politicians, structures, resources - locally, nationally, internationally (is impeded by)...a real poverty of networks in Southern Africa" (*ibid.*, 111), African participants are actively involved in North-South networks that treat global issues, such

as the Women's Global Alliance for Development Alternatives¹⁹ which is seeking:

a critical reassessment of economic theory and policy from a gender perspective: prioritizing people, reconceptualizing and reorganizing work, promoting people-centred sustainable development, and demanding accountability of national and international political institutions (Marchand, 1996).

Emerging Global Citizenship in African(ist) NGO-IGO Connections

It is among this growing number of transnational networks of Global Social Change Organisations (GSCOs) and Transnational Advocacy Non-Governmental Organisations (TANGOs) which adopt a 'world-view' approach to development issues that the primary force exists for the emergence of a global civil society (de Sousa Santos, 1995; Cooperrider & Pasmore, 1991; Boulding, 1991). The most obvious manifestation of increased solidarity among these organisations is in the pressures they assert collectively: "first, to influence governments to change their positions and policies on a range of issues and, second, to create new modes and mechanisms of governance in those political spaces where they may not already exist" (Coate, *et al*, 1996: 100).

The institutional framework which presently exists is obviously inadequate for the expression or treatment of cooperative action by civil societies on a global scale (Falk, 1996: 19). But, in lieu of the existence of formal structures of global governance, various

¹⁹ The Alliance includes the Southern network *Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era* (DAWN) as well as the North-American group, *Alternative Women in Development* (Alt-WID) and the European-based *Women in Development Europe* (WIDE). It has focused its efforts at UN Conferences in Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing.

political actors and analysts look to the UN system as the only arena that is presently available for collective political action and hence, the political space which is most receptive to creating “new modes and mechanisms of governance” which can adequately deal with the new realities of a ‘globalised’ world (see chapter 4).

It is logical that organisations and networks which are attempting to build and extend civil society on a global scale would view the UN as an important forum in which to wage their struggle. In the decades following World War II, the growth in numbers of new states - mostly from the ‘Third World’ - has reshaped the dialogue in the UN organisations, thereby introducing new values which have gradually gained relevance and legitimacy. In many cases, these new values have directly challenged the “western, male, and rational” principles on which the UN was founded (Murphy & Rojas de Ferro, 1995). In particular, the orthodox practices of ‘universalising’ the western development model, of naturalising and reifying the state, and of separating the political and the economic and the external from the internal are coming under increasing question and criticism (*ibid.*).

In line with such revisionist thinking, the four widely-accepted global values of peace, development, human rights and environmental sustainability “have been integrated into what is, by now, largely a single dialogue” by an increasing number of scholars and activists (Coate, *et al*, 1996: 102-3; also see above). Moreover, although there has been a tendency to continue to separate these issues in practice, there has been considerable pressure on the UN to expand its traditional primary preoccupation with national security: (1) by increasing the list of items to be included for consideration on the security agenda; and (2) and by broadening the definition of security to mean human security as opposed

to maintaining the previously narrow focus on national and/or military security (Shaw, 1996b: 38).

NGOs have contributed significantly to the shaping of this expanded and refocused international agenda²⁰ (Boulding, 1991). According to some scholars (*ibid.*; Falk, 1995; Coate, *et al*; Princen, *et al*, 1994) this reshaping has largely involved citizens finding a means to express their concerns for issues which are not (or no longer) adequately addressed by the state. Finger (1994) argues that “NGOs are more representative than are national governments” (and therefore) “draw their legitimation from citizens who no longer refer to national boundaries.” Clearly, this is not the case in all instances for all (or perhaps even most) NGOs. Yet, as was argued in chapter four, issues of accountability and responsibility have become clouded in the contemporary period by the ‘internationalisation’ and, in some countries, the collapse or near-collapse of the state. Hence, in some circumstances, NGOs may be *more legitimately, if not formally*, representative of citizens’ interests than are states. In fulfilling this essentially democratising role, international NGOs have become the principle conduits both for expressing local concerns at global levels and for bringing issues of global dimensions to the attention of ordinary citizens. As such, continues Finger, many NGOs function in

²⁰ However, while NGOs may have contributed to an expanded dialogue and greater inclusion of non-state actors in policy-making, it would be a mistake to over-emphasise their impact, and especially to over-estimate the degree to which their contributions have been counter-hegemonic. The international system is dominated or “governed” largely by what Gill (1995: 412) terms “disciplinary neoliberalism” of the “new constitutionalism”, the latter defined as “the political project of attempting to make transnational liberalism, and if possible liberal democratic capitalism, the sole model for future development”.

international organisations as links between citizens' interests and the 'new' social movements, expressing 'people-centred' issues and 'seeking participation in global decision-making' (*ibid.*).

Details concerning the functions performed by international NGOs have been further refined by Coate, *et al* (1996: 107-16). According to the latter, international NGOs use four main types of tactics in their efforts to establish global connections. First, they perform *informational functions*, serving as *clearinghouses and linchpins*, gathering and disseminating relevant information and, in particular, attempting to bring grassroots and community organisations "into the global policy information loop" (cf. MWENGO, FAVDO). Second, they have a *value function* and act in *establishing global norms* which support a people-centric approach to decision-making (cf. Women's Global Alliance for Development Alternatives). Third, they have *rule-creation and supervisory functions*. They participate in *creating and monitoring norms, standards and rules*. In this category, they help to set international standards by bringing expertise in specific areas such as human rights to the international policy-making arena. Moreover, they can mobilise public opinion to put pressure on international organisations for policy changes (cf. Greenpeace on the environment; Amnesty International on human rights). Finally, they serve *operational functions* in the international system - "building effective linkages between IGOs and civil society" (cf. various NGOs which are 'contracted' by UN agencies for peace-keeping/making, landmine clearing, humanitarian service in complex emergencies [see UN-DHA, 1996]).

There is considerable heterogeneity in the rapidly expanding group of NGOs which interact at the international intersection of the local and global in the process of establishing a global civil society. While the memberships of most organisations consist of citizens who are concerned about a particular global issue, some come together mainly because of their shared interest (eg. Earth Action), other organisations form around a professional grouping (eg. International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War) or a religious philosophy (International Fellowship of Reconciliation) (Smith & Pagnucco, 1995). The various organisations which are represented at the inter/transnational level are involved in a diverse array of activities - from advocacy, to providing expert advice and/or services to IGOs, to promoting a greater role for NGOs in international conferences and fora (eg, see Alger, 1994).²¹

An important sub-set of inter/transnational NGOs consists of regional organisations which promote the goals of global citizenship at local levels through their connections with national and community-based NGOs and, in turn, bring the concerns of the latter to the attention of international decision-makers. Making these connections has become crucially important for Africa as its economic position in the international system during the post Cold-War period becomes increasingly peripheral, but its political position with respect to 'new' security issues of basic needs, refugees, environment, land-mines and peace-keeping becomes increasingly central (Shaw & Adibe, 1996).

²¹ Many of these organisations and/or their activities are coordinated by the International Council of Voluntary Associations (ICVA).

Various NGOs (as well as events) continue to keep the continent's interests represented and addressed by IGOs. Aside from the strong representations of African NGOs at various international conferences which have been held in recent years²², a number of NGOs work on an on-going basis to encourage the adoption of a global perspective to deal with African problems and to make complimentary revisions in international policy. There are several consortia of NGOs which focus broadly on the need for revisions in international structures and policies but which are also active in promoting uniquely African interests and views. For instance, the North-South Roundtable under the auspices of the Society for International Development (SID) brings together academics, researchers and policy-makers from around the world to discuss global development issues. In a meeting on (and in) Africa in 1995, the group argued for a development agenda which was specific to African needs: "neither clinging to outmoded public ownership nor insisting on a rush to privatisation" (SID, 1996).

Other consortia have been formed to specifically treat African concerns and problems from within global and/or international contexts. One in which Canadian associations are actively involved is the Africa Contact Group (an informal association of international NGO coalitions interested in Africa which emerged out of activities surrounding the United Nations Special Session on Africa [UNPAAERD] in 1986).

Despite its rather informal structure, the group has continued to meet to analyse, prescribe

²² For example, the World Summit for Children (New York, 1990), the World Conference on Environment and Development (Rio, 1992), the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), and the Habitat Conference (Istanbul, 1996).

and strategise with regard to UN initiatives on Africa such as the 1990s New Agenda for African Development (UN-NADAF) (PAC, September 1994).

Such consortia, and NGOs generally, currently have a strong voice in the policy dialogue of the IGO system.²³ But, to the extent that many promote the construction of the sense of global citizenship - an acceptance of having rights and duties as members of a global community - they also challenge the authority of the state-centric international political system. Moreover, those that directly or indirectly expose the connections between (under)development, (in)security, human rights are explicitly or implicitly part of a transnational democratisation movement which resists the dominance of neoliberalism because in identifying these connections, they also expose the incompatibility between treating them as an integrated complex and the policies and practices based on the dominant ideology.

Clearly, these counter-hegemonic forces are not well developed or coordinated. As Falk claims (1995: 169), “(although) civil society performs a role as critic of inter-state law...(it) is incapable at this stage of providing a real alternative”. On the other hand, continues Falk, at present, “(t)ransnational social forces provide the *only* (my emphasis) vehicle for the promotion of the law of humanity”²⁴ (*ibid.*, 170). In particular, it is these forces which attempt to represent the position and views of those on the periphery of the

²³ For a good review of the extensive linkages which exist between NGOs and IGOs, see editions of “Go Between”, the bi monthly-publication of the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service.

²⁴ See chapter 4 for an explanation of Falk’s concept of *law of humanity*.

global economy within which Africans are probably the most seriously disadvantaged. Humane governance (based on the ‘law of humanity’) requires that “systems should be as decentralized and localized as possible consistent with such goals as equity, implementation of human rights, promotion of democracy, environmental protection” (Falk, 1995: 16). Therefore, its construction is contingent upon peripheral regions (and local communities within them) having increasing levels of access to and input into international systems of governance.

For the promotion of increased African participation, a counter-hegemonic model would operate at several levels. For instance, it would involve petitioning at the international level for a more serious hearing for the various proposals which have been put forward by Africans themselves: eg. the ECA’s *Long-Term Perspective of Africa’s Development (1983)*, the *Lagos Plan of Action (LPA)* (OAU, 1980), the *African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP)*, the *Kampala Document* on stability, security, democracy, development, and cooperation. Consecutively, it would involve campaigning for innovations such as new systems of taxation at the international/global level of governance which would support development/security initiatives (see chapter four). Finally, as such changes in IGO policy and behaviour are likely to be brought about because of social pressure as well as events, it would involve deliberate attempts to extend the level of solidarity among counter-hegemonic forces at international and global to regional, national and local levels.

Merging Local and Global Agendas

While possibilities for building global solidarity linkages in relations among NGOs that are directly concerned with local development issues are less obvious than in organisations which operate in international fora, they do exist. Indeed, there are some grass-roots and community-based organisations in Southern Africa which have adopted novel approaches to development that help to break down the prevailing orthodoxies and power hierarchies.

ORAP: A Participatory Development Model²⁵

Clearly, the majority of NGOs in Africa are rooted in national development projects and not deliberately engaged in building transnational identities. Nevertheless, some of these organisations appear to be contributing to the transnationalising process, both because the self-assurance of their positions in ‘partnerships’ with Northern NGOs helps to change the traditional patterns of dominance which exist within the development enterprise but also because of the transformative nature of their actions at the grass-roots level of society. Grass-roots organisations which form part of what Fatton (1995: 87) has termed ‘popular civil society’ promote an idea of citizenship based on a “radical vision of

²⁵ ORAP was discussed in chapter 2 as an NGO which has been considered “a success story” because of its efforts to maximise the ‘comparative advantages’ which NGOs are often assumed to possess. The discussion here regards the ways in which ORAP’s local/community development activities contribute to the establishment of global democracy.

a participatory democracy transcending mere parliamentarianism and privileging initiatives 'from below'."

In following such a vision, the Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP) is an example which attempts to 'empower' the rural poor in Zimbabwe - both materially and politically - by promoting a philosophy that development is a long-term process centered on "the people's (own) experience and processes of decision-making" (ORAP, 1993; see also Theunis, 1992: 265-73). Because the emphasis is on contact and dissemination of information among the individual units which make up ORAP's membership, the management structure is deliberately multi-leveled and designed to foster flows of information in upward, downward and horizontal directions. Moreover, while ORAP welcomes (indeed depends upon) assistance from international donors, it is insistent that any partnerships with other organisations be transparent on both sides, be respectful of the needs of both parties and, above all, remain true to the original purpose of serving the needs and interests of the rural poor (ORAP, 1993; personal interviews, 1995). Ultimately, ORAP's focus on community and popular participation, its mode and principles of operation, and its insistence that local people and their needs set the determinants for action help to subvert traditional patterns of dominance in the international development structure as well as at the level of national governance.

South African 'civics': challenging citizenship identities

Although in a manner quite different from ORAP's, some 'civics' and other organisations in South African civil society nonetheless also promote a vision and

strategy of popular participation which challenges prevailing hierarchies. In South Africa, popular political mobilisation has been tied almost completely to democratic transitions in national governmental structures. Yet, perhaps more clearly than recent events in any other country, the struggles between entrenched orthodoxies and new forces for structural change demonstrate the potentially compatible relationship between simultaneous democratisation processes at different levels of polity. Not only are ‘new’ issues and definitions of democracy and security explicit and immediate in South Africa, but the mutually supportive efforts of national and transnational civil society forces in recognising and exposing the connections between these concepts have been evident and critical.

Potential for change in conceptions of “what is the relevant polity?”²⁶ centers on the South African civics’ innovative approaches to “local government: ‘building a voice at the grassroots level’ (Swilling, 1992: 81)...(as well as on) exercises of democratic procedure in the non-political contexts of civil society: the school, the cultural association, and especially the workplace” (Orkin, 1995: 535). Building on relationships which were established in the common struggle against *apartheid*, civics are frequently assisted in these efforts by international NGOs, church groups, trade unions, etc. These transnational connections serve not only in the establishment of democratic structures in South Africa, and development opportunities for the region, but also in the building of a

²⁶ This phrase recalls earlier references both to Held’s (1995b: 102) queries about whether the national, regional or international was the “relevant community” to provide consent on various contemporary issues and to Sandel’s (1996) assertion that there is a need to “disperse sovereignty upward and downward”.

sense of global citizenship. At an ideological level, the commitment to democracy and to basic human rights which is at the center of the transition in South Africa has had a clear transnational dimension.

Constraints to Changing Structures and Identities

However, despite some evidence or at least suggestion of emerging supra- and sub-state identities in Southern Africa, it is likely that further development of a transnational citizen identification will face serious impediments, at least in the short-term. First, discussions of Africa's current 'wave' of democracy usually refer to political liberalisation processes by national governments. They rarely allude to the more extensive form of democracy which is implied in notions of 'local empowerment' and 'global governance' and which refer to changes in power relations at the level of civil society as well as at the level of international political economy (Osaghae, 1995). To date, the several attempts, occasional successes, and variety of limited progressions toward political liberalisation have been actively encouraged and supported by external donors, yet such efforts have hardly been designed to extend the ideologies or institutionalisation of global or social democracy.

Indeed, international donor support for political liberalisation has been closely associated with the economic liberalisation policies which are imposed or suggested by IFIs. This dual strategy, informed by neoliberal ideology and interest, has been intensely

intrusive. As Sandbrook (1996: 18) writes, “(a)lmost unnoticed, the agencies have taken on responsibilities that surpass those assumed even by the original colonial powers.”

Hence, *the strategies of international development agencies which support the dominant neoliberal paradigm are more conducive to promoting dependency than democracy in the South.*

Moreover, despite their intention to curtail the reach of the state, such policies are strongly resistant of any transnationalising pressures to disperse sovereignty upward. The neoliberal objective is to provide freedom for the market rather than to supplement the state’s power with political authority at another level of polity. Nor are these policies necessarily conducive to dispersing sovereignty downward, despite the decentralisation that frequently accompanies economic liberalisation. In many instances, decentralisation has been an euphemism for off-loading financial responsibilities to a lower level of government.

The neoliberal claim accompanying the implementation of economic and political liberalisation policies in the 1980s - that the withdrawal of the state in Africa would provide space for the development of a pluralist, liberal democratic civil society - was considered at the time to be overly simplistic and idealistic by its critics and, subsequently, it has been refuted by events (Sandbrook, 1996). There is no natural ‘civility’ in national civil societies in Africa, nor even an inevitable sense of common nationalist identity upon which democratic pluralism can automatically be built (Orkin, 1995; Fatton, 1995).

And where strong and widespread civic identities do exist in African civil society,

they tend to be nationalist. Identification with global democracy or global social movements, despite the salience of issues of gender, environment or human rights for grass-roots communities, tends to be confined to urban, educated, middle-class activists. Such divisions among NGOs based on class and/or level of operation may be exacerbated as the competition increases in the present period of declining resources and increasing numbers of organisations. In particular, tensions rather than solidarities may grow between NGOs which work at the grass-roots and those which are involved in transnational networking or international advocacy,²⁷ especially as practical issues - particularly funding arrangements but also issues of inequities in functional capacities among NGOs - militate against operationalising strategies which bring together national and transnational democratisation strategies.

Finally, the dominant discourse within civil societies continues to be oriented in favour of nationalist strategies. Hence, recent democracy movements in Southern Africa - whether for independence from a colonial power or for multi-party elections - have had control of the state institutions as their primary (and usually, only) objective. Perhaps only in South Africa has there been an obvious connection between the struggles for

²⁷ This tension was reflected in a heated discussion at an NGO forum I attended in Harare, Zimbabwe prior to the Social Summit in Denmark in 1995. Several members of NGOs which were involved in assisting the handicapped, the rural poor, AIDs victims, etc. voiced their displeasure with contributing (through membership fees in NGO umbrella organisations) to the travel expenses of members of urban-based, international advocacy groups. The critics were particularly dissatisfied with their perceived lack of representation in these groups and hence the latter's lack of accountability to the community which they professed to represent at international fora. Moreover, they felt that the likelihood was so remote for positive change to result from the advocacy of NGOs in international fora, that the efforts were quixotic and definitely too costly.

control of national institutions and the fundamental system change which is implied by the emergence of a transnational civil society. However, despite serious discussion on alternative trajectories for constitutional reform and foreign policy (Shaw & Nhema, 1995), recent analyses suggest that: (1) the policies of the new regime will comply with the regulatory global order of neoliberal economics, even at the expense of redistribution and basic needs; (2) foreign policy will be determined by the doctrine of *real politik* rather than by 'new', human security concerns and definitions; and (3) the logic of a "regionally focused, sustainable development-oriented, socio-economic policy" will be obscured by the paramouncy of a "South Africa first" attitude (Swatuk, 1996).

Conclusions

A rapidly proliferating group of inter/transnational NGOs are at the center of democratising processes - establishing citizenship identities and forging alliances at and among global and subnational levels as well as national levels of polity.

Conceptualisations of 'transnational civil society' have emerged to explain the formations of groups with common sets of concerns and/or identities which transcend narrow national or nationalist interests. Evidence of such developments in the Southern African region help to undermine, or at least bring into question, traditional assumptions about the nature of relations between states, between the latter and their citizens, and between informal global structures of governance and/or dominance and various transnationally

organised social groups. In particular, the notion of transnational civil society heralds the globalisation of democratic struggle. In the most persuasive analyses, such a struggle involves combining respect for the diverse and particularistic interests of local communities with a sense of global communality; in short, global democracy presupposes a citizenship identity that seeks to disperse sovereignty upward and downward.

In Southern Africa, the formation of various NGO networks and North-South NGO alliances based on a growing sense of solidarity and a concept of *partnership as mutual interest* support the establishment of a 'transnational civil society'. Moreover, even among NGOs which are not (yet?) committed to the ideal of global democracy or a global strategy for promoting development, interstices exist in which transnational civil society is emerging. However, although global identities and pressures are present in elements of Southern African civil societies, they are not likely to have a significant transformative effect on democratising projects in individual countries or the region or on global structures of power, at least in the short term. The dominance and present authority of the neoliberal paradigm, the resilience of statist and nationalist doctrines, and the competitions and contestations within civil societies and between actors promoting different types of civil society mitigate the power of transnationalising forces for democracy.

Nevertheless, the possibilities of extending democracy and development in the region and to international and global levels depends upon the formation of civil societies and institutions which can counter (or control) the transnational capitalist forces which are contributing to a growing list of interconnected insecurities in the world. Adler and

Steinberg (1995) argue with respect to South Africa, that any efforts to secure democracy must contend with the 'diversity' which exists within civil society. In a democratic system, this means the "cohabitation in one polity of different - perhaps incommensurate - conceptions of public life and virtue as well as incommensurate symbolic horizons in political life."

However, in the present age of globalisation, the picture is even more complicated than Adler and Steinburg suggest. In short, the present nature of diversity in civil societies extends beyond the cohabitation of conflicting conceptions within one national polity, but as well the cohabitation of civic allegiances to different levels of polity. Hence, policies to support democracy and sustainable development in Southern Africa are not merely issues of rational choice at national levels. Rather they must address the "number of fundamental gaps which have opened up between democratic politics and the late twentieth-century world, 'gaps' in the relations among citizens, individual states and the economic systems at the regional and global level" (Archibugi & Held, 1995: 5). To begin, an important step is to identify both the needs and the innovative actions of civil societies which have emerged in response to those 'gaps'.

Chapter 8: Conclusions: possibilities for sustainable democratic development

...a critical and historicist reading of present trends suggests that, in the absence of major changes in lifestyle, consumption patterns, and public goods provisions, the current configuration of world order and neoliberal forms of global governance is unsustainable.

- Gill, 1995: 422

Introduction

The main objective in the preceding chapters was to examine the role(s) which NGOs, and particularly North-South NGO partnerships (may) play in the promotion of democratic, sustainable development. A central argument which emerged from the analysis is that the terminology of the proposition is itself problematic. In short, there are no simple or universally accepted definitions of democracy or development nor is there consensus on the pathways by which these processes (or endpoints by some definitions) may be initiated, furthered or achieved, however they are conceptualised. Furthermore, the concept of partnership as applied to NGO relations is, at best, ambiguous and, in many cases, misleading. Finally, even the term 'NGO' is complicated by the varying degrees of interconnection which exist between governmental and non-governmental organisations and, increasingly, by overlaps that exist between the profit-motivated business sector and the voluntary sector of which NGOs are a part.

Nevertheless, despite, and indeed to some extent because of, the conceptual difficulties associated with the above problematic, I argue that the latter is an important area

deserving of further investigation. In particular, the alternative definitions and conceptualisations may be interpreted as part of an ongoing struggle between dominant and counter-hegemonic forms of knowledge and practice and therefore a feature of a dialectic between current processes of globalisation and democratisation (Cox, 1997). In short, debates surrounding concepts relating to democracy and development represent opposing forces in and contrasting explanations of the contemporary political economy and lead to alternative projections for the future.

Gramsci described such a period of ideological contestation as ‘revolutionary’ , involving first a struggle “to penetrate the false world of established appearances rooted in the dominant belief systems” and second “to create an entirely new universe of ideas and values that would provide the basis for human liberation” (Bobbio, 1976: 42). In the contemporary context, the dominant belief system of neoliberalism contributes on a global scale to a “market civilisation” perspective on the world “that is ahistorical, economistic, materialistic, ‘me-oriented’, short-termist, and ecologically myopic” (Gill, 1995: 399). Meanwhile, opposing counter-hegemonic or ‘revolutionary’ ideas and values have emerged which attempt to liberate the concept of democratisation from its “appropriat(ion) in an ideology of domination” and situate it instead with an understanding of “the interrelateness of life in the biosphere”, “principles of social equity and self-governance”, and ““new regionalisms’ emanat(ing) from the base of society upward” (Cox, 1997: 251).

The discourse which has emerged in support of these counter-hegemonic ideas, values and principles centres around conceptualisations of ‘humane governance’ and ‘people-centred development’. It has been articulated not only by certain NGOs and members of

'new' social movements, but also by UN agencies such as UNDP and UNRISD; in the 1990s, the former's annually published *Development Reports* and the latter's various publications, including *States of Disarray* (1995) which reports on the social effects of globalisation, have begun to articulate a framework for the construction of this new development agenda. According to these agencies, the necessary revisions of the existing formal and informal structures of governance begin by recognizing that sustainable development depends upon protecting human above national security and upon the ability of people to participate in the processes that affect their well-being. Further, it involves "changes in economic and social relations including gender relations, political culture, institutional frameworks, public attitudes - in short, on creating an environment in which human life will flourish" (Plewes, *et al*, 1996: 216).

Pressures for revisions have not come only from 'progressive', 'left-leaning' organisations, but also from within the existing structures themselves. As national and international agencies are being forced to deal with numerous new, often transnational issues of insecurity, the limitations of present coping and remediation mechanisms are exposed, thereby engendering impetus for change internally. Yet, not all or even most of the current changes and/or proposals for change (internally- or externally-generated) have contributed to or are likely to promote the creation of a just, orderly political economy or an ecologically sustainable environment.

Within an emerging literature, there is a growing recognition that achieving such objectives depends upon rethinking the 'Westphalian normative order' (Sakamoto, 1994: 13) and upon provisions for institutional changes to democratically regulate the economic and

social phenomena which are associated with globalisation (see chapter four). Hence, Richard Falk (1994, 1995) discusses the need to construct systems of 'human governance' based on the philosophical rationale of the 'law of humanity' rather than the 'law of the state'; David Held and Daniele Archibugi (1995) refer to the need to revise international organisations to construct a 'cosmopolitan' democracy. Others argue specifically for the need to control (and/or tax) transnational financial transactions, to promote regionalisms as "the safest available havens from the current disorder (Crouch & Marquand, 1995), to promote global trade unions (Galbraith, 1995) and to combine decentralisation with strengthening the sense of "civic community" at local levels (Sullivan, 1995; Falk, 1995). In short, the proposals are for a new "politics that disperses sovereignty both upward and downward" (Sandel, 1996: 74).

I argue that the actions of and issues surrounding North-South NGO partnerships are closely interrelated with these social changes and contestations associated with globalisation. Two main hypotheses have been explored; namely, that: (1) NGOs and particularly NGOs which are linked transnationally may constitute a significant counter-hegemonic force to the global dominance of neoliberal capitalism; and (2) in undermining the strength of the latter, such a counterforce is/would be contributive to 'developmental democracy' - informally as well as formally and at local and global as well as at national levels. Incorporated in these hypotheses is the suggestion that a conceptualisation which holds democracy to be a 'developmental' and 'participatory' process as opposed to the 'protectionist' institutional version associated with orthodox liberalism is more compatible with promoting the ideals of the 'bottom-up', 'people-first' strategy.

A 'Revolutionary' Role for NGOs? A Mixed Review

With regard to the first hypothesis, I conclude, albeit cautiously, that *some* NGOs, especially through cooperative and coordinated effort, do possess *some* potential to challenge the prevailing hegemonic (or at least, dominant) neoliberal order. On the second point, I argue that the promotion of sustainable, democratic development is furthered by those NGOs which contribute - deliberately or inadvertently - to democratisation at global as well as national and local levels. In short, the destruction or containment of democratising principles and practices is not mainly or merely the result of the policy choices of national governments, but is due as well to the structure of the global political economy. Therefore, NGOs which promote the extension of global civil society as a counterforce to the anti-democratic properties of globalising capitalism are making an important contribution to sustainable democratic development and are providing a crucial supplement to the democratising activities of those NGOs which are building national civil societies as a force of (potential) opposition to the state.

Yet, not all - or even a majority of - NGOs are part of (or linked with) a coherent global counter-hegemonic project or process. In fact, for the most part, developmentalist NGOs tend to concentrate on local or national issues or problems. In chapter five, various efforts (and some apparent successes) by indigenous NGOs to further (tentative) processes of participatory democratisation in Zimbabwe were identified. Yet, the struggles for

democracy and the prospects for its consolidation are conditioned by national, regional and inter- and trans-national political economy contexts. In particular, Zimbabwe's future and the nature of its state-societal relations will emerge out of the dialectics of structural adjustment and the possibilities for stability and economic growth in the Southern African region, both of which are conditioned by processes of globalisation.

Second, the indigenous NGOs which are contributing to democratising processes require the assistance (financial, in particular, but also in areas such as capacity training, etc.) of 'partners' (NGOs and/or bilateral agencies) in Northern countries such as Canada. Yet, it appears that the relationships which have been established as 'partnerships' between Canadian and Zimbabwean organisations have not usually tended to reduce traditional North-South disparities. Moreover, development practices are sustainable to the extent that they become routine or usual *within the limits of the available resources*. Not only has the level of financial dependence of Zimbabwean organisations on Northern donors persisted, but as available resources are reduced through cuts to aid funding, the sustainability even of the essentially dependent relationships is threatened.

The interrelated nature of the national, international and global factors which affect Zimbabwe's political economy render locally- and nationally-directed solutions to development problems inadequate on their own. Therefore, I argue that the formation of effective North-South NGO partnerships that can help to further participatory democracy and sustainable development in national contexts depends upon the partners' ability to see themselves as participants in a mutual struggle for global democracy. Moreover, their most effective strategy at present involves forming linkages and networks that can assist the

strengthening of civil society at local, national, regional and global levels. Presently, in Southern Africa there are several impediments to the formation of local, national and regional linkages among indigenous NGOs. Yet, some do exist and, with the cooperation of certain 'progressive' Northern NGOs, are engaged in the construction of a 'global civil society.'

To the extent that a global civil society counterforce has been elaborated to date, it has been as the result of the actions of a variety of groups in civil society, including NGOs operating in 'interstices' that have opened up because of the contradictions inherent in globalisation. It was argued in chapter five that such interstices may be found in Zimbabwe, for instance, in the complex dialectical relations among ESAP, corporatist statism and anti-establishment pressures by some Zimbabwean NGOs. Chapter six argued that in Northern countries such as Canada as well interstices are evident in the dialectical situation created by the adoption of neoliberal policies and the increasing internationalisation of the state countered by a growing assertiveness of marginalised groups and the reemergence of 'leftist' solidarity forces. And, as shown in chapters four and seven, yet another interstice appears to be emerging at the international/ transnational interface where social responses to the insecurities associated with globalisation put pressures for revision on the existing international institutional system at the same time that other social forces are petitioning for major restructurings, some of which promote increasing formalisation of a global system of governance.

However, the ability of NGOs and social movements to take full advantage of the various openings in which democratic change might be furthered is constrained by the

conservative and/or orthodox attitudes which prevail even among their own memberships of self-styled 'democrats'. For instance, chapters five and six indicated that the concept of partnership as it is generally applied to relationships between NGOs is overly narrow and thus restrictive. Among those who claim that their organisations are working within or toward 'partnerships', few can identify how the implications of *mutual* gain or interest that are embedded in the term apply to their relationships (at least, beyond the satisfaction that assisting an 'other' may provide). This view impedes efforts to advance the field of development beyond the well-recognised impasse that has resulted from the 'self-other' dichotomy by which inequitable North-South power relations have been defined (and perpetuated) over the past several decades (Schuurman, 1993; Sachs, 1992).

An alternative concept of partnership as an alliance between agents participating in a common project which benefits the marginalised of the North *and* the South is not only likely to introduce more equality into associative arrangements between individual organisations, but it has been made increasingly relevant by the social problems associated with the current conjuncture. In short, various forms of resistances in both North and South have their origins in the increasing gaps between elite beneficiaries of globalisation and the increasingly marginalised poor. However, if the conditions of partnership between Canadian and Zimbabwean NGOs are typical, few members of these organisations draw connections between Northern and Southern experiences or appreciate that they are part of a global development problem.

Moreover, even when such assumptions are understood, there is a deficit in the number of appropriate fora in which 'progressive' NGOs can come together to promote the

ideals and practices of a 'cosmopolitan democracy'. As was argued in chapter four, following scholars such as Archibugi & Held (1995), a 'cosmopolitanism' that moves beyond a narrow national focus, merging local with global issues and extending sovereignty both upward and downward would be consistent with a more democratic development structure and agenda. However, the wide acceptance of state sovereignty as an essential principle of international law precludes any simple revision of international institutions to accommodate a more 'cosmopolitan' perspective and politics. In short, the existing practices and orthodox notions surrounding the inter-state system are formidable obstacles to the NGOs and social movements which are pressuring for change to the international structure.

Nevertheless, just as the dominant economic forces in the contemporary period favour globalisation, civil societal responses to them are increasingly taking on a global dimension, even if the immediate and most obvious forms of reaction are usually local. In efforts to explain the nature of changing social relations, but also partly for the normative reason of promoting the position and voices of the marginalised and excluded, critical theorists attempt to expose and understand the connections between the local and global (Cox, 1997). In so doing, their scholarly focus moves beyond - though clearly includes - the policies and ideals of specific actors such as NGOs.

Likewise, while this thesis concentrated on the latter as a focal point, many of its conclusions, observations, and sites for further investigation relate to broader philosophical, theoretical and practical issues. In brief, these include the points that:

- (1) the ontologies and epistemologies which traditionally informed (and were often taken for granted in) the study of International Relations need to be revisited;

- (2) words matter - that is, discourse is an important determinant of social process;
- (3) institutions are important venues for social perpetuation and/or contestation; and
- (4) the assumption of an idealist-realist dichotomy in the study of international relations is over-stated and therefore flawed.

The following section will elaborate on each of these.

Questions of Ontology and Epistemology: re-thinking international relations

Since the end of the Second World War, orthodox studies of international relations have been dominated first by a realist and then by a structural realist (neorealist) perspective which assumes that the primary ontological unit is the state. Borrowing from liberal analysis which postulates that rational, freely choosing individuals form the basic unit of society, realists and neorealists imbue the state with the human attribute of rationally choosing agency. Further, given the absence of an over-arching sovereign authority at a global level, structural realists argue that the condition of anarchy produces a system which constrains and controls the actions of individual states. Because the state has come to be seen as a natural, inevitable construction situated within a persistent condition of anarchy, the realists theories are essentially static. Therefore, claims that globalisation is radically transforming social relations¹ tend to be challenged (or ignored) especially by neorealists.

¹ In particular, realist assumptions about the essentially unchanging nature of the state are undermined by claims about it becoming 'internationalised'.

Liberal internationalists, by contrast, assume that the composite action of individuals drives history. Hence, globalisation tends to be regarded as the inescapable progression of human destiny. In more extreme versions such as Fukuyama's, it is assumed that liberalism has triumphed over competing ideologies and that the global extension of capitalism and the world-wide pervasiveness of Western culture are evidence that the 'end of history' has been reached.

It is a conclusion of this thesis that a more truly 'realistic' interpretation of societal order and social change is provided by critical theory which allows that system, state, individuals and groups all have determining roles in the making of history, yet none of these units is consistently or universally the sole primary force that determines stability or change. Instead, history is a process that results from the dialectical interaction of systems (of economy, state, institutions, knowledge) and individual people, firms and organisations.

The current period of world history is characterised by the transnationalisation of capitalist production and financial transactions and the concomitant dominance globally of neoliberal political and economic ideology. However, the potential for the long-term sustainability of this neoliberal order is threatened by the insecurities associated with increasing inequities produced by the globalising processes. In short, globalisation has exacerbated conditions of inequality in the world, and while there are a minority of people who benefit from the present trends in the global economy, there are growing numbers of others who are marginalised and excluded. Both the 'internationalisation' of the state and the emergence of many of the various NGOs and 'new' social movements in civil societies around the world may be seen largely as responses to globalising economic pressures. In the

case of the state, the response is largely concessionary; in the case of civil societies, responses may be supportive, revolutionary or reactionary.

These varied responses challenge the ontological assumptions of orthodox realist and liberal theory. As Cox (1997: 248) argues, understanding the complex interaction of agents and structures within national, local and global political economies involves:

....problematizing the classic Westphalian conception of the state as the exclusive unit of world affairs, and especially of world economic, social and cultural affairs. With the collapse of 'real socialism', the notion of a struggle between two rival economic, social and political systems that has dominated thinking in the four decades of the Cold War has lost its relevance. Emerging cleavages may define rival forms of capitalism, each competing for legitimacy on the world scale or having a territorial base in different world regions.

In short, a world which is characterised by the universalising transnationalisation of capital as well as by the particularising phenomena of emerging rival capitalisms and various forms of overlapping and/or competing identities cannot be adequately explained by theory which takes the state (or the individual) as the basic unit. Neither is our understanding of world political economy furthered by undue reliance on positivist epistemology. Renderings of history which depend upon the latter tend to ignore the importance to political process of the *meanings* which are attached to actions. Yet, "intersubjective meanings are the 'common sense' that prevails for a certain people during a phase of their history, and through which they not only understand but reproduce reality" (Cox, 1997: 246).

One of the contradictions of globalisation is that a variety of intersubjective meanings attached to alternative views of the political 'good life' are being exposed. Some of these from the South and the East oppose the dominant Western ideal of individualist freedom of

choice and are undermining the position that Western experiences provide the only valid development models for the rest of the world to emulate (Said, 1978.). To some extent, the proliferation of contending viewpoints has the effect of strengthening Southern voices, thereby contributing to greater equality within and increased democratisation of North-South relations. Furthermore, some Northern scholars and NGOs have contributed positively to this democratising momentum by promoting the viewpoints of the South, particularly the Southern poor, in a variety of fora. Hence, to some extent, liberal/neoliberal notions about democracy and development are being openly challenged and competing discourses are being given greater credence.

Alternative Discourses and/of Democratic Development

The use of words to express and develop intersubjective meaning is well understood. Often overlooked, however, is the fact that some words are assumed to signify universally constant conceptualisations when, in fact, they are also associated with alternative intersubjective meanings that have been subverted by the dominant order's hegemonic control over interpretation. Therefore, just as "theory is always for someone and for some purpose", words and the concepts they define support particular views of the world which benefit some and disadvantage others. But, just as words may be used to maintain existing power relations, they may also be used to undermine them. It is in this sense of the use of

words that discourse is understood. In short, discourse is language in dialectic interaction with social relations².

Discourses of Democracy

The interrelated discourses of ‘democracy’, ‘development’, ‘security’, ‘civil society’ and ‘citizenship’ which currently preoccupy many in the development field tend usually to be used as if they signify single, unambiguous concepts. Yet, as noted in the preceding section (and in more detail in chapter two), ‘democracy’ defined in classical liberal theory as a set of institutions which are ‘protective’ of individual freedom is associated with a different type of society (and set of intersubjective meanings surrounding the notion of societal ‘good’) than ‘democracy’ defined in ‘developmental’ and ‘participatory’ terms. Classical liberal conceptions about democracy are founded on the principle of individual freedom and emphasise the need for protection from coercion by others, and especially from the state. By contrast, the latter, more communitarian, definition of democracy is based on the priority of social justice and holds that because people’s ability to act upon their choices is distributed inequitably, society (or the representative institution of governance) has a duty to equalise opportunities for participation where possible.

² Michel Foucault (1972) has made significant contributions to understanding how language expresses and upholds the integral relationship between power and knowledge. For example, his notion of a “discursive formation”: a set of ideas and practices with particular conditions of existence, which are more or less institutionalised, but which may only be partly understood by those that they encompass...allow(s) us to make sense of the way that practices and understandings come to pervade many areas of social and political life, in complex, perhaps unpredictable and contested, ways” (Gill, 1994)

The thesis concludes that currently, despite a rhetorical emphasis on establishing 'participatory democracies' in the 'Third World', the policies of dominant development agencies promote a form of democracy which is based upon the 'protectionist' version. Structural adjustment programmes reduce the reach of the state, ostensibly 'freeing' civil society to make more rational market choices. Yet, as reported in chapter five, statistics on the Zimbabwean experience suggest that freedom from state intervention in the economy does not necessarily provide a solution for bringing many in civil society out of deepening levels of poverty.

In reaction to ESAP in Zimbabwe, as to SAPs elsewhere, much of any recent anti-establishment pressure has been led by members of the indigenous NGO community. This pressure often includes the articulation of the necessity of promoting a 'developmentalist' form of democracy that would consider the needs of people prior to (or at least as well as) those of markets. However, it was observed that such NGOs are frequently coopted, sometimes by state interests, but also by international donor agencies from which the former draw their main financial support. Hence, while the language of participation has become incorporated in the development community's discourse on democracy, most policies and practices are more supportive of the market mechanism (and the international system that protects the latter) than of people-centred development.

This tendency is often reinforced by the interventions of Northern NGOs even though associations between the latter and their Southern counterparts are now usually described as 'partnerships', denoting an apparent 'democratisation' of the development agenda. While evidence presented in chapter six suggests that the discourse of partnership is being used by

Southern NGOs in an attempt to strengthen their position vis-a-vis those of Northern actors, its use by the latter tends usually to have the effect of maintaining existing structures of economic and political power.

To a large extent, those structures continue to be maintained by a discourse that confines democracy to formal constitutional and national contexts. Yet, *while struggles for control of the state and debates about the latter's distributory functions, are clearly still relevant to the theory and praxis of democracy, they do not constitute a complete discourse for the contemporary period.* First, with the 'internationalisation' of the state being a feature of globalisation, the political and economic rewards for capturing the state by civil societies are diminished. Second, as the realms of economic and increasingly of social and political activity are globalised, ideas and efforts to extend democracy - formally as well as informally - to the global level become more salient.

At this stage of history, definitions of democracy which reduce it to a sum of its institutions are obviously inadequate for application beyond the state level. However, defined as a 'participatory' and 'popular process', global democracy may be described as an emancipatory "struggle of humanism against the free market"³ (Seabrook, 1993: 59, cited in Waterman, 1996: 164). In other words, at the present time democratisation at the global level is less concerned with the nature of relations between a sovereign political authority

³ The 'idealism' which is implicit in this statement is treated in more detail below - indirectly in the following section dealing with human security and directly in a later section on idealism versus realism in the contemporary conjuncture.

and a counterbalancing civil society as between the latter and the dominating economic forces of neoliberal capitalism.

Discourses of Development and Security

The thesis concludes that there is some evidence that pressures exist for extending the principles of 'participatory democracy' to the global level. However, like the concept of 'protective democracy', theories of 'developmental' or 'participatory democracy' grew out of a Western tradition. And, although the latter appear to be more consistent than the former with 'bottom-up', 'people-centric' and 'community' development practices they are limited by a tendency to assume that Western conventions regarding sovereign statehood are immutable. As Held and McGrew (1994: 72) observe, not only early theorists such as John Stuart Mill, "but...nearly all subsequent democratic theorists, failed to examine the extent to which the very idea of a national system of accountability and control was compromised in an increasingly complex and interconnected system". In short, most contemporary analysts (and proponents) of 'participatory' as well as 'protective' democracy tend to remain no less fixated on the national context than their predecessors, and most discourses on democracy tend to be reduced to concerns only with relations between the state and the national civil society.

Even with the recent exponential increase in the number of complexities and interconnections associated with globalisation, and a growing awareness in academic and governmental circles of their existence, few scholars have yet attempted to draw links between the changing nature of international relations and the limitations in nation-centric

conceptions of democracy. Nevertheless, certain non-orthodox discourses do present new conceptual imagery which helps to expose such links.

As noted above, an important example involves the efforts of organisations such as the UNDP (1994&5) and UNRISD (1995) to understand and explain the relationship between development, security and democracy⁴. Such initiatives attempt to broaden the security agenda beyond the traditional military dimension to one which focuses on human needs - that is, on “community, development, economics, the environment, gender issues” (Shaw, 1997: 38) . As well, they accentuate the importance of political security - “guaranteeing the right to representation, autonomy (freedom), participation, dissent, combined with empowerment to make choices and a reasonable probability of effecting change” (in short, democratisation) (IDRC, 1994). However, although several leading scholars and organisations have accepted the argument thus far that security, development and democracy are integrated issues, few as yet have gone the step further to argue as did the UNRISD report, *States of Disarray* (1995), that “the time has come to extend...principles (of citizenship) internationally: to focus attention explicitly on global citizenship.”

⁴ Note also that NGOs have played instrumental roles in furthering awareness of the linkages among security, development and democracy. By the nature of their ‘developmental’ activities at the grassroots, for example, many have become conscious of (or treated intuitively) human security or basic needs and democratic goals of ‘empowerment’ as integrated issues. And, as state and inter-state institutions draw increasingly upon developmentalist NGOs for the expertise they have gained in areas such as peace-keeping/-building, understanding concerning the various linkages continues to grow.

Discourses of Citizenship and Civil Society.

Citizenship implies membership in a political community which is ordered by the adherence of individuals to sets of rights and responsibilities (Ghai, 1996). Less formally, but equally important for the maintenance of order and good governance within the community, is a sense of civic identity among its members: a “fellow feeling” or intersubjective consensus on appropriate “personal conduct, rules of justice and morality” (Mittelman, 1997: 80). The thesis has argued that, according to the latter definition, a ‘sense of citizenship’ is emerging at the global level.

Yet, the notion of the existence of a ‘global citizenship identity’ is problematic. Conventional conceptualisations of citizenship adhere to the formal definition, thereby denying the latter existence where official institutions are not in place to explicitly specify the rights and privileges which are involved. Furthermore, a lingering reliance on nineteenth century theories of liberal democracy and the liberal state to explain the nature of citizenship forecloses on opportunities to explore the possibilities of establishing new forms of democracy and new institutional arrangements to accommodate the concerns and interests of a transnational civil society (Held, 1993).

Yet, today “many of the old institutions that guided humanity over the last 50 years seem increasingly impotent or inappropriate” (UNRISD, 1995). Moreover, evidence presented in chapters four and seven suggests that various NGOs and other agents within civil society are actively pressing for changes to existing institutions that are consistent with demands for protection from insecurities *of a global nature* as well as a growing sense of responsibility for others *on a global scale*. In short, a sense of identity as members in a

global community is emerging. Or, expressed in another way, an alternative discourse of citizenship is being elaborated. If this, in fact, is the case, the traditional liberal discourses on citizenship and civil society are being challenged. And theories that postulate the existence or development of civil society only in opposition or apposition to the state become questionable.

The evidence presented in this thesis suggests that a civil society at the global level is emerging through the coordination of responses to the effects of economic process - namely, the globalisation of capitalism. On the basis of that observation, two assertions can be made that challenge certain assumptions now widely held about the nature of civil society. First, as Cohen and Arato have argued, it is appropriate to separate civil society from the economy as well as the state⁵. The (re)emergence and/or (re)vitalisation of civil societies in the contemporary period have been as much or more in response and/or opposition to pressures of capitalism(s) as to formal political authority. Second, civil society emerges not necessarily in opposition or apposition to but prior to, or in dialectical relationship with, the development of formal institutions of democratic governance.

These assertions have profound implications for current trends in development theory and practice. The neoliberal policies that are favoured at present by dominant development agencies support the notions that: (1) reducing the reach of the state fosters the development of civil society and (2) democracy equates with a condition of state and civil society in

⁵ Clearly, the notion of a distinct separation is an abstraction mainly for heuristic purposes; as noted in the introductory chapter, demarcations among state, market and civil society are not always or obviously distinguishable.

competitive tension. However, if the alternative position presented here is correct and civil societies emerge from the dialectical combination of economic, political and social processes, democratisation is much more complex than the liberal model suggests. For example, initiatives to curtail the reach of the state where the latter is excessively authoritarian may provide space for the development of civil society as liberal theory suggests. On the other hand, an interventionist state may strengthen civil society (ie. providing and equitably distributing greater human security is integral to sustainable democratic development). In short, democratising patterns may vary from country to country depending on particularities of political economy and political culture. Moreover, a narrow definition of democracy confined to the state - civil society nexus not only ignores the presence and intentions of myriad democratising forces presently extant, but it precludes the possibility of constructing institutions which can meet their needs and mediate their concerns.

Institutions and Changing Social Relations

The institutions in society, like various discourses, help to establish or maintain a condition of hegemony. However, as well, they may also be sites of contested terrain, in which social struggles are waged or first become apparent. In the preceding chapters, evidence was presented that processes of both hegemonic construction and disassembling presently co-exist. In particular, financial IGOs such as the World Bank, IMF and WTO and

the OECD are noted for their contributions to promoting the global hegemonic control of neoliberal economism. And, with the exception of some specialised agencies such as the UNDP and UNRISD, social/political IGOs which make up the UN system generally serve to reinforce 'taken for granted' assumptions concerning the present construction of the inter-state system (Gill, 1994; van der Pijl, 1995).

As representatives of the dominant order, such organisations are able to withstand considerable pressure by popular forces for change. Moreover, as has been suggested by organisational theory, organisations by nature are resistant to change (eg. see Nelson, 1995). Yet, by no means are they completely impervious to events or changing ideas in the greater society. Hence, in adopting the language associated with progressive ideas regarding 'developmental /participatory democracy', the World Bank has demonstrated some measure of vulnerability to the counter-hegemonic power of alternative discourses.⁶ Similarly, by ratifying policies to give NGOs greater responsibility in its decision-making and policy-implementation, UN agencies such as the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) have signified that they are susceptible to social pressure for change. Finally, by adopting the discourse and/or rhetoric of North-South and IGO-NGO 'partnership' in various sub-

⁶ The dominant order has mechanisms to restrain organisations like the Bank from veering too far into the counter-hegemonic camp. A recent articles in *The Economist* (1-7 March, 1997) suggests that efforts by World Bank president, James Wolfensohn, to make the organisation more accountable and efficient as "a source of development and social expertise" are endangering its authority. Two earlier article in the *International Herald Tribune* (Blustein, Friedman, 28-29 September, 1996) argue that the Bank's authority has already waned; as private capital continues to move into expanding economies of the former Third World, the Bank may "become a bit player in all but the world's most desperate economies." In short, if the Bank does not or can not continue to promote neoliberal interests, it will be marginalised as surely as the poorest countries it is mandated to serve.

contracting arrangements with NGOs, powerful IGOs make at least some concession to demands for increased democratisation of the development agenda.

Admittedly, the examples provided do not indicate that the degree of functional or ideological change within the organisations which promote and support the dominant order has been very significant. And, the combined power of the various NGOs, social movements and institutions which are presenting alternatives to the current structures and practices is relatively small (Walker, 1994: 669). Nevertheless, more radical changes in the world's institutional structure may yet occur, even if it is less the result of the deliberate actions of such actors and more because of the broader social change of which they are representative. Many of the NGOs and 'new' social movements are responses to rather than initiators of the various transnational forms of insecurity that now besiege formal institutions of governance. Therefore, the immediate consequences of the formers' intended individual (or even collective) actions should not be regarded as their *only* important contributions to institutional (or, generally to social) change. Instead, *at the present time, their most salient contribution may be in demonstrating by their existence that global transformations are producing or exacerbating conditions of insecurity, authoritarianism and unequal development which are inadequately treated in the existing institutional framework.* Thus seen, NGOs and 'new' social movements deserve a prominent position in international relations theory as evidence or harbingers of profound social change, rather than as overly idealistic "mosquitos on the evening breeze, irritants to those who claim maturity and legitimacy at the centres of political life" (*ibid.*).

Deconstructing the Idealist-Realist Dichotomy

One of the great debates in twentieth-century International Relations studies was initiated by an attack shortly following the end of the Second World War by realists on the utopian belief that a more peaceful world could be achieved through efforts to increase international cooperation. Realism emerged triumphant from the debate to dominate the field for the next several decades. Yet, even one of the important theorists and proponents of the realist approach, E.H. Carr, was unable to reconcile his support for a more 'realistic' approach to viewing the 'necessary' behaviour of states with his understanding that progress in social behaviour was not possible without benefit of insights embedded in the musings of idealistic visionaries. As a consequence, his celebrated treatise, *The Twenty-Year Crisis*, seems unsatisfactorily incomplete and contradictory. Yet, North American neorealists in particular subsequently have tended to ignore his unsolved dilemma⁷ and have focused instead on his conclusion that 'states will be states' - that is, because of having certain immutable characteristics, they will behave in a predictable, self-interested way and therefore, it is unrealistic or idealistic to assume that peace can be achieved through a change in the international behaviour of states.

In more recent times, a somewhat similar realist vs. idealist debate has occurred surrounding the reemergence of academic interest in civil society. Self-professed 'realists'

⁷ However, while Carr's dilemma was not acknowledged by realists, it resurfaced in a debate between realists and neorealists regarding the former's historicist and the latter's positivist epistemologies. Moreover, scholars have pointed out that the historicism of the British strand of realism distinguishes it from American neorealism (eg. Ashley, 1984).

caution that relying on civil society to lead efforts for positive social change are overly idealistic. The main argument presented by this 'new realist' position is that the forces for changes in civil society (and especially those from the Left) are weak, largely uncoordinated and devoid of alternative-policy content. A second argument involves the claim that the Left 'needs' the state and therefore by emphasising civil society, it is further undermining its already diminished socialist cause.

Admittedly, there is some substance to these assertions in terms of their empirical accuracy, yet they are less forceful as arguments because they tend to misrepresent the positions of many theorists from the 'Left' who focus on civil society. For instance, few analysts from the Left claim that elements in civil societies currently constitute a coordinated or coherent counter-hegemonic force. And, there is considerable scholarship supporting the view that not *all* NGOs and social movements are dedicated to a democratic project (eg. see, Macdonald, 1995; Mouffe, 1988; Cohen and Aerate, 1992). Moreover, even if a majority were to declare their commitment to common political ideals and their consent to common legal conventions, the necessity exists for an institution (like the state) that can mediate among competing interests.

In short, the majority of scholars who see socially transforming potential in civil societies at present are not claiming that the latter is necessarily more responsible or accountable than the state or that NGOs or some other elements in civil societies can replace the state. Instead, most would argue in agreement with the 'new' realists that the Left (and the Right, for that matter) needs *the state or something like it* to realise their objectives for social order and justice. Where they tend to take issue with the 'realist' position is with

regard to the latter's assumption that the institution in question must be the state *as it is presently constructed*. Instead, it is a central argument of at least some of these scholars that the process of globalisation has changed social relations on a global scale to such an extent that is unlikely that the state can be reestablished in its former position of protector of its citizens from external threat and arbitrator of only domestic interests. And, indeed, if that conclusion is accurate, it may be much more unrealistic, even idealistic, to assume that the world can continue to rely on the state and/or the present state structure for its order and security arrangements.

In describing the policies that his country might follow to try to extricate itself from a protracted and damaging political situation, an Israeli statesman once reportedly claimed "under the circumstances, the only realistic policy is utopian"⁸. As Carr acknowledged, that phrase may well have relevance in most times of great social upheaval. If so, its currency is reestablished at the present conjuncture as the world moves from the relative stability of the Cold War order into an uncharted future. Neorealists in particular have implied that the state-system, once established, henceforth has been resistant, even impervious to change. Yet, states developed at a *particular* conjuncture of history, in response to the *particular* needs of that era; in short, they are historically contingent constructions - products of social change.

There is no reason to assume that states or the state-system are at an end-point of social process. Indeed, as many scholars have noted, as the role of the state has evolved in reaction to transnational market forces, its power has been reduced relative to various

⁸ This is a paraphrase of a statement which was made, I believe but cannot be certain, by Disraeli.

regimes, new regionalisms, and international and non-governmental organisations and its sovereign authority has been challenged in the wake of a series of “collapsed states.” Therefore, just as E.H. Carr was unable to wish away his unease regarding the world’s need for Utopian activism, contemporary neorealists have no credible explanation for the rapid growth in a wide variety of social actors which have emerged to confront the prevailing dominant ideologies and structures. In short, we have entered a period described by E.H. Carr when existing ‘realist’ theory has become sterile and that which was taken for granted to be truth is proving to be anachronistic.

Debates about NGOs and new social movements are central in the deconstruction of previously held assumptions about what is realistic and what is idealistic in international relations. In other words, rather than being proponents of utopian notions about changing the nature of social process, these civil society actors provide evidence of social transformation and point to a competing version of ‘realism’ that challenges the existing social order and prevailing assumptions.

NGO Partnerships: a praxis for ‘globalisation from below’?

The proliferation of NGOs and ‘new’ social movements seems to be the result or at least the heralding of a fundamental transformation in social relations. It is probably less accurate to view these actors as primary agents in initiating the change. Nevertheless, even if their actions are principally reactive, NGOs and social movements display the need and raise

the awareness that the existing institutions, orthodox theories and prevailing policies which support the present development agenda are inadequate for the promotion of sustainable democratic development. Moreover, some NGOs - especially among those which are in the process of forming 'partnerships' to integrate the 'new' social movements' concerns for the protection of the environment, peace, human rights and gender equality - do support an alternative and more developmentalist agenda.

Therefore, if, in general, the practice of 'partnership' within the NGO community (and the broader development community) presently lacks much radical content, contained within the discourse of 'partnership' is a potential for (and perhaps even the beginnings of) a more democratic and participatory development paradigm. In such a paradigm, NGOs have a central role as active agents for promoting 'globalisation from below'; that is, building transnational solidarities by creating partnerships and networks among democratic elements in civil societies around the world.

Such a project is fraught with difficulties, not the least of which is the necessity of establishing an institutional system which would allow for uncoerced debate among the various - and often competitive - versions of the social good which are now extant but at the same time have an agreed mechanism for arbitration to ensure cohesive and coherent policy. Yet, while it may be idealistic to project that such a project will or can be achieved, the new 'realism' makes it necessary to try. As de Sousa Santos (cited in Waterman, 1996: 179) exclaims:

‘The future is no longer what it used to be’⁹ [.....] What is to be done , then? The only route, it seems to me is utopia. By utopia I mean the exploration of new modes of human possibility and new styles of will, and the confrontation by imagination of the necessity of whatever exists - just because it exists - on behalf of something radically better that is worth fighting for and to which humanity is fully entitled.

The proliferation of NGOs and their increasing roles in various aspects of development and governance provide evidence that “the future is no longer what it used to be” - or, at least, it is not likely to be what many have assumed it would be. If democratic, sustainable development on a global scale is to be a feature of that future, both policy and institutional revisions are necessary. NGOs, especially those which view developmental partnerships as alliances in a global project, are likely to have an important role in articulating the revisions. Moreover, regardless of the degree to which such institutional changes occur, the intellectual and theoretical implications of non-state actors is profound.

⁹ According to de Sousa Santos, this statement originated as graffiti on a Buenos Aires wall.

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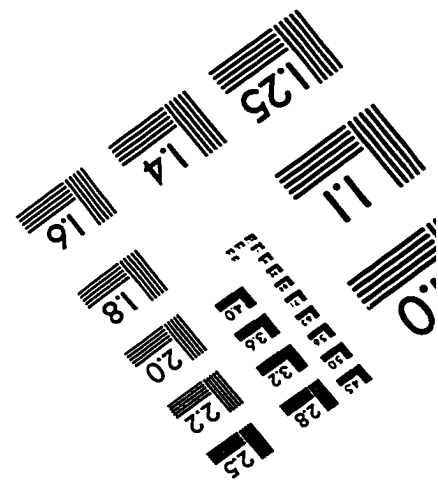
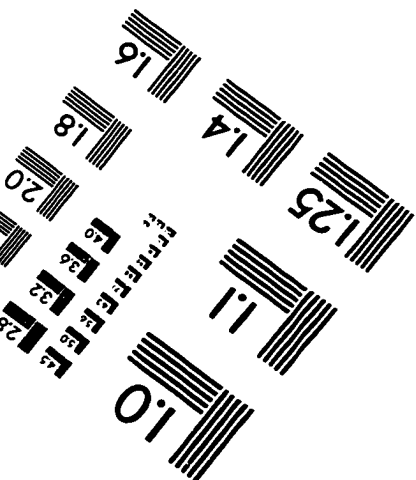
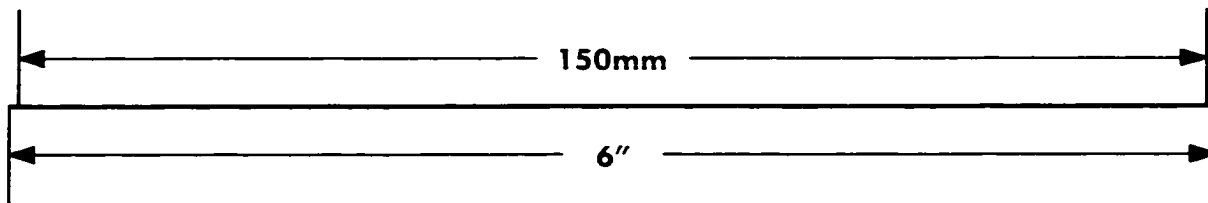
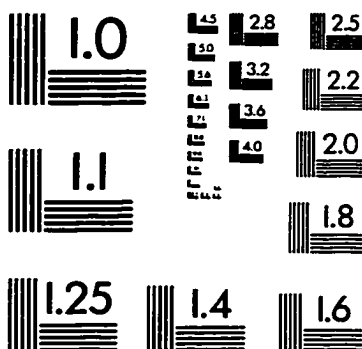
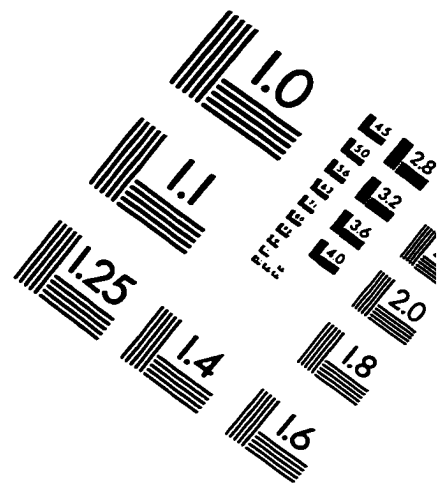
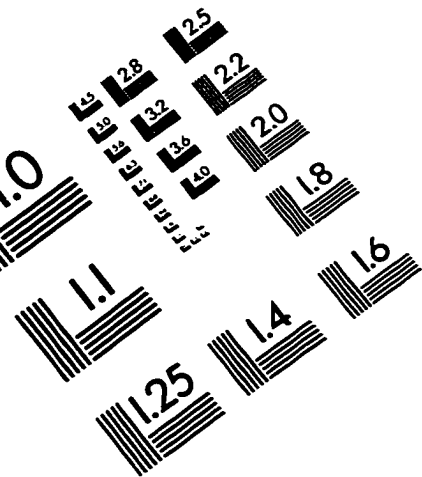
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