Practice-Research Engagement and Civil Society in a Globalizing World

Edited by L. David Brown
The Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations is a University-wide interdisciplinary research center at Harvard University that seeks to expand understanding and accelerate critical thinking about civil society among scholars, practitioners, policy makers and the general public, by encouraging scholarship, developing curriculum, fostering mutual learning between academics and practitioners, and shaping policies that enhance the sector and its role in society.

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Chapter One

Introduction

L. David Brown, Kumi Naidoo, and Sanjeev Khagram

This short book has grown out of a series of engagements between action-oriented researchers and reflective practitioners concerned with the growing roles of civil society organizations in a rapidly changing and ever-shrinking world. It provides overviews of the current “state of the art” on several topics of interests to researchers and practitioners who seek to solve social problems, promote sustainable development, protect human rights and support economic justice.

Civil Society and Transnational Problem-Solving

In the last twenty years it has been recognized that civil society organizations – development nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), churches, peasant associations, indigenous people’s movements, village organizations, unions, human rights networks, environmental advocacy groups and many other actors with roots in values and voluntary commitments – are increasingly important actors on many social issues. Much of the initial attention to civil society actors focused on their work on development activities at the grassroots, where they demonstrated that they could deliver services and organize communities to solve local problems, often more efficiently and effectively than other agencies. Their importance grew in part from their capacity to work in difficult contexts and to build local capacities to solve development problems that could be sustained after outsiders left. As these organizations have expanded their programs, they have increasingly recognized the importance of national and international factors in building sustainable solutions to problems at the grassroots, and so have become increasingly concerned with understanding and influencing those forces. National and international civil society service providers have become more concerned with transnational dynamics and impacts on their work.

At roughly the same time, civil society actors have become increasingly visible as international actors as well. While some voluntary associations, such as anti-slavery networks, have been concerned with influencing international activity for many years, the last two decades have seen an explosion in transnational alliances among civil society actors to influence national and international policies on human rights, gender justice, environmental sustainability, corrupt practices, and a variety of other issues. These alliances have identified unrecognized issues, articulated implications of current practices, framed alternative policies, and mobilized campaigns to influence decisions and activities of international institutions like the United Nations (UN) or the World Bank as well as national governments. In many cases they have been able to foster innovative action on issues where the existing institutions of the interstate system have been blocked or otherwise unable to solve the problems.
The end of the Cold War, the rise of international markets and world trade, and the meteoric development of global information flows and transportation systems have created a smaller and more interdependent globe. On balance these factors have favored increased activity and influence for the civil society and market sectors, though there remain important roles for institutions of the state to perform as well. Present trends suggest that the roles of civil society organizations are likely to increase at both the national and the transnational levels in coming decades.

As civil society actors take on more national and transnational problem-solving, they face growing problems of knowledge access, generation, and management. Expanding from work at the village level to work on national problems often requires a different order of information and capacity to articulate and implement large-scale programs. Influencing the policies of governments, multinational corporations, or intergovernmental agencies requires understanding complex problems as well as the challenges faced by other actors. For many civil society organizations, the conceptual and informational challenges of effective action on transnational problems are more than a little intimidating.

Experience suggests that cooperation among civil society activists and experts in critical knowledge areas can produce outcomes that neither activists nor experts could accomplish by themselves. Practice-research engagement (PRE) offers opportunities for effective action and improved theory, and for long-term mutual creativity that can catalyze new paradigms for both practice and research.

Practice-Research Engagement

Practitioners and researchers at first blush march to very different drums. Stereotypical practitioners are action-oriented, focused on immediate and concrete problems, and concerned with having direct impacts on those problems. Stereotypical researchers are theory-oriented, focused on long-term conceptual issues, and concerned with producing knowledge and conceptual results. Practitioners are embedded in institutional contexts that press them to solve practical problems; researchers work in institutional contexts that reward contributions to theory or knowledge. These differences set the stage for misunderstanding and poor communications at the practice-research boundary, even when the participants share many concerns and values.

However, there are also cases of constructive engagement between researchers and practitioners that have contributed significantly to both the theory and practice of development intervention. PRE brings together reflective practitioners and action-oriented researchers to learn together about issues that are critical to their shared interests in sustainable and just development. Successful PRE draws on the insights of practical experience as well as the rigor of academic disciplines to generate new theory, knowledge and innovations in practice.

PRE ranges from brief collaborations to answer specific questions to long-term joint inquiries that redefine problem domains and classes of development intervention. The following examples illustrate the potential for joint initiatives to redefine development theory and practice:
Environmental Activists and Ecological Science. Since the publication of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, which assessed the environmental impact of pesticides, ecologists and environmental activists have worked closely together to develop scientific data and theory that can be used in national and transnational policy influence campaigns. Political resistance to environmental policy initiatives has meant that cooperation among advocates and scientists has been crucial to generating and implementing policy agreements. However, there is evidence that concern for the environment is increasingly institutionalized into the decision-making of business and government actors who would have ignored the issue a few decades ago. The long-term cooperation between ecologists and environmental activists has reshaped the policy positions of activists as well as the scientific frameworks and results of ecologists.

Self-Employed Women and Informal Sector Theory. The struggle to organize self-employed women – street vendors, domestics, home-based workers – has produced the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) in India and analogous organizations in many other countries to campaign for policies and practices that support their members. Influencing policies at national and international levels, however, has required hitherto unavailable data and revisions in economic theories of the informal sector to counter expectations that informal employment would disappear with economic growth. In fact, research sponsored by Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) has demonstrated the growing role of informal sector employment in many countries, reframing economic theories and providing bases for policies to support informal sector productivity.

Grassroots Capacity Builders and Adult Education. The problems of literacy and grassroots capacity building were for many years treated as largely intellectual problems that could be resolved by standard classroom techniques. The experiments of Paolo Freire in combining literacy with political education to “conscientize” Brazilian peasants demonstrated that adult education could be more than a cognitive process and that political awareness was an essential element of grassroots capacity building. Freire’s successors at the International Council for Adult Education and in the traditions of participatory action research (PAR) and participatory rural appraisal (PRA) have reshaped the theory and practice of adult education as well as approaches to local organization and self help.

Local Entrepreneurs and Micro-credit Economics. The time-hallowed theory that borrowers could not be trusted to repay loans unsecured by collateral was tested by the Grameen Bank and other micro-credit schemes that relied on “social accountability” grounded in group loans. The resulting repayment rates demonstrated that poor entrepreneurs could be excellent credit risks, and spawned a huge micro-credit movement organized to help finance small businesses, particularly among landless women. Economic theories were expanded to include group lending as a basis for risk management, and micro-credit programs proliferated around the world.
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These examples illustrate joint initiatives in which cooperation between practice and research generated fundamental changes in both theory and research paradigms. For example, the new micro-credit paradigm has been the basis for loans to literally millions of small business entrepreneurs and substantial changes in the theory of loan accountability. The recognition of the importance of “conscientization” that supports political understanding and efficacy as well as intellectual development has shaped thousands of social entrepreneurs’ work around the world. The recognition of the informal sector as a major contributor to the gross domestic product and the dominant occupation of women in many countries can be the basis for fundamental changes in the status of women and the macroeconomic understanding of development. Finally, the emergence of concern and awareness of the biosphere and its importance involves a fundamental restructuring of human thinking from “cowboy economics” to sustainability as a criterion for economic activity.

As civil society actors become more engaged in complex and large-scale social problems, the capacity to generate new problem analysis and new intervention paradigms becomes increasingly critical. Building alliances across the practice-research gap is a critical skill for responding to this challenge, assuming that relatively few civil society organizations will be able to support in-house research capacities equal to their needs in many different fields.

The Workshop

In January 2001, the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations and CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, with support from the Ford Foundation, jointly sponsored a workshop on Practice-Research Engagement and Building Transnational Civil Society. This workshop brought together representatives of civil society support organizations and university centers on civil society from around the world, evenly divided among industrialized and developing countries. Participants sought to assess the advantages and disadvantages of joint initiatives, to begin to identify critical principles for carrying out PRE projects, and to contribute to the creation of a network of individuals and institutions that could support future PRE initiatives.

The workshop also sought to implement a mini-PRE workshop among practitioners and researchers concerned with the evolution of transnational civil society (TCS). For two of the six days, attention was focused on facilitating discussions among practitioners and researchers—some participants in the PRE conference and some invited particularly to the TCS workshop—who had led transnational civil society initiatives or carried out research on those campaigns. The intent of this meeting was to assess the current state of transnational civil society, to identify critical problems in TCS development, and to explore what kinds of initiatives would build essential knowledge and theory or support critical innovations in practice.

This workshop should be understood as an event in a stream of efforts that have brought practitioners and researchers together to understand and strengthen the roles of civil society actors in social development and change. Many initiatives led by the research community have engaged practitioners to some extent. In the late 1980s, the Overseas Development Institute and World Development convened a meeting in London to examine the expanding roles of civil society organizations in development. Several conferences on the work and capacities of development NGOs were organized by practice-oriented scholars.
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at the universities of Manchester and Birmingham and Save the Children during the 1990s. Professional associations of researchers, such as the International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR) or the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), have also engaged to some extent with practitioner audiences.

Practitioner communities have also initiated engagements with researchers relevant on critical concerns, like civil society capacity building. Some regional initiatives have been important sources of new knowledge and practice innovations. In South Asia, for example, the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), often in cooperation with ANGOC (Asian NGO Coalition), has mobilized and supported an Indian and later a South Asian network of support organizations committed to strengthening civil society organizations. MWENGO (The Eastern and Southern Africa NGO Reflection and Development Centre) has carried out similar activities in its region, and ALOP (Association of Latin American Development Organizations) has fostered civil society capacity building in Latin America.

Other initiatives have been transnational and cross-regional. El Taller provided training to NGO staff from many countries; INTRAC (International NGO Training and Research Centre) in the UK and IDR (Institute for Development Research) offered collaborative research and consultation services in many countries; and the Global Partnership for NGO Issues, Studies, and Education offered training programs and degrees in Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, and the United States. More recently, CIVICUS has emerged as a Southern-grounded network to support many aspects of civil society development, and Southern NGOs have initiated the International Forum for Capacity-Building to promote engagements among Southern NGOs, Northern NGOs, and donor agencies on strengthening civil society capacities.

The Hauser Center-CIVICUS workshop should be understood as being grounded in this history of initiatives. Many participants in the workshop have been key actors in these initiatives. To the extent that the workshop contributes to network building, it will build on knowledge, practice innovations, and social capital from past efforts.

This Book

This book has several goals. First, it seeks to explore the importance of practice-research engagement for civil society organizations, particularly for civil society actors in transnational problem-solving and governance. Second, it provides an overview of the concept of practice-research engagement, including initial ideas about how to carry it out effectively. Third, it offers some initial fruits of practice-research engagement on two issues: perspectives and strategies about the rise of TCS, and building legitimacy for civil society advocacy. Finally, it explores some of the next steps relevant to practice-research engagement in the service of strengthening transnational civil society in the future.

More specifically, Chapter Two documents the January 2001 workshop, in terms of its intentions, its initial design, and how that design evolved to produce workshop results. Since the workshop was simultaneously an investigation of PRE and an effort to practice it, participants had an opportunity to explore directly what was helpful or not helpful in such initiatives. Chapter Two describes the events in both the PRE and the TCS components of the workshop. It provides brief descriptions of the cases presented by participants as well as
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the problems and possibilities participants identified for PRE. Readers interested in the background from which subsequent chapters spring will find this chapter helpful. Those primarily interested in the substance of other chapters can skip Chapter Two.

Chapter Three examines the concept of practice-research engagement, the kinds of results that it can produce, and some methods used to facilitate productive engagements. Participants in the workshop believed that the identification of principles for facilitating effective PRE were critical to future practice, so the chapter identifies six principles identified during the workshop and during subsequent analyses by participants. This chapter is intended to be useful to researchers and practitioners who seek to implement future PRE initiatives.

Chapter Four discusses activist-researcher collaboration on the issues of transnational civil society, exploring conceptions of TCS, the challenges and opportunities presented by its emergence, and the strategies and lessons emerging from experience so far. The chapter reviews some of the controversies about TCS that emerged at the workshop and frames an agenda for future practice-research engagements. It is intended to stimulate further discussion of the issues and possibilities for transnational civil society.

Chapter Five focuses more narrowly on the legitimacy of transnational civil society organizations, particularly when they seek to influence national and international policies. The issue of legitimacy emerged as a key concern for both practitioners and researchers in the workshop. Participants flagged the need for a “legitimacy discussion guide” that could be used by civil society actors to reflect on the bases on which they might claim legitimacy with different stakeholders, particularly as their roles in international decision-making are challenged by governments and intergovernmental institutions. This chapter represents an initial draft of a guide, grounded in discussions in the workshop as well as other work on legitimacy issues. It is intended to help both practitioners and researchers who are concerned with enhancing the legitimacy of civil society actors in transnational contexts.

Finally, Chapter Six summarizes the lessons of earlier chapters, and focuses on the potential for future practice-research engagement to enhance the roles of civil society actors in an increasingly globalized world. It reviews past expansions of the domain of PRE for TCS, as reflected in previous chapters. Finally, in keeping with discussions in the January workshop, it outlines elements of a general strategy and important priorities for strengthening the domain in the future.

This book should be understood as a snapshot of a “work in progress.” The institutions and activities of transnational civil society are evolving rapidly, and the contributions of PRE to that evolution are also expanding quickly. We are beginning to identify where practice research engagement is essential. Practitioners and researchers involved in those engagements have begun to articulate principles and mechanisms that foster effective joint learning. Networks of individuals and institutions with skills in facilitating shared initiatives are recognizing and building links to one another. This book is intended as an overview of the possibilities, a progress report on work so far, and an invitation to interested parties to join in fostering more effective initiatives in the future.
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Notes to Chapter One


Chapter Two

Practice–Research Engagement and Building Transnational Civil Society: Two Connected Workshops
L. David Brown, Angela Johnson and Sarah Titus

Introduction

Civil society organizations are playing an increasing role in dealing with global problems. The Hauser Center and CIVICUS have become increasingly aware of the importance of engagement among civil society practitioners and researchers to generate new knowledge and innovations in practice that can support these emerging roles. In January 2001, we brought together practitioners and researchers from around the world to explore the potential utility of practice-research engagement (PRE) and, more specifically, to enable such an engagement on the issues of building transnational civil society (TCS). This chapter describes those workshops: planning, implementing, immediate outcomes, and proposed follow-up.

Behind the concept of these workshops is the belief that much can be gained from contacts among “activist scholars” and “reflective activists” in the service of better understanding complex political, economic and social problems. These workshops sought to foster relationships and organizational arrangements that would allow members to learn from each other’s perspectives and advance both theory and practice on issues of global concern. We hoped to learn more about circumstances under which contacts between practitioners and researchers produce outcomes of value to both groups, and to encourage continuing contacts focused on specific topics in the future. We saw the discussions of transnational civil society as an opportunity to actually carry out PRE on that topic with practitioners and researchers who are heavily involved in the challenges of building and understanding transnational networks and norms. Although transnational civil society activism and research have grown rapidly in recent years, there have been few opportunities for activists and researchers to engage each other to deepen theoretical understanding or explore evolving practice. Therefore, a joint event to advance practice-research engagement and understanding of transnational civil society gained support from workshop sponsors and the Ford Foundation.
Workshop Design

The Hauser Center and CIVICUS designed a joint six-day event to explore these two issues. While the issues are intertwined, we will describe them separately for the sake of clarifying what in practice turned out to be a complicated set of events.

The Practice-Research Engagement (PRE) Workshop we hoped would help build knowledge and connections for an international network of organizations with the capacity for facilitating PRE on critical issues facing civil society. Such a network might include university centers on civil society, civil society support organizations and other actors committed to strengthening civil society around the world. More specifically we hoped that the workshop would identify good examples of PRE, articulate principles for effective engagement, and identify task forces committed to fostering PRE on specific topics in the near future. In the longer term, we hoped that the workshop might contribute to building an informal network of organizations that foster PRE, improve resources for facilitating PRE, and promote rapid development of intellectual capital on issues critical to civil society.

The Building Transnational Civil Society (BTCS) Workshop was intended to be an example of PRE focused on the issues of transnational civil society. We hoped in this workshop to develop and consolidate research and theory, to identify innovations and issues in practice, and to assess educational initiatives about transnational civil society. We planned more specifically to identify existing conceptual and theoretical TCS questions, articulate lessons of practical experience, probe for ways that current practice could be improved, and explore the implications of theory and practice for education in this area. In the longer term, we thought that the workshop might facilitate the creation of new course syllabi on TCS for different constituencies, improve theoretical and scholarly discussions, and promote the development of practitioner toolkits and resource guides.

Hauser and CIVICUS staff developed a working design for the workshops that included several elements:

• Selection of participants through consultations with an advisory committee familiar with both PRE and BTCS experience;
• Preparation of background papers on PRE and on BTCS by sponsors, preparation of “thought papers” by BTCS participants, and e-mail dialogues to explore issues and expectations prior to the workshop;
• Preliminary plans for the workshop itself; and
• Initial ideas about topics for task force initiatives and fundraising after the workshop.

We describe much of this initial design in part to provide a background for understanding how the workshops evolved.

Workshop Participants and Sponsors

An advisory committee of Southern and Northern civil society experts helped CIVICUS and the Hauser Center generate lists of potential participants. We sought to create workshops that were balanced by Northern and Southern origin, by gender, and by research and practice experience. For the Practice-Research Engagement Workshop, we sought participants with
significant experience in fostering engagement across the practice-research boundary. For the Building Transnational Civil Society Workshop, we sought individuals with extensive experience in transnational civil society work. Many participants in the PRE Workshop also had extensive transnational experience, and so were invited to both workshops.

Participants in the workshops represented four kinds of organizational and institutional resources. For the PRE Workshop, we invited: (1) representatives of support organizations that provide training, capacity-building, research, information, and other kinds of support to civil society actors, and (2) representatives of university centers that carry out research and education activities with and for civil society organizations. Examples of the support organizations included ALOP (Association of Latin American Development Organizations), PRIA (the Society for Participatory Research in Asia), MWENGO (the Eastern and Southern African NGO Reflection and Development Centre), and the Advocacy Institute (from Washington, DC.). Examples of university centers included Carleton University in Canada, Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, the Center for Civil Society at the London School of Economics, and ISTR (the International Society for Third-Sector Research). We hoped that these representatives and their organizations might be future catalysts for practice-research engagement in their regions, which included the African, Arab, Asia-Pacific, European, Latin American, and North American regions.

Participants in the BTCS Workshop, in contrast, were drawn from (1) researchers who had made important contributions to knowledge and theory about the evolution of transnational civil society, and (2) activists from transnational civil society organizations and alliances who are advancing the practice of civil society building in their everyday activities. We sought to recruit participants whose organizations might be catalysts for future engagements among academics and activists. Activists who participated included leaders from the Social Watch Coordinating Committee, the Japanese Campaign to Ban Landmines, The Advocacy Institute and Association pour la Defense des Droits et des Libertes. Researchers involved in transnational civil society studies included representatives from the Institute for Development Studies, the Universidad de los Andes, the University of California at Santa Cruz, and the University of Warwick. (See Appendix A for a full list of participants).

The workshop sponsors included the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, CIVICUS: The World Alliance for Citizen Participation, and the Ford Foundation. While Hauser initiated the concept, CIVICUS worked closely with the Hauser Center to design the workshops, identify participants, implement the program and disseminate results. The Ford Foundation fostered the idea of increased engagement among researchers and practitioners, helped identify participants, and provided financial support for the workshops. The sponsors brought different but highly complementary resources to the project.

The Hauser Center is a university-wide center charged with fostering research, education, and practitioner outreach on the roles of nonprofit, nongovernmental, and civil society organizations. The role of civil society organizations in national and international development is a core area of interest for the Center. Several staff of the Center have been involved for many years in promoting collective reflection and learning that advances both theory and practice. Current staff includes authors of several books on the building of transnational civil society and consultants to a variety of international civil society networks.
CIVICUS is a network of more than 600 organizations and individuals from over 100 countries that is dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world. Since its founding in 1995, CIVICUS has undertaken a variety of projects to strengthen the visibility and viability of civil societies around the world, to improve their relations with other sectors, to enhance their financial sustainability, and to enhance their roles in terms of the cultures within which they are embedded. As a transnational civil society organization itself, CIVICUS is committed to promoting learning about effective practices and solving major issues for civil society in the international arena.

The Ford Foundation provided financial support as well as technical advice in the development of these workshops, and several Ford officers participated in the workshops. The Foundation's division of Governance and Civil Society actively promotes the evolution of civil societies as catalysts for development and democratization around the world, and many of the ideas that shaped this conference emerged in discussions supported or catalyzed by the Foundation.

**Workshop Preparation: Background Papers and Internet Dialogues**

In order to provide a common context and base for discussions, we prepared background papers to share with participants prior to the workshops. The background paper for the Practice-Research Engagement Workshop, titled “Toward Civil Society Action Learning Networks: Practitioner-Researcher Engagement for Sustainable Development,” was drafted by Dave Brown at the Hauser Center. Two papers were written to provide background for the BTCS meetings: Kumi Naidoo of CIVICUS drafted “Power Shift or Power Shrift? Challenges Facing Transnational Activism” to summarize practice perspectives and Sanjeev Khagram of the Hauser Center drafted “Tentative Theses on Third Sector Transnationalism” to summarize research issues.

In addition, we asked TCS participants to write four-to-five-page papers on the key issues in building transnational civil society from their perspectives. Researchers were asked to:

- Examine the major advances in theorizing about transnational civil society;
- Identify other theoretical or disciplinary literatures to which transnational civil society scholarship might contribute (such as social movement theory, social capital, international relations, etc.); and
- Offer some potential practical implications of theoretical and empirical scholarship on transnational civil society.

Practitioners were asked to:

- Identify key lessons learned on practices and strategies for building and strengthening transnational civil society;
- Present critical challenges that transnational civil society practitioners are currently facing which may be addressed by future scholarship and research; and
- Suggest the types of “toolkits” and activities that are or might be useful to transnational civil society practitioners and activists.
The resulting papers were distributed to all participants and the themes identified in these papers were incorporated into the topics for discussion during the conference. [These papers can be downloaded from the Hauser Center website at www.ksg.harvard.edu/hauser.]

We also created an Internet process for discussing issues prior to bringing participants together at the workshops. Over several weeks prior to the January workshops, CIVICUS organized an Internet discussion designed to prepare us all for the workshop. Participants from both groups helped to identify examples of engagement, participant fears and expectations, and key issues to address during the conference. Some of the key issues identified by participants in the PRE Workshop included:

- Building intellectual capital that is relevant to both scholars and practitioners.
- Examining the underlying structure of power in researcher-practitioner engagements.
- Identifying the constraints that stop scholars from significantly contributing to development practice.

From the BTCS participants a somewhat different set of issues emerged, including:

- Finding the appropriate balance between academic rigor and practical use.
- Discussing disparities in power and resources between TCS in developed and developing countries.
- Dealing with issues of accountability and legitimacy in TCS.

While not all participants took part in the internet discussions, those who did provided feedback that was later incorporated into the workshop design and used to initiate discussions in the workshop itself.

**Preliminary Workshop Design**

Our initial design for the workshop focused on three phases. The initial three days were planned to focus on practice-research engagement as understood and practiced by university centers and support organizations. We hoped to clarify costs and gains of PRE, to identify key ingredients and principles for successful PRE, and to begin to identify topics on which future engagements might be particularly productive.

In the second phase of the workshop, we planned that TCS activists and researchers would join with PRE participants who had transnational experience to create a practice-research engagement on the issue of building transnational civil society. We hoped to assess the current state of transnational civil society practice and research, to identify issues and areas that need further work, and to encourage the formation of participant task forces to carry out future work on TCS research, practice and education.

Finally, in the third phase, we expected to focus again on PRE. We hoped to examine the experience of joint reflection on TCS to extract lessons for future PREs, and to encourage task forces to plan PRE initiatives on key issues.
Table 2.1 describes this preliminary workshop design in more detail. Note that the design proposed to use both plenary and small group interactive work to identify and develop issues in some depth. It also focused more on process than on content in later phases, as we hoped that participants would define critical content areas for further work.

We expected in each workshop to develop a shared understanding of key concepts, to articulate critical ingredients and important lessons for moving forward, and to identify participant task forces committed to further work after the workshop. We also hoped that the workshop would contribute to creating an informal network of organizations and individuals committed to advancing PRE and to advancing TCS theory and practice.

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Workshop Proceedings

The workshops evolved from this preliminary design, in part because we sought to engage participants in adapting that design to address emerging concerns as the discussions progressed. This section reviews workshop events and discussions of the workshop. We have not provided a complete record of a very complex process, but rather have tried to capture the overall flavor of the discussions.

Phase 1: Practice Research Engagement Workshop (1)

The PRE Workshop began with a reception and dinner at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Hauser Center and CIVICUS leaders welcomed the participants over dinner. Participants were invited to introduce themselves to one another at dinner and were provided with a brief overview of the next morning’s agenda.

The first official day of meetings began with the outlining of meeting goals and design. We presented a workshop “roadmap” and goals to the participants, and agreed with them to start with the design as initially outlined. We then shared the results of the Internet discussion as an introduction to a discussion of the concept of PRE. This discussion raised a number of issues that are illustrated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Themes Related to the Concept of PRE

- The links between micro- and macro- levels of analysis are very important.
- Can we develop a shared definition of PRE?
- How can we create a safe space for collaborative work between researchers and practitioners?
- How can we deal with power differences that affect PRE?
- Are we interested in PRE for civil society, social transformation, or both?
- How do we build trust in working across practice-research differences?
- What experiences allow us to bridge research and practice?

The group also discussed hopes, concerns and fears for the upcoming week and its proposed work. We emphasized that the format and agenda for the meetings were flexible and to be determined by the participants themselves, according to the issues that they felt most needed attention.

The next session centered on the benefits and costs of PRE. Small groups met to explore this issue in terms of their own experience. In subsequent reports, participants generally felt that both researchers and practitioners benefited from the experience of PRE. They identified a number of benefits and costs as described in Table 2.3.
After presentation of the results of small group discussions about costs and benefits of PRE, we discussed the preliminary design and its fit with work so far. Participants felt that much of the first day’s work had been completed, but they also wanted more opportunities to discuss specific examples of cooperation among researchers and practitioners. We agreed that we would spend some of the next morning discussing specific examples, and eight participants offered to present examples from their own experience, with some emphasis on the principles that could be extracted from their experience.

We also discussed critical issues that participants saw as worthy of more intensive discussion the following day. Participants identified five areas in which small group discussions might make use of the case examples to explore PRE issues in more detail. The areas identified are described in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Critical Issues for PRE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits of PRE</th>
<th>Costs of PRE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Allows understanding of broader goals and collaboration for more effective social change</td>
<td>• Risks public exposure that could damage the cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supports leadership and capacity building for civil society</td>
<td>• Creates conflict among researchers and practitioners over level and costs of engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supplies researchers with empirical data and a reality check, reducing distortions in social learning</td>
<td>• Requires investment to build trust among researchers and practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Creates public accountability and a constituency for ideas or body of knowledge</td>
<td>• Undermines cooperation though a collision of incentives and institutional expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next day began with the presentation of participants’ cases of PRE. Participants tried in each case to identify the nature of the initiative; its relationship by, for, or with clients; its objectives; its challenges; and its successes and failures. Eight different cases were presented, the summary of which can be seen in Table 2.5.
Table 2.5 Cases of Practice-Research Engagement

**Participatory Development In India** *(Rajesh Tandon, India)*

PRIA worked with departments of sociology and social work to help train students in strategies and tools for participatory research and development. Faculty taught courses and visited NGOs in the field with student teams to learn more about how participatory development worked in practice. The National Association of Schools of Social Work created a task force to explore how students could be taught more about participatory development methods, but lack of support for universities in India undermined the long-term initiative. PRIA continues to build university libraries and projects that enable faculty and students to learn more about development initiatives.

**Research Outcome**: Faculty–student research on participatory development in rural areas.

**Practice Outcome**: More student and faculty understanding of possible participatory development initiatives.

**The Sustainable Nonprofit Fundraising Project** *(Nilda Bullain, Hungary)*

This project has worked in Hungary since 1998 to expand the knowledge base and tools available to aid NGOs in their quest for financial stability. Through their work examining legal issues and developing case studies, researchers have helped NGOs change their perception of the concept of "entrepreneurship" and so enabled more innovation to enhance NGO sustainability.

**Research Outcome**: New knowledge about building more sustainable nonprofit actors.

**Practice Outcome**: Involving local constituents is key to success – financial experts, business experts and professors.

**Forum International de Montréal** *(Nigel Martin, Canada)*

Practitioners working in the forum write case studies on current hot topics in the transnational civil society and its relations with global institutions. The Forum brings together academics, practitioners, and government officials to reflect together on critical issues and extrapolate trends for the future.

**Research Outcome**: Broad understanding of emerging issues and their likely future evolution.

**Practice Outcomes**: Opportunities to "see around corner" for practice innovations with diverse experts.

**Leadership Regional Network** *(LeaRN)* *(Gavin Andersson, South Africa)*

LeaRN's mission is to nurture leadership for social and economic justice across South Africa. To this end, the network has created partnerships between universities and NGOs in five national hubs. Out of these hubs the program runs five distinct but interrelated programs: Global Leadership, Public Policy Dialogues, Leadership Academy, Local Leaders for the Future, and Youth 21.

**Research Outcome**: Build leadership theories for civil society actors grounded in local and regional realities.

**Practice Outcome**: Recognize the importance of trust building between the NGOs and the universities.
Table 2.5 Cases of Practice-Research Engagement (continued)

**Technical Assistance Program to NGOs (Katherine Graham, Canada)**

Carleton University’s Faculty of Public Affairs and Management has established a network of research and capacity-building units to provide technical assistance and support to civil society initiatives in the region. The research unit works in the NGO sector to inform policy and build a body of accessible technical assistance knowledge that can be used by grassroots initiatives.

**Research Outcome:** Continuing development of models for community economic development. Further refinement of capacity building and the voluntary sector.

**Practice Outcome:** Technical assistance to local civil society actors in key areas like program evaluation and community economic development.

**Transnational Coalitions to Influence the World Bank (Jonathan Fox, United States)**

This project was a collaborative effort between the Institute for Development Research and civil society activists involved in transnational coalitions to influence World Bank projects and policies. Practitioners and researchers jointly developed case studies of coalition campaigns and convened two conferences to extract lessons about accountability within the coalitions and between the coalition and the Bank from comparing those cases.

**Research Outcome:** New theory and knowledge about accountability and change in international institutions and in transnational coalitions.

**Practice Outcome:** Dissemination of strategies and practices for influencing international institutions and policies. New programs for advocacy support at the Bank Information Center.

**Bolivian Land Reform (Manuel Chiriboga, Ecuador)**

As part of the structural reform process, Bolivia was pressed to change its 1953 Land Reform Law to fit a market-oriented focus. Researchers and activists, from research NGOs and peasant and indigenous organizations, worked together to construct an alternative proposal that would help preserve community lands outside the market and assure access to lands to indigenous peoples. The collaborative effort set a new agenda to limit the market use of community-owned lands.

**Research Outcome:** New knowledge on land dynamics in different parts of the country.

**Practice Outcome:** An alternative law on land reform.

**Arab Network of NGOs (Farida Allaghi, Saudi Arabia)**

In the early ‘80s the first NGO working for the interest of women and children was established in the Arab world. Individuals committed to bringing academics and policy makers together to establish funding for the NGO and other humanitarian issues. These initial efforts eventually lead to the establishment of the Arab Network of NGOs, whose membership has grown exponentially in the decade since its first conference.

**Research Outcome:** Better understanding of regional requirements for NGO success.

**Practice Outcome:** Rapid growth of NGO community in region.

After the case presentations, we agreed to use the cases and other experiences as bases for examining and discussing critical issues identified the day before. Participants chose to form small groups to discuss three areas:

18
These groups produced reports for the afternoon meeting that are summarized in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Issue Discussions

**Group 1. Identifying Objectives and Potential Impacts of PRE:**
- There is a need for clarity in the definition of “practitioner” and “researcher”.
- How is sustainability measured?
- Shared meanings should be identified in specific projects in addition to establishing a general lexicon.
- Actors must be aware that more globalization can lead to impoverishment of meanings (one loses the cultural particularity) by restricting meaning to a single “global” interpretation.
- To build effective relationships, actors must ride a fine line – sharing meanings but not over-universalizing them.

**Group 2. Principles and Ethics for PRE:**
- **Principle 1:** We agree to explicitly negotiate shared meanings of critical terms.
- **Principle 2:** Parties explicitly negotiate the terms of their joint work.
- **Principle 3:** Be specific about how research will be useful/beneficial to our constituencies so parties understand what goals they share and what goals remain outside the partnership.
- **Principle 4:** Each party should be explicit about its accountability. Parties should be open about their funding sources, to whom they are accountable, and who has the ultimate decision-making ability.
- **Principle 5:** Make sure constituencies are protected from the risks taken in your partnership.
- **Principle 6:** Parties explicitly acknowledge their constraints, the limits imposed upon them, and work to negotiate to mitigate the effect of these constraints in pursuing shared objectives.
- **Principle 7:** There can only be negotiations between autonomous organizations.
- **Principle 8:** Both parties must benefit from the partnership; the expected benefits for both parties must be spelled out at the beginning.
- **Principle 9:** Ensure due notice of major issues. Principles of dissolving partnerships include:
  - How will resources be distributed afterwards?
  - How will credit be attributed?
  - Must the decision to dissolve be mutual?
  - How will unfulfilled responsibilities be distributed so they will be fulfilled?
- **Principle 10:** Partnering organizations must agree upon a system of evaluating goal attainment.

**Group 3. Institutional Arrangements to Promote PRE:**
- Do we need to reform current institutions or design new ones:
  - Do existing educational arrangements produce and sustain active citizenship?
  - Current arrangements over- and under-produce some kinds of knowledge.
  - What institutional arrangements would promote PRE to strengthen civil society?
- Arrangements needed to support centers of excellence, bridges, networks and so on.
- Tasks include challenging orthodoxy, training resources, enabling dissent, policy analysis and advocacy, fund-raising, co-producing knowledge, and so on.
- Action plan should take advantage of current need for PRE, provide analysis of knowledge gaps inimical to civil society, case studies of effective PRE, institutional reform or recreation plans.
Phase 1 concluded with the development of an initial list of future topics on which PRE might provide valuable results. It was agreed that we would return to further discuss this list and how participants might work together in future PRE projects in Phase 3. Table 2.7 lists representative examples of topics identified.

Table 2.7 Topics for PRE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social leadership/entrepreneurship in sustainable development and civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social movements and their role in political empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil society, state stability, conflict and citizen engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power relations across levels (local, regional, national, international, global)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditions that support or constrain development of civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption in civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil society, democracy and democratization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and many others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase 2: Building Transnational Civil Society Workshop

In the evening, the BTCS Workshop participants joined the PRE participants for a reception and dinner. The BTCS Workshop was intended to bring together practitioners and researchers to explore the issues of building transnational civil society. All the PRE participants (many of whom had extensive TCS experience) were invited to participate in the second phase, and more than half accepted that invitation.

We began the BTCS Workshop with a brief overview of the work that had been accomplished in the first few days of the PRE meeting. Organizers then reviewed the primary goals of the BTCS workshop and offered a preliminary "roadmap" for the next two days. Participants agreed to begin with that design.

Both practitioners and researchers for this phase had written "thought papers" as part of their preparation for the workshop. Analysis of those papers across practice and research perspectives suggested a number of themes that might be discussed in the conference. Table 2.8 summarizes those themes as presented to the workshop at this point.

Table 2.8: Themes from BTCS Thought Papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy issues including internal democracy, downward accountability, and representativeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INGOs (international nongovernmental organizations) versus DINGOs (domestic based NGOs focused on foreign/international issues)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCS multi-level organizational complexities (local, national, international), coping with diversity issues, and building networks based on organizations rather than individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good and bad transnational civil society groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCS globalization, global governance, world culture, international institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCS engaging states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCS engaging private-sector firms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCS need for increased research and information management capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with the backlash against TCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of universities, think tanks and scholars in BTCS (produce case studies, provide arenas for both introspection and negotiation with other sectors)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion of the paper themes was followed by a brief presentation of the results from the pre-workshop Internet discussion.

We spent the rest of the morning conducting an informal mapping exercise on the experiences and themes represented by the various participants. Participants introduced themselves and their organizations and briefly reflected on how they became involved in transnational civil society work. This culminated in discussion of six reasons for developing more knowledge about TCS, including:

1. To develop a clear vision of the public good at the transnational level;
2. To improve or transform global governance;
3. To understand how to campaign about an issue with a transnational target;
4. To build, maintain, and sustain transnational civil society coalitions and alliances;
5. To transfer knowledge and information to other actors; and
6. To interact or address the type of globalization that is now dominant.

In the afternoon, participants were split into four small groups to discuss practice, research and teaching about transnational civil society. Groups were asked to respond to three questions:

1. What is the current state of TCS?
2. What is needed and where do we need to go?
3. What are the key questions and challenges for the future?

The remainder of the afternoon was spent in group discussions, with the understanding that we would start the next day with group reports on the findings of their discussions.

The second full day of BTCS discussions began with reports from the small groups from the previous day. Each group summarized its assessment of the current state of TCS and what is needed. Table 2.9 describes issues highlighted by the groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.9 Reports on the State of Transnational Civil Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 1:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current State of TCS:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• North-South gap dominates transnational civil society: power, resources, and technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transforming state-civil society relations in the South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Growing strength and success of regional coalitions and networks in South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is Needed:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More ability to bridge the gap between research and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research to develop advocacy strategies, document best practices and failures, provide rigorous support for policy advocacy and decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Practice that enables legitimization at home, innovative fundraising, second- and third-generation leadership, and more issue-based coalitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching that builds economic literacy in civil society, better use of information technology, less “extractive research,” guidance for working with transnational institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “We want a seat at the table for global governance.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter Two
Table 2.9 Reports on the State of Transnational Civil Society (continued)

**Group 2: Practice issues and research possibilities**

What organizational structures and processes guide work of INGOs and CSOs?
- Need research on best practices, legitimacy, regulatory environment, internal governance, coalition building

How can we improve relations among CSOs and other parties?
- Need research on coalition building, target selection, funding, sovereignty and foreign intervention

How can practitioners deal more effectively with the larger context?
- More research on globalization, power structures of targets, using wider expertise

**Group 3: Where are we now and where would we like to be?**

- More career development and vocational choices for TCS via student placements in grassroots organizations from both North and South
- Address disparities among Southern NGOs with a multi-scale approach across levels for better effectiveness, accountability and autonomy
- Challenge the hegemony of the “market” in discourse by encouraging alternative research agendas and perspectives
- Support civil society as a corrective to the market and the state: consider cross-sectoral alliances against transnational interventions
- Build alliance with NGOs with radically different values and strategies (especially violent/non-violent) to find ways to work together

**Group 4**

**Practice**
- Problem definition issues: How do we identify critical issues and problems, determine their dynamics, and develop proposals beyond protest?
- Campaign management: How do we devise new organizational forms, manage information, set priorities, determine targets, build alliances (across issues) and communicate across cultures?
- Legitimation: How do we gain access to TCS, build linkages to constituencies and maintain transparency?

**Teaching and Research**
- How do we get TCS on research agenda? It is not now recognized as a real area
- How do we participate effectively in definitional debates?
- How can we promote theory building? More cases now than theory
- What methods will help us connect to practitioners?
- How can we develop courses and materials to educate new generations?

Following the small group reports, plenary discussion focused on themes to be explored to move the field forward. After identifying a long list of topics that merited further discussion, participants identified three areas around which small groups could be organized: (1) legitimacy in transnational civil society; (2) strategies and tactics for transnational campaign management, and (3) transnational civil society and other actors in the global context. Then the plenary broke up once more into small groups to discuss strategies for going forward on these issues.
When the plenary reconvened, representatives reported on small group discussions of ideas about activities that might advance transnational civil society knowledge and practice. Table 2.10 summarizes those reports.

Table 2.10: Moving Forward on TCS Issues

**Group 1: Problems of TCS Legitimacy and Credibility**
- Legitimacy issues are increasingly raised in attacks on transnational civil society actors
- Legitimacy is the acknowledged right to exert influence in the political process
- Three bases for legitimacy: democratic-based, moral and value-based, competency-based
- However defined, legitimacy requires ongoing maintenance
- Elements of legitimacy include: convening power, representativeness, length of existence, perceived independence, reputation, transparency, theoretical credibility, consistent means and ends, effectiveness, quality of leadership, industry, choice of partners, choice of actions and standards, commitment, compliance with legal requirements, accountability to mission
- Transparency is good in itself, but too much may threaten survival of organization
- Ethical codes: Should CSOs meet higher standards than others should?
- We need a "legitimacy discussion guide" to help CSOs reflect on their own and others' legitimacy

**Group 2: Strategies and tactics for transnational campaign management**
- Campaign management is special capacity that involves much work with coalitions – more focused on specific goals than social movement, and emerging as new phenomenon on global scene
- Knowledge creation on topic and dissemination to potential users very important agenda
- Ways forward:
  - Participate in many different forums to share lessons and generate new understanding from cases
  - Can disseminate information by "circuit riders" that share and listen and act as "talent scouts"
  - Need "reflection spaces" for practitioners to engage each other, ask questions, and meet theorists
  - Need ways to systematize and validate learning from practice and field
  - Need to monitor implementation and issues, and independent resources to support learning
- Who and How?
- Need to organize spaces for processing experience in campaigns and advocacy: would like nodes to facilitate that learning around the world
- Need the research community to monitor and evaluate implementation of key projects (e.g., debt relief programs for Highly Indebted Poor Countries)
  - Need research and better theory on campaign management itself: governance structures, alliance management, good decisions in coalitions, and organization of campaigns
- Who: Advocacy Institute, Hauser Center, regional nodes
Table 2.10: Moving Forward on TCS Issues (continued)

**Group 3: Transnational civil society and other actors in the global context**

- Need to move toward shared definition of TCS and its roles
- TCS can be a bridge across levels and sectors
  - CSOs can provide better links between grassroots and global issues
  - They can reframe issues to change how states understand their development roles
  - They can catalyze alliances with the state and other actors
- TCS can be monitor and information source
  - TCS monitoring of international governmental organizations and their program impacts
  - TCS can help intergovernmental actors implement avowed commitments to democracy
- TCS can play key role in sustaining education and in collating information about innovations

These reports provided the bases for discussions of next steps. A BTCS workshop follow-up plan was shaped from these reports. The final plenary session focused on what might be done to move forward on the issues raised, and who would take responsibility for different elements of that plan. Table 2.11 summarizes those decisions.

Table 2.11: BTCS Follow-up Plans

- **Draft and disseminate a Conference Report.** Conference participants agreed that the Hauser Center would draft a report on the conference to be shared with participants for feedback and elaboration.
- **Draft and disseminate a Guide to TCS Strategies.** Participants began to catalogue a range of strategies for building TCS. It was agreed that the Hauser Center will construct an initial guide to such strategies.
- **Draft a Legitimacy Discussion Guide.** Another active discussion focused on the issues of the legitimacy and accountability of NGOs involved in transnational campaigns. The Hauser Center with support from several participants will draft an initial document.
- **Website to Share Materials for TCS Education.** Educators involved in developing courses and workshops on TCS agreed to share their materials. We hope that such materials can be made widely available through the Internet, either through CIVICUS or through the Hauser Center.
- **Draft Review Articles on BTCS.** Several researchers are interested in summarizing, consolidating and advancing the existing state of theory on building transnational civil society. Volunteers have agreed to develop theory review from North American and Latin American perspectives.
- **Organize Presentations at Professional Associations.** Many researchers agreed that the primary disciplines tend to be blind to the promise and challenges of transnational civil society. Researchers plan to propose symposia and paper presentations at academic associations.
- **Encourage Creation of Practitioner Reflection Spaces.** Many participants mentioned the need of practitioners to reflect on their work and to learn together, perhaps with support from researchers with a broad base of knowledge in the area. We discussed the possibilities for organizing such reflections at a number of meetings in the immediate future at which it would be possible to bring together reflective practitioners with practical scholars. These meetings include the CIVICUS World Assembly, a proposed Latin American Civil Society Conference on Practice and Research, a European Conference on TCS, and the Prague Conference on Corruption, all scheduled for the next two years.
Phase 3: Practice Research Engagement Workshop (2)

The Practice-Research Engagement Workshop reconvened the next morning. By this time participants who had started with the initial meeting had been working intensely together for four-and-a- half days, and many were becoming quite tired. We began the session by discussing the agenda for the remainder of the conference, and what it would take to accomplish the rest of the agenda to which we had all agreed at the outset.

We decided that we had made substantial progress over the course of the four days, and that we might be able to complete our proposed work on PRE in one additional day, making the planned final day unnecessary. This decision liberated considerable energy, as well as a rash of phone calls to travel agents to organize earlier departures.

We then turned our attention to the two remaining agenda items: (1) extracting lessons about PRE from our experience in the BTCS workshop, in which most of those present had been active participants, and (2) planning for follow-up activities for fostering more PRE in the future.

The experience with the BTCS workshop group as an example of PRE generated a lively discussion. Participants in the first phase were acutely conscious of the time and energy required to “bring the BTCS participants up to speed” at the outset of that workshop. They felt frustrated that the momentum generated in the first two days could not be continued, in part because the new participants did not have the Phase 1 experience and in part because they were as a group much less experienced in working across the practice-research gap. A summary of the groups’ reflections of the workshop is shown in Table 2.12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.12: Lessons from the BTCS Workshop</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A range of options for doing PRE exists – from those serving as “puzzle solutions” to long-term PRE initiatives – and they can all change research, practice and society. Major changes in fundamental paradigms are more likely from long-term cooperation that builds the relationships needed for major rethinking of complex issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Framing engagements are very important: The process had to begin over when the BTCS participants arrived because they were not parties to the initial work in the PRE Workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• PRE should be strategic rather than ad hoc:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- We need strategies and long-term programs for developing research areas and disciplines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- We need strategic approaches to long-term enhancement of practice capacities and tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Specific topics must be approached strategically: appropriate topics and points of entry need to be identified and planned in advance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Institutional barriers to increasing the use of PRE are high: Many research disciplines place value on distance from rather than closeness to practice, and many of our areas of interests (e.g., TCS) have little credibility in established disciplines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cases that allow researchers and practitioners to ground their discussions in empirical examples are essential. Generating compelling cases and case comparisons will be key to advancing PRE on complex topics with both practitioners and researchers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The future of this type of work rests with our ability to foster the growth of young people as researchers, practitioners, and bridges in the field. Young scholars and activists may be more willing to cross the divides involved, but they are also more vulnerable to field biases.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The last activity of the workshop focused on next steps. After some discussion, participants broke into two groups. One group, which included many Southern participants, decided to focus on regional strategies for expanding and enhancing the use of PRE in the different regions. The second group, which later divided itself into two subgroups, focused on the general issue of strategies for wider use of PRE, given the levels of institutional and interpersonal resistance that might be expected. Table 2.13 highlights the strategies identified by each discussion group.

### Table 2.13 Strategies for Expanding PRE

**General Strategies (Groups 1a and 1b)**

- Create a common language and normative criteria for identity and excellence in PRE. Develop initial list of principles and a shared vocabulary as starting points
- Identify and influence stakeholders who dominate the marketplace of ideas. This might include activities in forums where multiple stakeholders act and meet together (universities, civil society, consulting firms, and media)
- Generate convincing arguments in response to academic critiques of the scientific merits of PRE; strengthen PRE methodologies
- Carry out compelling PRE initiatives on critical topics where other paradigms provide inadequate results
- Invest in disseminating the results and implications of PRE in many forums

**Regional Strategies (Group 2)**

**Strategic Goal:** Promote research, practice, and education for democratic governance in our regions

- Organize joint civil society/research convening process
- Build competencies in research/teaching centers, both nationally and regionally
- Strengthen library, courses, research fellowships, journals, and dissemination capacities
- Promote indigenous, Southern and global frameworks (in that order)

**Action Plan:**

- Map existing resources, and build steps to convene interested resources
- Hold regional PRE conferences
- Disseminate papers and publications on joint research across regions
- Build new courses to train PRE-skilled actors
- Communication via the Web

The conference concluded in the afternoon with a final plenary session in which participants and the conference hosts discussed the next steps for moving the work of PRE forward. We agreed in this final discussion to the follow-up steps listed in Table 2.14. The workshop closed with a discussion of the importance of continuing and building on the initiative, with many participants concerned about utilizing the momentum generated. Participants expressed the hope that the Ford Foundation and other donors would give support to regional initiatives and to further engagements on more specific topics. It was suggested that the Hauser Center convene a follow-up meeting in two years to reflect on progress in utilizing PRE in different settings.
Table 2.14: Follow-up for the PRE Workshop

- **Draft and disseminate an “Announcement” Document.** This document will describe the conference, the importance of PRE, some illustrations of its value, and the commitment of conference participants to foster enhanced PRE in many settings. The Hauser Center will construct a first draft to be shared with and elaborated by representatives of different regions by February 14, 2001.

- **Draft and disseminate a Conference Report.** The Hauser Center will draft a report on the meetings. A draft will be circulated to participants for comments and elaboration.

- **Develop an Important Concept List.** While we are skeptical about “final definitions” of concepts, we agreed that a “working list” of tentative definitions would be helpful. A team will develop further the working list generated during the meetings.

- **Document Principles and Ethics of Practice-Research Engagement.** The Hauser Center will draft a document that builds on workshop discussions that began to identify the value added by PRE, its principles and ethics, and institutional issues involved in promoting it. This document could be the basis for discussions in different regions to develop locally useful guidelines.

- **Building Regional Programs.** Regional actors need research, practice and education that supports democratic governance. While the details of regional strategies have to be worked out within regions, an overall approach to expanding PRE focused on joint convening by civil society and research representatives; building national and regional institutions to support PRE; strengthening libraries, courses, research fellowships and dissemination tools; and promoting frameworks grounded in indigenous and Southern realities as well as global perspectives. Regional representatives have proposed a general action plan to:
  1. Map existing PRE resources and convene an initial planning meeting (by June 2001).
  2. Organize regional conferences on PRE for critical issues in regions (by early 2002).
  3. Hold these regional conferences by mid-2002. Note: Latin America is already planning such a conference for Fall 2001.
  4. Develop publications and papers that can be shared across regions as well as joint practice-research projects and new courses to prepare individuals for PRE.
  5. Explore making results available through the web by 2004.

For each region contact participants agreed to either serve as regional nodes or contact the institutions and individuals who could undertake those responsibilities.

- **Engage Other Forums for Exploring PRE.** We agreed that we will seek to create opportunities to explore the value of PRE in practice and research for a like the CIVICUS World Assembly, Forum International de Montreal, ARNOVA (Association for Research on Nonprofit Organization and Voluntary Action), ISTR (International Society for Third Sector Research), and IFCB (International Forum on Capacity Building).

The Workshops in Retrospect

The PRE and BTCS workshops were themselves efforts to bring practitioners and researchers, activists and academics together to share perspectives, explore potential common ground, and seek ways in which they might advance their interests together. We began with the hope that the conference would contribute to strengthening and enlarging an informal network of individuals and organizations that are already to some extent supporting PRE around the world. We initially designed the conference to promote the identification of critical topics for PRE and the creation of task forces to carry forward
investigations of those topics. In the longer term our success in that endeavor will be reflected in the proliferation of projects, conferences, and initiatives of various types that enable wider and more constructive engagements among key actors.

We recognized that the goal of building a wider and stronger network required that participants take ownership for post-workshop initiatives and activities. We sought in varyingly successful ways to encourage shared ownership. The creation of the Internet discussion and the thought papers prior to the workshops was intended to invite participation in and ownership of workshop content and design. Unfortunately, relatively few participants (more researchers than practitioners) found time to participate in the Internet discussion, so its impact as a mechanism for facilitating wide ownership was limited. A majority of the BTCS participants took the time to reflect and write a very interesting set of thought papers. Some felt deprived by the lack of opportunity to present and discuss their papers in a formal setting, but we thought such presentations would seriously undercut the time for more interactive discussion of the issues.

In managing the workshops we sought to create a design that provided a base for engaging each other to explore widely shared issues and, at the same time, be responsive to emerging priorities and concerns of the participants as potential network members. This balancing act led us to invite widespread participation in designing the PRE workshop after the first day. One immediate consequence was the invitation to participants to present cases of PRE the next morning, which provided empirical bases for later discussions. The participatory decision to try to complete the conference agenda a day earlier also reflected our concern with sharing ownership for the initiative. We thought that both of these decisions led to increased energy and commitment to the work on the part of participants, though they also involved significant changes in the initial design of the workshop.

Perhaps more importantly, our conception of desirable outputs of the workshops evolved as we interacted with participants. We expected that a major product of both workshops would be proposals for substantive work on specific topics by task forces of interested participants, and that much of the last day of each workshop would be given to small group planning of projects (e.g., planning a theoretical review of transnational civil society strategies in the BTCS Workshop, or action research projects on civil society alliance-building in the PRE Workshop). What emerged instead as the post-workshop focus for both workshops might be described as field-strengthening strategies. In the PRE Workshop, for example, the focus of the final sessions was on identifying approaches to enabling widespread use of PRE, rather than launching new examples of it. The next steps listed in Table 2.14 emphasize identifying concepts and principles for implementing PRE, encouraging its recognition in various forums, and building systematic strategies for widening its impact around the world. For the BTCS Workshop, follow-up activities included some emphasis on substantive issues (TCS strategies and legitimacy, for example), but they also emphasized creating opportunities for engaging in academic forums and creating practitioner reflection spaces – which are more institutional than substantive interventions. In retrospect, we think this shift from substance to institutional outcomes makes considerable sense for advancing informal networks engaged in these issues – though it also makes it more difficult to clearly assess what impacts the workshop may actually have in the longer term.
In the immediate term, we can report that some progress has been made on several of the proposed follow-up initiatives. For both workshops, this chapter represents a common workshop report. Follow-up to the BTCS workshop has touched on many of the initiatives listed in Table 2.11. Chapters Four and Five of this volume are respectively the synthesis of TCS strategies and the legitimacy discussion guide proposed as substantive products of the BTCS workshop. The proposed educational materials website is under discussion at the Hauser Center and CIVICUS, and review articles on transnational civil society theory are being prepared by at least two participants. Panels and symposia on BTCS have been proposed for meetings organized by the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organization and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), the International Studies Association, and CIVICUS. The Centre for Civil Society Studies at the London School of Economics has already held one follow-up conference on TCS organization and governance, and a third conference is now being planned by International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR) in cooperation with the Hauser Center and the Centre for Civil Society Studies.

Many of the proposed steps to follow-up the PRE Workshop are also underway. The announcement document has been drafted and distributed. An initial list of concepts and a process for defining them has been articulated and launched. Chapter Three of this volume describes an initial effort to identify some of the principles that can guide PRE. Symposia and panels for discussing PRE have been organized for the CIVICUS World Assembly, ARNOVA, and ISTR. The series of follow-up conferences organized in cooperation with the Centre for Civil Society Studies and ISTR is also intended to encourage PRE in exploring their issues.

The January 2001 workshops were intended to foster the development of both new knowledge and innovations in practice and to encourage further engagement among many actors concerned with strengthening civil society contributions to constructive social change. Their long-term success, of course, cannot be assessed for some time.

Notes to Chapter Two

1 Angela Johnson and Sarah Titus were the administrators of the workshops and the project of which they were part. They took primary responsibility for managing not only the logistics of the conference but organizing the reams of information it generated so we could write this chapter. We would like to express here our appreciation for the time and energy that many others at the Hauser Center put into making that conference a success, including Celeste Benson, Matais Canah, Tim Freiermuth, Diane Gregorio, Corinne Locke, Susan Misra and Shannon Spiroigh.
Practice-Research Engagement Principles for Civil Society

L. David Brown with David Cohen, Jane Covey, Alan Fowler, John Gaventa, and Rajesh Tandon.

Introduction

Engagements between civil society practitioners and researchers offer opportunities to bring very diverse resources to bear on difficult problems. When practice-research engagement (PRE) works well, it produces new knowledge that is grounded in practical experience and innovations in practice that are rooted in improved understanding. “Practice” in this context refers to the activities by which civil society actors carry out strategies to achieve their missions. “Research” refers to systematic efforts to develop new knowledge. PRE can bring together practitioners, such as civil society leaders concerned with influencing public policy, and researchers, such as political scientists and sociologists interested in civil society relations with the state, to learn together from shared analysis of past policy influence campaigns. Joint inquiry by practitioners and researchers can draw on the insights of deep experience with practice as well as the broad knowledge and generalizable conceptual frames of research.

Experience suggests that practice-research engagement is not always successful. The interests and perspectives of practitioners and researchers diverge as their methods become more sophisticated and specialized. The dominance of positivist research traditions in social science has often hampered its engagement with the complexity and uncertainties of many practice traditions. In spite of these tensions, some efforts to bring researchers and practitioners together have led to action research in the service of organizational change, participatory research that has raised awareness of oppressed groups, and participatory rural appraisals that have improved understanding of grassroots realities. But PRE is not easy – too often the parties find themselves mired in misunderstandings, split by conflicting incentives and procedures, and unable to use their differences constructively, even with the best of intentions.

This analysis explores some of the patterns and products of PRE, describes some relevant methods, suggests some choices involved in its use, and articulates some working principles to guide constructive engagements. PRE has been used extensively by the business and government sectors, in part because they have the resources to support in-house research capacities or hire outside researchers. Civil society actors who are challenged to develop and use state-of-the-art knowledge about complex issues seldom have in-house resources or easy access to external capacity. Organizing PRE for mutual benefit
with researchers in universities, consulting firms, think tanks, and private practice can be pivotal to civil society actors who cannot buy research support. This chapter offers a map for bringing together researchers and practitioners in joint work.

**Products of Practice-Research Engagement**

What can PRE produce for civil society actors? Sometimes researcher initiatives to engage with practice leads to important innovations. Efforts to develop practical tools for literacy education with poor peasants led Paolo Freire to develop “conscientization” approaches to adult education and a “pedagogy of the oppressed” that has inspired adult educators who work with marginalized groups all over the world. Economics professor Mohammed Yunus tested the hypothesis that accountability to peers might replace collateral as an incentive for poor borrowers to repay small loans, and helped create the practice innovations for a micro-credit movement that now serves millions of borrowers around the world. Some researcher initiatives to engage with practitioners have produced new understanding and innovations that have fundamentally changed the roles of civil society actors.

In other cases, practitioners have pressed for research that reshapes theory as well as practice. Oxfam America and the Advocacy Institute brought together practice and research perspectives to generate frameworks and lessons grounded in U.S. and international advocacy experience. The International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) built programs in many countries to respond to practitioner demand for knowledge of “bio-intensive gardening” and regenerative agriculture that can be applied to feeding many people from small but intensely cultivated plots. Interaction between practice and research can produce innovative practice for specific situations as well as general principles that can be adapted to wider contexts.

PRE initiatives vary considerably in the scope and intensity of joint activities. At one end of the spectrum, for example, is **puzzle-solving**, in which short-term PRE initiatives produce solutions to well-defined problems. For example, the leader of a large Kenyan NGO asked the Dean of Architecture at the national university to develop plans for low-cost housing that could be built in poor areas of the city. The dean set low-cost housing design as a student project, and rapidly produced a variety of proposals. WIEGO, the international network of self-employed women (street vendors, domestics), has mobilized sympathetic researchers to assess the scope and composition of the informal sector in many countries, and then used the results to influence national and international policies. Puzzle-solving PREs may require relatively little in the way of ongoing interaction among practitioners and researchers if the specifications of the puzzle are relatively well understood, and requests can be translated into puzzles which research disciplines and methodologies are well suited to solve.

In other situations, the problem is not understood well enough to be structured as a puzzle for recognized research paradigms. As civil society takes on larger and more complex roles, it faces many problems that are complicated, unstable, and ill structured. For such problems, PRE for issue identification can produce enhanced understanding of the nature of the problems from multiple perspectives. Such explorations bring practitioners and
researchers from different perspectives together to create an enriched analysis or even a redifinition of the issue. The conferences organized by the Forum International de Montreal (FIM), for example, invite researchers and practitioners to build better understanding of the issues involved in transnational civil society initiatives. These conferences focus on complex interaction among civil society actors and multilateral agencies in order to promote better understanding of the issues and the actors, rather than on narrowly defined problems or immediate solutions. The results are increased sensitivity to the issues, better understanding of how they appear from different perspectives, and identification of alternative approaches to later action, rather than specific and immediate solutions.

Sometimes the focus of PRE is on particular innovations and their efficacy. Such intervention assessments can improve existing programs, identify effective practices, and develop theoretical frameworks that help civil society actors adapt interventions across contexts. For example, participatory evaluation approaches have been utilized to assess and strengthen existing programs. These initiatives can build better intervention theories as well as improve present practices. Other initiatives have assessed interventions across organizations and campaigns. Researchers from the Institute for Development Research (IDR) and practitioners from NGO networks in the Philippines, for example, compared cases of policy influence campaigns to extract, document and share lessons for future campaigns. Some intervention assessments involve long-term engagements between researchers and practitioners. A study of transnational civil society campaigns to influence World Bank policies and projects over several years produced eight case studies, two conferences to discuss them, a book reporting on both, and a series of follow-up initiatives to make use of results. Assessments of interventions can produce innovations in practice as well as new understanding or knowledge.

These products of PRE reflect ascending degrees of engagement, in terms of both intensity and time. Puzzle-solving can be narrowly bounded in scope, time, and interaction. Issue identification may involve engagement across perspectives in exploring the complexities of poorly understood issues. Intervention assessments require engagement among researchers and practitioners to identify pitfalls and possibilities in actual problem-solving and to assess the value of alternative strategies.

A fourth pattern of PRE may require even more time and resources. In field development engagements, researchers and practitioners seek to build new understanding and practices in areas recognized as vital but not yet understood well enough for assessment of specific interventions. The Leadership Regional Network (LeaRN) of Southern Africa, for example, brings together universities and NGOs from six countries to grapple with the problems of building leadership for future civil societies in the region. The project is designed to continue for at least ten years, and hopes to develop frameworks, educational programs, and other initiatives to strengthen sector leadership theory and practice for the whole region. The Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania has developed a series of collaborative programs with local schools over the last decade that are improving educational practice as well as researcher understanding of the issues of urban education. Similarly, WIEGO, the international network of women employed in the informal sector, has recognized the need for research on the informal sector as critical to its
effort to build supportive national and international policies. It is working with researchers and university resources in several countries to build this knowledge base to support sector development.

Field development PRE is often defined in terms of strategic directions that will have widespread impacts, rather than more specific practice or research questions. These initiatives often require commitments that build long-term relationships among researchers and practitioners. Puzzle-solving engagements can produce results that meet initial specifications. Issue identification engagements can raise awareness about emerging topics and their consequences, and intervention assessments may produce change theory and practice and facilitate their dissemination. Field development initiatives may fundamentally change how researchers and practitioners understand the field, its problems, the interventions that are useful, and the roles of civil society actors. WIEGO has already altered how many development actors understand the informal sector. LeaRN seeks to

Table 3.1: Comparison of PRE Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Characteristics</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solve Puzzles</td>
<td>Provides answers to well-defined problems</td>
<td>Makes efficient use of comparative advantages of parties</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Does not require expensive ongoing relations</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Wastes resources if initial diagnosis is over-simple</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Produces poor results if puzzle wrongly defined</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify Issues</td>
<td>Brings multiple views for understanding complex, ill-structured problems</td>
<td>• Allows many voices to identify issue patterns and implications</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sets stage for wide participation in problem-solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Diversity can produce incoherent results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Escalates conflicts among parties over problem definitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assess Interventions</td>
<td>Analyzes, improves and documents quality of interventions and best practices</td>
<td>• Evaluates and improves existing programs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Identifies costs and benefits of possible solutions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Clarifies best practices for interventions</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Focuses on existing activities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Overemphasizes “one best way”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Focuses on problem-solving at expense of deeper understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>IdDevelop Fields</td>
<td>Long-term co-inquiry to build perspectives, theory and practice in new domains.</td>
<td>• In-depth analysis over longer term of poorly-understood problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Produces new paradigms for intractable problems</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Fundamental changes in theory or practice</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Uses many resources for long-term inquiry</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Possible cooptation of researchers or practitioners</td>
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create fundamentally new perspectives on the nature and role of civil society leadership in Southern Africa, and the Center for Community Partnerships intends to reorient how the University of Pennsylvania and other universities understand their relationships to their communities.

Table 3.1 summarizes these approaches and some of their advantages and disadvantages. The summary provides a menu of options that may be adapted to different civil society purposes. Where questions may be answered by research on a well-defined problem, puzzle-solving PRE is appropriate, and engaging in one of the other approaches would probably be a waste of resources. On the other hand, if the problem is not well understood and the stakes are high, some sort of long-term engagement that will bring the comparative advantages of practitioners and researchers to bear – in either a field development or an intervention assessment process – may be more effective even if it is more expensive. Given the chronic shortages of resources and time that face most civil society organizations, an expensive option should not be chosen lightly.

Relationships of respect and trust between researchers and practitioners are an essential element of effective PRE. Where such relationships do not exist, it may be helpful to start with the limited commitments of puzzle-solving and expand over time into more extensive engagements that can build on experience with each other’s capacities and characteristics. “Social capital” is an important resource for PRE, and prior experience can create (or destroy) relationships that are vital to future initiatives.

Methods for Practice-Research Engagement

Researchers and practitioners have grappled with the challenges of jointly generating new knowledge and practice innovations in many ways. The last two decades have seen a proliferation of PRE concepts and methods, including action research, participatory research, participatory rural appraisal, collaborative inquiry, action science, appreciative inquiry and many others. We will limit this discussion to brief descriptions of some of the methods that have proven particularly useful to development and social change initiatives. More detailed discussion is available from other sources.

The participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tradition has produced an explosion of methods for collecting data and generating knowledge in collaboration with grassroots groups in the last two decades. Growing out of work to improve knowledge about local conditions, PRA workers have worked in close cooperation with local groups, sharing control over data definition, analysis and interpretation, and catalyzing action on the basis of local analysis and knowledge. The Institute for Development Studies in the UK has been a center for disseminating PRA materials, but an active international network with centers around the world is developing new tools, training people to use them, and fostering large-scale use of PRA methods all over the world.

A second tradition that has also grown out of experience in grassroots development contexts is participatory research, sometimes also referred to as participatory action research. Participatory research tools have emerged from grassroots conscientization and mobilization initiatives. Early participatory researchers focused particularly on making research technology available to marginalized groups to preserve and develop local
knowledge for their own development and empowerment. Researchers and activists in this tradition have been particularly concerned with the relationship between knowledge and power, and how PRE can counteract the widespread use of knowledge to strengthen elites at the expense of excluded groups.

Practitioners and researchers working on problems of group and organization development have developed a third set of methods. The action research tradition, also sometimes referred to as participatory action research, has been particularly concerned with planned change to improve group and organization performance. This tradition has emphasized strategies and tools for joint researcher-practitioner work to understand groups and organizations, and to intervene to improve organizational practices and systems.

Yet another set of approaches to PRE brings researchers and practitioners together to examine multiple cases to identify critical lessons. Collective reflections allow investigators to extract factors that are common across successes or that distinguish successes from failures, and so develop better theories on which to base future initiatives. For example, a multi-regional consortium of practitioners and researchers drew lessons from comparing cases of NGO-government relations in twelve countries in Asia and Africa. A variety of tools for such comparative analysis have been developed, and the approach allows more confidence about the robustness and generalizability of results than is possible from single cases.

Finally, a fifth set of PRE methods emphasize bringing together many actors to assess complex problems from multiple perspectives and develop coordinated approaches to solving them. Multi-stakeholder problem-solving that brings together diverse and often conflicting actors to solve complex problems is increasingly common. For example, “executive sessions” bring together leaders in a field with researcher support to develop new analyses and problem-solving interventions over multiple meetings that may cover years of joint analysis. As innovative ideas emerge, participants are positioned by their leadership roles to test them quickly. “Multi-stakeholder dialogues,” as developed by the International Forum on Capacity Building, foster engagement among Southern NGOs, Northern NGOs, and other development agencies to explore critical issues and negotiate common initiatives on capacity building for civil society actors. Such methods allow multiple constituencies to work together to understand and take innovative action on complex problems.

The boundaries among these approaches are permeable and rapidly changing, as practitioners and researchers reinvent, combine, and reshape methods to fit particular constellations of resources and needs. However, several themes recur across many methods. First, PRE initiatives must come to terms with the different values, goals, perspectives and capacities of their participants. Researchers and practitioners have different time horizons, priorities and biases, and effective PRE initiatives evolve ways to make use of those differences and to limit their negative impacts. Second, the concerns at the focus of PRE initiatives are typically complex, dynamic and uncertain, so PRE approaches must be flexible enough to deal with possibilities not visible at the start. Third, perceived and actual power differences often complicate relations among practitioners and researchers, and successful PRE initiatives work out decision-making processes perceived as legitimate and fair by all the parties. Fourth, PRE on civil society and social change issues often operates at politically volatile social intersections, where ideas, data, practices and interpretations can catalyze
strong reactions from powerful actors. These factors can create outcomes that are surprising and threatening to both practitioners and researchers. Ideally, some of the potential drawbacks and payoffs are recognized in discussions that precede decisions to initiate such projects.

**Choosing to Try PRE**

Diverse actors, complex and dynamic problems, power differences, and political volatility all contribute to the definition and implementation of PRE as essentially negotiated processes. Integrating differences in perspective (and agreeing to disagree about some of them), responding to unexpected or shifting problems, managing decisions that invoke differences in interests and power, and coping with external challenges require that PRE participants be prepared for ongoing dialogue and be willing to adapt to unforeseen threats or seize emerging opportunities. PRE is often—to put it mildly—hard work.

Why would practitioners or researchers put up with such demands? What benefits and costs are likely? And what questions should they ask at the start of negotiations? Specific answers to these questions will, of course, depend on the initiative, but we can identify some areas to be considered.

Several kinds of practice benefits can be realized from engagement with the right researchers. Examples might include: advancing immediate goals by answering critical questions, gaining access to otherwise unavailable knowledge and expertise; getting sophisticated support in learning from practice experience, learning from research about experience in other settings, building credible positions that are grounded in professional research and interpretation, or using researchers to disseminate understanding of practical successes to others. On the other hand, practitioners must weigh these benefits against the practice costs of PRE activities, which might include: use of time and energy that might be invested in other activities, emphasis on theory at the expense of practical relevance, investigations carried out by ‘research time’ in the face of practice urgencies, researcher ‘neutrality’ that threatens practice, or results that are not worth the investment of scarce time and money.

From a researcher’s vantage point, joint inquiry with practitioners also offers both benefits and costs. Among the research benefits can be: creating new knowledge on the basis of practitioner perspectives, access to detailed information from practice experience, opportunities to test theories in practical action, practitioner support for assessing the practice implications of theories, and opportunities to contribute to constructive social changes. The research costs of engagement with practitioners might include factors like: pressure for quick results, demands that undermine research neutrality, lack of practitioner interest in, or sympathy for, research priorities, or results contaminated by political biases.

Table 3.2 summarizes this incomplete list of benefits and costs. This list will vary considerably among researchers and practitioners and across potential joint projects, but it is intended to stimulate thinking rather than exhaust the possibilities.

Creating the basis for effective PRE involves exploring potential benefits and costs and negotiating agreements about interests that can and cannot be met by joint inquiry. Some of those interests have to do with the substance of the initiative: products in terms of new
knowledge and innovations in practice that the parties seek. Some interests have to do with relationships among the parties: the expectations and ground rules that govern relations between practitioners and researchers and their relations with other important constituencies. It is not possible to foresee all the challenges that may emerge, but ensuring that the parties understand each other's interests can significantly reduce difficulties in managing their later differences.

Principles for PRE

What general principles can guide organizing effective practice-research engagements? This section describes ideas that have emerged from experiences of practitioners and researchers who have sought to learn from each other. This is an illustrative rather than a complete list of principles. It is intended to encourage PRE participants to examine issues that have proven important in the past. This list should be treated as a work-in-progress to be adapted and revised with new experience.

1. Choose problems that require the resources of both practitioners and researchers.

The challenges of combining research and practice make PRE expensive in time and resources. When the capacities of practitioners or researchers working alone are adequate to resolve problems, PRE is an expensive choice for creating new solutions.

But many issues need both the research and the practice perspectives to develop better understanding and more effective action. The problem of understanding how civil
society coalitions can promote institutional reform and project improvement at the World Bank, for example, was not easily solved by researchers without practitioners, or by practitioners without researchers. Different pieces of the puzzle were held by Bank officials, civil society activists, and researchers interested in institutional reform. The general issue called for integrating information and perspectives across a number of stakeholders with quite different viewpoints. Organizing researchers to work with civil society coalitions, World Bank staff, and other researchers familiar with institutional reform and coalition-building across many settings, could articulate new conceptual and practical implications.

Several questions are relevant to deciding whether a problem requires practice-research engagement as an inquiry strategy. They include:

- Does understanding the problem require both research and practice perspectives?
- Will PRE foster solutions that involve both researchers and practitioners?
- Do researchers and practitioners recognize the value of PRE enough to accept its costs?

2. Recruit participants appropriate to the problem and the PRE process.

Once the problem has been initially defined (initial definitions are often transformed in the course of PRE processes), selecting and recruiting participants becomes critical. It is important, of course, to recruit practitioners and researchers who have the experience and capacities to shed light on the problem. Learning how transnational civil society coalitions contribute to institutional reform at the World Bank required engaging civil society activists and Bank staff involved in specific campaigns, because both had information and understanding that was not available to the other or to researchers. The researchers, on the other hand, brought general knowledge of institutional reform and response to external pressures from other settings as well as frameworks and methods that could be applied to understanding the Bank reform campaigns. Recruiting participants focuses on gaining access to information and skills needed to generate new knowledge and practice innovations on the topic at hand.

Other attributes of participants are also important. To what extent are they willing and able to engage effectively with the other participants? Practitioners vary in their tolerance for researchers, and vice versa. The researchers could talk with both Bank and civil society practitioners in the study of Bank reform campaigns, but bringing those two constituencies together sometimes produced more heat than light. Potential participants also vary in how they are positioned to act on PRE results. Since the investigation of policy influence campaigns in the Philippines involved many leaders of those campaigns, new ideas and practice innovations could be tested very quickly in the field. One criterion for recruiting participants is their ability to make use of results that emerge from the PRE process. Researchers with credibility among policy-makers and practitioners from leadership positions in important institutions may be important assets for immediate impacts.

Some participants may be selected for their ability to promote constructive engagement among the parties. Conveners or third parties who can help participants
understand each other, challenge old assumptions, mediate conflicts, facilitate creative
discussions, and catalyze agreement on new syntheses can be critical assets to PRE,
particularly when there are conflicts and disagreements among participants. Participants
may be recruited to foster effective engagement processes as well as to participate in them.

Selecting and recruiting PRE participants may be particularly critical to long-term
efforts to deal with intractable, politically polarized, and poorly structured problems. Key
issues to be considered in recruitment include:

- Do the practitioners and researchers have the knowledge, perspective, and position
  required for this topic? Do they include all the most important views?
- Are the participants willing and able to work with and learn from each other?
- Can some participants convene and facilitate participant engagement?

3. Establish shared values, goals, and expectations for joint work.

Practitioners and researchers often bring quite different constellations of values and
expectations to their work. Civil society development practitioners, for example, may be
concerned with fostering equity and fairness, empowering oppressed groups, and promoting
constructive social change. Researchers are often concerned with developing elegant theory,
generating valid data, and producing replicable results. Differences in underlying values
and paradigms can easily undermine cooperation if practitioners and researchers have not
explicitly articulated shared values and goals for their joint work, or recognized the validity
of each other’s central concerns.

It is not necessary for practitioners and researchers to be completely similar, of
course. After all, it is their differences that make them valuable to one another. But
agreement about project purposes and impacts on key stakeholders, such as disenfranchised
groups for civil society practitioners or disciplinary audiences for researchers, can be
essential to viable PRE. Thus the university and civil society partners in the Leadership
Regional Network (LeaRN) in Southern Africa share the goal of strengthening civil society
leadership, though they may have other reasons for participating as well. Agreement about
general purposes can be complemented by agreements about how parties will work together.
Shared expectations about how resources will be allocated, who will make decisions and
how, and how differences will be managed can be critical to joint ventures. Without explicit
attention to building shared purposes and expectations to guide joint work, it is too easy for
parties to assume that core values and assumptions are shared – and then to interpret the
later discovery of differences as betrayal.

Discussing purposes and values in early stages of PRE can clarify other issues as well.
Identifying the special resources of each party and their relevance to shared purposes can
help to balance power differences that might otherwise undermine cooperation between
researchers and practitioners. For example, adapting IIRR’s “bio-intensive gardening” work
to different countries and regions requires detailed analysis of local climatic and soil
conditions, so the value of consultations with researchers from IIRR is highly dependent on
engaging the practical experience of local agricultural practitioners. These discussions can
build shared terms and languages that bridge the differences among participants. It is
common to come to joint projects with incompatible languages, and building a shared language is often critically important to effective cooperation.\\footnote{16}

Building shared values, goals and expectations is a critical early step for effective practice-research engagement. That process involves considering issues like the following:

- What values and purposes provide a shared base for this initiative?
- What expectations and ethics will guide joint work?
- What resources and capacities do the parties expect and need from each other?
- How will parties construct shared language and terminology for their work together?

4. Diagnose institutional arrangements that support or retard PRE.

Practitioners and researchers are typically embedded in quite different institutional contexts, and those contexts may support or undermine their involvement in PRE. “Institutions” refer sometimes to the rules that shape activity and sometimes to organizations that play special social roles. Recognizing and adapting to institutional constraints is critical to PRE that requires ongoing institutional contacts. For example, efforts to encourage student-faculty research and teaching about participatory development in Indian universities were hampered by university norms against fieldwork as well as resource shortages that limited student and faculty participation. More generally, university research communities often see few incentives to work on practice problems rather than more theoretically-defined topics, while practitioner organizations often reject as excessively “academic” any research whose practical payoffs are not obvious. Institutional diagnosis involves assessing arrangements that may influence the PRE process.

In some cases the institutional barriers may require revising expectations or definitions of a PRE initiative. Effective innovation systems are characterized by institutional arrangements that evolve in response to emerging understanding or to demands of the researcher-practitioner partnership. Studies of successful innovations suggest that national systems of innovation are emerging in knowledge-based economics. These systems are “networks of private and public sector institutions whose interactions produce, diffuse, and use economically useful knowledge”\\footnote{17} in producing economic growth. Diagnosing these institutional arrangements involves assessing channels for knowledge flows, identifying bottlenecks, looking for opportunities and constraints for interactive learning, and seeking policies and practices that hamper or support innovation development.

So the institutional arrangements that affect participants and the PRE process as a whole require attention. Issues include:

- How do institutional arrangements affect PRE participants and process?
- What changes will alleviate institutional factors that undermine effective PRE?
5. Organize the engagement process to use participant resources effectively.

The ways in which participants interact to carry out joint activities shapes their outcomes. Ideally the organization of the PRE will enable frank exchanges that use the special resources of parties, exploration of different perceptions and alternative interpretations, wide-ranging search for relevant information, generation of creative alternative solutions, good choices among those alternatives and effective planning for implementation. However, achieving these outcomes is anything but automatic.

Decades of experience with action research in Scandinavia have produced the concept of “democratic dialogue” among researchers and practitioners for creating new knowledge and practical innovations. Democratic dialogue is characterized by give-and-take, widespread participation among equal status participants, agreement to investigate arguments, tolerance for disagreement, and commitment to decisions that provide platforms for action. For emerging PRE projects, an important concern is building the organizational structures, norms, technologies, and leadership that foster democratic dialogue.

The creation of democratic dialogue depends in part on recognizing factors that inhibit participation by some participants. The power differences that shape interaction in the larger society may also be played out within PRE projects. Some theories of power emphasize the repressive impacts of power differences through the control of resources, or the management of agendas, or the shaping of consciousness; others examine power as a relational concept that works through discourses, institutions and practices to establish boundaries of possibility and action. From the point of view of democratic dialogue, the organization of PRE should create discourses, institutions, and practices that expand the possibilities of joint learning, not systems that control some participants for the benefit of others.

The issue that evokes most concern in many PRE projects on TCS issues is funding and the control over financial resources. When participants come from very different positions in the global spectrum of wealth and power, the control of financial resources can be an extremely divisive issue. The transnational coalition that supported the exploration of civil society-government cooperation in Africa and Asia, for example, found that agreements that established regional control of resources, case design decisions, and management of regional conferences were essential to building and maintaining a climate for joint inquiry. Organizational arrangements that protect participants from abuses of financial power, promote transparency of financial information, and clarify bases for allocating scarce resources are all important to balancing perceived and actual power differences that can easily undermine practitioner-researcher relations.

Recognizing that all the parties bring special resources can help build the climate for democratic dialogue. The more parties recognize the value of each other’s unique and relevant capacities, the more the incentive to utilize them. Specifying action plans can clarify responsibilities and accountabilities. In some cases explicit norms and procedures can prevent major problems: A “no surprises” agreement that presses all parties to
communicate with each other before taking drastic action – like leaving the project can help foster mutual tolerance and influence.

Organizational arrangements can also be created to protect participants against foreseeable problems with PRE projects. Project risks can be explored in some detail, and initiatives taken to minimize or at least balance those risks across participants. It may be useful to agree on “escape hatches,” through which participants may cancel their involvement if they believe the risks are unacceptable. In the study of transnational coalitions for World Bank reform, for example, one coalition exercised an explicit option to withdraw from the project because of concerns about security. That decision actually set the climate and relationships for important subsequent cooperation with some of that coalition’s members.

So organizing PRE projects may in fact be organizationally complex. Critical issues to be considered include:

- What arrangements foster democratic dialogue among researchers and practitioners?
- How can power differences be balanced to encourage open discussion, expand existing boundaries, and distribute resources fairly?
- How can responsibilities and accountabilities be defined to encourage cooperation?
- How can participants be protected against foreseen and unforeseen risks and problems?

6. Learn from the process about both the issue and PRE.

Practice-research engagement is a strategy for learning about issues of interest to civil society practitioners and researchers, such as civil society legitimacy, policy advocacy, organizational sustainability, and so on. The process may use sequences of activities to foster learning, such as:

- problem or question definition ➤
- data collection and analysis ➤
- interpretation and theory building ➤
- practice innovations ➤
- dissemination of theory and practice results.

This sequence emphasizes producing both research and practice results. Some PRE processes involve practitioners and researchers throughout the process, sharing responsibilities for defining problems, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting theory and practice implications, and disseminating results. Others combine a few elements of this cycle, or multiple iterations over long periods of time. “Puzzle solving” or “issue identification” PRE focuses on one or two elements. “Intervention assessments” may take several years to go through a full cycle, as in the analysis of the campaigns to influence the World Bank projects and policies. The ten-year “field development” project of the Southern African Leadership Regional Network (LeaRN) will go through several cycles on different issues, while the Norwegian action research program on industrial democracy is in its
fourth decade, having completed many cycles at different levels of analysis and on different topics. The patterns of inquiry carried out by PRE initiatives may vary considerably depending on learning priorities and contexts.

PRE projects may also be used to learn about the PRE process itself, and so enhance the capacities of participants and others to carry out future initiatives. The reflections of thoughtful PRE facilitators have contributed a great deal to our understanding of general lessons about PRE as a way to build and utilize knowledge.

Ongoing issues that deserve attention in reflections on PRE processes include:

- What sequences of problem definition, data collection and analysis, data interpretation, and dissemination of findings are most important for this project?
- What time periods and cycles of learning make most sense for the topic?
- How can this process foster learning and lessons about the PRE process itself?

### Table 3.3: Principles for Practice-Research Engagement

1. **Choose problems that require the resources of both practitioners and researchers.**
   - Does understanding the problem require both research and practice perspectives?
   - Will PRE foster solutions that involve both researchers and practitioners?
   - Do researchers and practitioners recognize the value of PRE enough to accept its costs?

2. **Recruit participants appropriate to the problem and the PRE process.**
   - Do the practitioners and researchers have the knowledge, perspective, and position required for this topic? Do they include all the most important views?
   - Are the participants willing and able to work with and learn from each other?
   - Can some participants convene and facilitate participant engagement?

3. **Establish shared values, goals, and expectations for joint work.**
   - What values and purposes provide a shared base for this initiative?
   - What expectations and ethics will guide joint work?
   - What resources and capacities do the parties expect and need from each other?
   - How will parties construct shared language and terminology for the PRE?

4. **Diagnose institutional arrangements that support or retard PRE.**
   - How do institutional arrangements affect PRE participants and process?
   - What changes will alleviate institutional factors that undermine effective PRE?

5. **Organize the engagement process to use participant resources effectively.**
   - What arrangements foster democratic dialogue among researchers and practitioners?
   - How can power differences be balanced to encourage open discussion, expand existing boundaries, and distribute resources fairly?
   - How can responsibilities and accountabilities be defined to encourage cooperation?
   - How can participants be protected against foreseen and unforeseen problems?

6. **Learn from the PRE process about the issue at hand and about joint learning.**
   - What sequences of problem definition, data collection and analysis, data interpretation, and dissemination of findings are most important for this project?
   - What time periods and cycles of learning make most sense for the topic?
   - How can this process foster learning and lessons about the PRE process itself?
Chapter Three

Practice-Research Engagement in a Globalizing World

This chapter focuses on issues that influence practice-research engagement in the service of civil society initiatives. We have discussed questions to be considered in organizing a wide variety of PRE initiatives. Table 3.3 summarizes general categories and key questions that have been discussed.

We live in a rapidly globalizing world. That globalization confronts our institutions with a growing list of national and transnational problems that they are not designed to recognize, let alone solve – epidemics like HIV/AIDS, environmental limits and degradation, or complex humanitarian emergencies. For many of those challenges, civil society organizations have emerged as sources of innovation and catalytic action that enable otherwise grid-locked institutions to respond more effectively.

But many of these problems overwhelm the technical capacities of all but the most specialized civil society organizations. Productive connections with actors who can help generate the needed intellectual capital are increasingly critical. Practice-research engagement has demonstrated great potential for generating new knowledge and innovations in practice that can be vital to social transformation and development. We hope that this document will contribute to wider exploration of the possibilities of cooperation across the practice-research divide in the service of social transformations yet to come.
Chapter Three

Notes to Chapter Three

1 This chapter is based on a background paper to the January workshop written by Dave Brown and extensive discussions by many participants and small groups in the workshop itself. Dave Brown drafted an initial outline, and then wrote a first draft on the basis of that outline and inputs from many participants. He revised the first draft in response to further comments from participants. This version has benefited from many inputs from listed co-authors, but the lead author must assume responsibility for errors or failure to take good advice.

2 For example, CODE-NGO, a network of NGOs in the Philippines, worked with researchers from the Institute for Development Research to compare case studies of past civil society efforts to influence national policies, and used the resulting knowledge and practice ideas to train future activists. See Valerie Miller and Heredina Razon-Abad, "What Constitutes Success in Policy Influence?" in CODE-NGO, Policy Influence: NGO Experiences, Manila: Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs, 1997.


14 Ansley and Gaventa, 1996, op. cit.


Moore and Hartman, for example, see individuals who press participants to move beyond old assumptions and easy agreements as essential to creative solutions in ‘executive sessions’ on complex problems. See Moore and Hartmann, 1999, op. cit.

See Orlando Fals Borda, 2001, op. cit. p.32.

Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001, op. cit.


Examples of thoughtful facilitators, most mentioned already in endnotes, include Orlando Fals Borda at the National University of Colombia, Bjorn Gustavsen in the Norway industrial democracy project, Robert Chambers and John Gaventa in the Participation Group at the Institute for Development Studies, Rajesh Tandon at the Society for Participatory Research in Asia, William Foote Whyte at Cornell University, and Budd Hall at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
Chapter Four

Activist-Researcher Collaborations on Transnational Civil Society: Reflections and Perspectives, Challenges and Opportunities, Lessons and Strategies
Sanjeev Khagram with L. David Brown, Alison Brysk, Terezinha da Silva, Ann Florini, Jonathan Fox, John Gaventa, and Lucita Lazo

Over the past twenty-five years, and certainly in the last decade, transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements – organizing and networking, lobbying and campaigning, protest and mobilization – grew seemingly by leaps and bounds. Whether the issue of contention involved international trade, landmines, gender justice, human rights, self-determination of indigenous peoples or global climate change, transnational efforts and institutional arrangements led and primarily constituted by civil society activists, organizations, coalitions, networks and movements increased in numbers and, by many accounts, became more and more effective.

In many of these transnational civil society efforts, civil society activists – both in and outside of academic settings – actively worked with researchers contributing to the emergence and success of these initiatives. Partly as a result of their involvement in these efforts, researchers initiated knowledge gathering and evaluation activities on the growth, nature, role(s) and impacts of these various manifestations of transnational (or even global) civil society, and several of these projects actively involved critical and constructive reflection by practitioners themselves (see boxes throughout text).

But what exactly does the notion of transnational civil society entail? Does transnational civil society currently exist and to what extent is it emerging, or is this idea purely a combination of myth and fancy? What are the challenges and opportunities for building, empowering and sustaining a transnational civil society if one is in formation and does warrant support? And to the extent that there have been various transnational efforts involving civil society activists and organizations in recent years, what lessons can be gleaned about strategies for external efforts and internal institutional arrangements, especially from and for activist-researcher collaborations, towards the building, empowering and sustaining of a transnational or even a global civil society?

In this chapter we endeavor to begin addressing these questions, based on previous and ongoing activist-researcher collaborations, and particularly from the inputs, process and products linked to the Hauser Center/CIVICUS workshop on “Building Transnational Civil Society” held in January 2001. We first focus on convergent, divergent and emergent
reflections and perspectives on transnational civil society and then turn our attention towards identifying future challenges and opportunities. In order to begin to chart paths forward with respect to these challenges and opportunities, we draw some lessons and strategies from several recent works and the conference discussions on transnational civil society experiences to date. We conclude by offering some thoughts about future needs and activities, focusing particular attention on the types of activist-researcher collaborations and products that warrant further exploration and support.

Reflections and Perspectives

Multiple perspectives exist on the notion of transnational civil society and ideas such as transnational activism, global civil society, transnational movements, global citizen action, and international nongovernmental organizations, even among those who are involved or sympathetic to these efforts and institutional arrangements. Our focus in this section is on offering some conceptual reflections of what is going on, why it might be important or desirable, what impact is being made by whatever phenomena might fall under these rubrics, and so on. As shown in Box 2.

Despite the broad range of views on what is going on in this area, most activists and researchers concur that there has been a proliferation of cross-border and multi-level – local, national, regional and international – efforts and institutional arrangements led and constituted primarily by civil society organizations. These transnational initiatives have ranged from coalitions promoting increased international and national efforts to combat the aids epidemic, to social movements campaigning for third world debt relief, to nongovernmental networks constructed to promote the rights of homeworkers, to formal international nongovernmental organizations established to promote good governance and sustainable development (for example, by fighting against corruption around the world). As shown in Box 3.
While cross-border and multi-level organizing, mobilizing and lobbying have deep historical roots and precursors – such as transnational campaigning against slavery or the international working man’s movement – most activists and researchers also argue that the volume, speed, intensity, breadth and depth of recent initiatives is much greater than in the past. Moreover, manifestations of transnational civil society activism are relatively recent phenomena in many places – like the Arab world – and are not very extensive in several regions – such as Africa or the former Soviet Union. This is why many prefer the term transnational to global when identifying these types of cross-border and multi-level civil society initiatives.

There seems to be some agreement about why individuals and organizations get involved in transnational efforts as well. Some of most commonly offered rationales, often in combination, include:

- To coordinate action on or against international institutions, global organizations or hegemonic states that have local, national, regional, and/or international reach around the world

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Box 2. Assessing the "Third Force"

One recent volume, The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society, edited by Ann Florini of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, set out to answer three questions about transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements: 1) Are they powerful? 2) Are they sustainable? and 3) Are they desirable? Based on six in-depth case studies ranging from landmines to anti-corruption to large dams, as one reviewer stated: "The study convincingly concludes that the power of transborder civil society is considerable, sustainable and – provided it meets standards of transparency and accountability – desirable." Five of the six case study authors were both practitioners and researchers, who had participated in the initiatives they examined for the book, and the sixth was a prominent academic who had just completed a book on the transnational network his chapter examined. The success of the project depended on many factors, but the strong social conscience combined with wisdom about the practical and moral limits of transnational civil society shared by the chapter authors certainly contributed greatly to its value and usefulness to activists and researchers alike.

Box 3. Examining the Rise of International Nongovernmental Organizations.

John Boli and George M. Thomas, in Constructing World Culture: International Nongovernmental Organizations Since 1875, have examined the meteoric rise of international civil society actors over the last century. Their data suggests that the rates of founding of regional and international NGOs increased by roughly a factor of ten from 1895 to 1973, albeit with precipitous drops during each of the World Wars. They argue that the rise of international NGOs has to be understood as part of the phenomenon of the evolution of a worldwide polity. In particular they argue that the rise of international civil society organizations can be understood as the "embodiment of universalism, individualism, rational voluntaristic authority, progress, and world citizenship." (Boli and Thomas, p. 45)
• To link activists and organizations across borders on issues of mutual concern
• To promote a set of rights or goals established by international agreements and good
governance more generally (often to secure goals or conditions that governments
will not or cannot provide)
• To share experiences, ideas and resources
• To advance understanding and better responses to shared social problems
• To share and develop knowledge on challenges that are similar across different
contexts
• To empower marginalized constituencies and provide a common front against
powerful interests

Also, as is suggested in the section on lessons and strategies below, different types of
activities and institutional arrangements seem warranted depending on the motivations
behind the transnational effort.

However, if we focus our gaze more precisely on the formation of transnational civil
society, and not just transnational efforts and institutional arrangements led or primarily
constituted by civil society organizations, who or what actually belongs or should belong to
this category? Many activists and researchers – especially those from the North and West –
suggest that transnational civil society includes organizations and movements (the latter
term broadly construed) which see themselves neither as agents of business nor of states,
and whose fields of collective/coordinated action and arenas of concern explicitly transcend
the national level – whether regional (South Asia, Western Europe, etc.) or global.

Others contest this conceptualization as being disconnected from long-standing
philosophical traditions, or as being too broad and unwieldy. On the one hand, such a
notion does not neatly align itself with understandings of civil society formulated by
theorists ranging from Adam Ferguson to Gramsci.iv While this essay is not meant to
meander into an analysis of philosophical discourses on civil society, it is clear that defining
civil society, let alone transnational civil society, has historically been difficult and
contentious. However, there do seem to be two broader poles in the debate – one that
provides a conceptualization that is generalizable and applicable to all settings, and another
which believes in definitions that depend on the context, roots, agendas and social
foundations of the specific society. Given the divergences on how to conceptualize civil
society within domestic settings, it is no surprise that conceptualizing cross-border
phenomena is so challenging.

On the other hand, the nongovernmental, not-for-profit view of transnational civil
society could include everything from terrorist networks to the Catholic Church to Neo-
Nazi groups on the net, which does not seem appropriate or useful to a range of activists
and researchers. It is universalistic, purposive, and progressive (i.e., focused on issues of
social justice, empowerment, etc.) transnational civil society efforts and institutional
arrangements that have been more and more visible recently, and these were the types
which many workshop participants wanted to understand and strengthen. Would it then
make sense to exclude the initiatives of fundamentalist religious movements or coalitions of
gun-owners’ rights organizations in the conceptualization of transnational civil society?
With such a political orientation, yet others suggest a need for a more positive framing of the manifestations or components of transnational civil society they seek to promote, rather than one that includes everything not part of the state or the market sectors. It is argued that there is the need for a “political project” or “vision/values framework” of a universal, purposive and progressive transnational civil society. However, a shared view on this remains elusive, although there is discussion of the need for these initiatives to contribute to the provision of global public goods, including global governance.

Finally, while most agreed that international agencies, states and businesses were often “targets” of transnational civil society efforts, many noted this was neither always practically true nor desirable. For example, some hold the view that strengthening states and international public agencies in certain ways empowered civil society activists and organizations to hold private sector firms more accountable to progressive international and national norms and standards. Others also see the potential importance of negotiating and collaborating with other sectors in bi- or multi-sectoral initiatives. The practical and strategic challenge is then recast as: Under what conditions does building linkages with organizations from other sectors make sense?

Given these convergent and divergent views and reflections, a set of notions that span the range of possibilities is most useful for the moment. At the most general level, transnational civil society would be defined to encompass all transnational non-state, non-market efforts and institutional arrangements (including illicit and violent categories such as terrorist networks or armed liberation/separatist movements). A more restrictive definition would include cross-border and multi-level civil society initiatives that are non-violent and promote some form of social change (including coalitions of anti-abortion activists, for example). A yet more restrictive definition might include solely manifestations of transnational civil society that are non-violent and promote some broad range of progressive goals, such as human rights, equality, justice, and environmental integrity. At this point we need a working definition that is open for reflection and revision.

Taking the middle range notion of transnational civil society initiatives non-violently promoting social change, it does seem that we can say that a transnational civil society is in formation. It is emergent in numerous ways, many of which are identified in the next section. This definition includes non-violent but “conservative” or “reactionary” cross-border and multi-level civil society efforts and so facilitates their study. That study may expand our understanding of their successful strategies as well as ways to challenge them that are of interest to more “progressive” transnational civil society elements.

It may also be useful to disaggregate transnational civil society institutional arrangements a bit further, building on these broad understandings. It certainly seems warranted to distinguish between international nongovernmental organizations and mass-based transnational social movements. While international nongovernmental organizations come in a variety of shapes and sizes – more or less bureaucratic, centralized, regional or global, as well as incorporated or not – they are generally much more formal organizations than are the comparatively loosely linked transnational social movements.

Most transnational social movements include some international nongovernmental organizations, but most international nongovernmental organizations are not expressions of
social movements, like those that promote human rights, environmentalism, world peace, and economic justice. Indeed, most international nongovernmental organizations (approx. 60%), are scientific, technical, rule-making and/or knowledge-oriented bodies like the International Hotel and Restaurant Association, the International Textile Manufacturers Federation, the International Technical Timber Association, the International Association for Landscape Ecology, and the International Association for Environmental Assessment. Moreover, even those international nongovernmental organizations that are more directly linked to broader transnational social movements – like Amnesty International – are not formal “representatives” of these broader manifestations of transnational civil society.

Somewhere in between international nongovernmental organizations and mass-based transnational social movements lie transnational coalitions and transnational networks. Transnational coalitions tend to be focused around specific campaigns with short-term objectives, like halting of a specific project or promoting a specific agreement. Transnational networks, on the other hand, tend to be longer-term institutional arrangements in which activists and advocacy organizations pursue social change, often through the tactics of elite lobbying, information gathering and dissemination, and (more rarely) the mass mobilization and protest tactics used by transnational social movements. Of course, there are often both organic and practical linkages between these different types of institutional arrangements within a specific issue area. In addition, transnational civil society is composed of all these different institutional arrangements.

Box 4. Restructuring World Politics

One of the contributions of a forthcoming volume, Restructuring World Politics: The Power of Transnational Movements, Networks and Norms, edited by Sanjeev Khagram, James V. Riker and Kathryn Sikkink, is a typology of different institutional arrangements that constitute transnational civil society. This edited volume, which took almost six years from its initial conceptualization, was a collaborative effort of activist-researchers and researcher-activists. One of the co-editors is a full-time activist now, and another is moving back and forth between the academy and the ‘real world’. The chapters in each of the three sections of the volume (on human rights, labor and sustainable development) were reviewed by individuals who had long activist careers in those areas. The hope was that this approach would bridge the researcher and activist perspectives more organically and make the volume valuable for all those who cared about understanding or contributing to transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements.

Before moving to challenges and opportunities for the future, we conclude this section by reflecting a bit more directly on the relationship between transnational civil society and globalization. While much can be said about the interactive linkages between transnational civil society and processes of democratization, marketization, the rise or reemergence of domestic civil societies – particularly in the South – most of these discussions inevitably return to the problem of globalization. The idea here is to lay out some of the broad terrain in this complex and hotly contested area. Indeed globalization may simultaneously be one of the greatest challenges and greatest opportunities for transnational civil society.
While the relationship can be conceptualized in a number of ways, two versions have received the most attention. In the first, there is nothing profound or new with contemporary globalization. For example, the international economy has always been dynamic and prone to cycles of transformation and crisis. In this view, the nation-state remains the dominant force in the international arena and continues to hold significant policy control. Correspondingly, transnational civil society remains thin and epiphenomenal with very limited capacity to influence the world.

The alternative view is that contemporary globalization is transformative in its reach and depth, ushering in dramatically new power dynamics, organizational forms, exchange relations, and so on. In the realm of civil society, the information and communication revolutions, declining costs of travel, and global spread of social norms have generated the facilitating conditions for the emergence and proliferation of transborder efforts and institutional arrangements.

It may be better to recognize that globalization is an uneven, complex, multifaceted set of processes. For example, nation-states may not be withering away, for globalization certainly works with and through virtually all nation-states. It is likely that the state with which civil society efforts and institutional arrangements interact is different or changing, with different capabilities and propensities for response, and maybe even different goals. Perhaps most importantly, processes of globalization are producing and changing the contexts in which cross-border and multi-level efforts and institutional arrangements arise, find open space or resistance, and succeed or fail.

If globalization is indeed a set of interconnected processes which are moving partly in tandem, partly independently, and often in tension with one another, would it not be at least worth considering that transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements are not just products of globalization but are contributing to globalization as well? Indeed, almost ironically, even the most ardently anti-globalization civil society efforts are contributing to common global discourses – even if those discourses favor re-localization, decentralization, and the like. The point here is not a normative one for or against globalization; it is rather a hypothesis that contemporary manifestations of transnational civil society, like their predecessors, are likely to be conscious or unconscious forces for globalization.

**Challenges and Opportunities**

Although much work remains on further developing and refining our understanding of the nature and dynamics of transnational civil society, it is certainly possible to identify several challenges and opportunities to building, empowering and sustaining it – particularly its more progressive, universalistic, and purposive elements. The ideas and perspectives offered in this section are, once again, an attempt to synthesize the rich written and verbal contributions to the January 2001 Building Transnational Civil Society Workshop. The next section offers some lessons and strategies that might be useful in addressing some of these challenges and opportunities, and the last section identifies some possible actions and activities for further work in these areas.
Virtually all the participants were concerned with how transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements can combat, rather than mirror or accentuate, existing social, political and economic inequalities. The power disparities within and across societies remain incredibly wide and deep and they may even be growing. Civil society is not immune to these asymmetries, and it can become a vehicle for their reproduction or amplification. This outcome is most disappointing when those who ostensibly are working to rectify these imbalances unintentionally worsen already bad situations.

Along similar lines of thinking, how can different levels and types of action support each other? One aspect of this challenge is that rather than displace attention from local to global levels, action instead empowers those individuals and organizations most affected by the issue. It may be a short-term necessity to raise a local struggle to the international arena, but if it remains there, the end result will be hardly satisfactory. Similarly, different tactics are often pitted against one another rather than seen as strategic, sequential or interactive modes of action. For example, elite lobbying and mass protest are not necessarily contradictory tactics.

Another question is how transnational civil society efforts can be more systematically and substantively multi-level, from local to global, in orientation. In particular, this requires greater participation of and accountability to groups and organizations at the grassroots level. It also requires moving from transnational to global civil society and the attendant broadening of involvement by less represented regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab World, and China.

In this regard, the challenges for Southern organizations, coalitions, networks and movements are particularly acute. They include, among others:

- consolidating their own constituencies and bases of political support and legitimacy
- becoming more transparent and accountable themselves
- developing and strengthening research capacities of their own
- dealing with overwhelming demands of Northern counterparts
- constructing networks based on organizations and not individuals
- strengthening capacity for transnational campaigns – both human and technical capacities

If there is one area that is of the highest priority, it is building Southern civil society capacities to participate in transnational initiatives.

There is also the challenge of cross-issue linkages among various transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements. With the increasing specialization and professionalization of many nongovernmental organizations, particularly in the West and at the international level, there is a tendency for single-issue campaigns and causes to become blind to the linkages between their work and the work of their counterparts in other areas. There are certainly opportunities being missed in terms of longer-term and sustainable change. In fact, how transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements promote sustained/sustainable change, not just a series of successful campaigns, is a broader issue that requires more considered thinking and strategizing.
In immediate terms, however, there are several challenges that must be addressed swiftly and decisively. The first is certainly a response to the growth of conservative and regressive manifestations of transnational civil society, in the form of transborder and multi-level efforts such as the National Rifle Association in the United States, various religious fundamentalisms that seek not only self-preservation but domination, and the resurgence of networks like the Neo-Nazis around the world.

Likewise, it is a high priority to challenge the backlash against transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements that is not focused on constructive criticism, but rather attempts to disempower and delegitimize transnational civil society initiatives. This is linked to the challenge of why, when and how transnational civil society efforts openly oppose undemocratic decision-making processes and engage in inter-sectoral negotiation and collaboration.

Lessons and Strategies

What are some of the lessons and strategies that can be gleaned from past experiences in terms of effective external efforts and internal institutional arrangements that offer guidance for tackling these challenges and utilizing these opportunities? While not exhaustive by any means, the growing literature – often based on activist-researcher collaborations – and the materials from the Building Transnational Civil Society Workshop provide a range of possible ideas worth review. The box below reflects collaboration focused on efforts by transnational civil society coalitions to influence projects and policies of the World Bank.

Box 5. Accountability in and outside of Transnational Advocacy Coalitions

Jonathan Fox and L. David Brown, *The Struggle for Accountability: The World Bank, NGOs and Grassroots Movements* (MIT Press, 1998) describe a collaborative effort between scholars and civil society activists involved in transnational coalitions to influence World Bank projects and policies. The project was hosted by the Institute for Development Research and received strategic advice from the Bank Information Center. Practitioners and researchers shared the agenda-setting process. The project convened two conferences to draw lessons about accountability between the World Bank and transnational coalitions and accountability within those coalitions. The book took the form of a “researcher/activist sandwich,” with most of the activist cases framed by the scholars’ chapters at the beginning and the end. The learning process between activist researchers and scholars was interactive, mutual and horizontal.

Lessons about influencing international institutions included analysis of alternative campaign strategies, building alliances within target agencies, recognizing alternative forms of influence, and building capacity for the future. Lessons about accountability within alliances included recognizing the importance of building local bases, building organizational chains to span power, wealth, and geographic gaps, using face-to-face negotiations to build shared strategies, and creating interpersonal linkages and trust.

In order to simplify the presentation, these lessons and strategies have been organized into the categories of external efforts and internal institutional arrangements. Of course, the boundaries between these are soft and fluid, particularly when transnational movements, coalitions and issue-networks are involved.
External Efforts

At the broadest level, like virtually all groups and organizations, transnational civil society initiatives require a strong political base – a set of constituencies and allies for and with whom the work is being done. In this regard, the continuous need for real consultation and dialogue is critical, especially by the most visible members of transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements. Investing time and resources in choosing partners and building relationships is generally worth it, even if a short-term campaign achievement may have to be sacrificed. This is all the more fundamental because transnational civil society advocacy focuses on issues of transparency, participation and accountability.

One critical strategy that is in increasingly being utilized but still could be exploited much more is the building of deeper and broader alliances among activists and organizations that focus on different issues (human rights, environment, health, indigenous peoples, gender justice, labor, etc.). This can be useful especially when the focus is multidimensional itself – such as poverty alleviation or reforming international organizations. It can also be incredibly useful for efforts and institutional arrangements around more narrowly specified issues, if only to demonstrate the broad support behind the cause.

Another strategy that has been used with increasing success is the building of coalitions with sympathetic insiders. Often representatives and employees of “target” organizations and agencies have more in common with transnational civil society efforts than with their own colleagues. Those on the “outside” benefit from increased access to information and decision-making that sympathetic insiders provide, while those on the “inside” are empowered both morally and strategically by external support.

Transnational civil society activists and organizations should keep in mind that states, multinational organizations, and other powerful groups and organizations are more likely to change policies or behavior if the change advances interests relevant to them, such as increasing citizen well-being for states, or increasing market share for corporations. Openness to information and institutionalized rule of law are key issues for most transnational civil society efforts. Thus, pushing for more of these in addition to the other goals is generally a good idea.

It should also be recognized, however, that the range of “targets” and potential allies is much broader than is often recognized. For example, technical and professional standard-setting and rule-making by international nongovernmental organizations proliferated exponentially in the 20th century. These groups and bodies often set the rules for intergovernmental organizations, states and for-profit firms around the world. Why not, for example, look to the “other WTO” (the World Tourism Organization) as a potential focus of transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements?

In other words, transnational civil society efforts are successful when they challenge “targets” by working at multiple levels simultaneously, using multi-method strategies, and encouraging multi-party involvement. These strategies can be boomerang (going outside a context and pressuring from there rather than within), funnel (getting adversaries to agree to seemingly small changes that can be gradually broadened), pincer (simultaneously from “above and below” and from “inside and outside”) or other strategies, and often several in...
combination. This suggests the importance of a sense of timing as well as the flexibility to adapt to changing strategies and contexts.

Of course, creativity lies in utilizing diverse strategies and tactics in relation to various contexts that may present themselves, especially in terms of the power dynamics and the different types of desired outcomes. But transnational efforts should be continuously watchful of the tensions between short-term, insider-oriented reform negotiations and long-term, mass-based mobilization focused on sustainable empowerment. For example, invoking abstract and diffuse values might be more critical to fundamental, long-term social transformation than it is to short-term, incremental policy reform. Moreover, the effectiveness of transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements requires strong local and national-level mobilization, and transnational initiatives can in turn also strengthen domestic civil societies in a mutually reinforcing cycle.

Finally, knowledge is essential to increased empowerment and sustainability. Knowledge includes not only issues-related expertise, but also political understandings of power structures as well as the tactics and strategies that are most useful in different settings. While issue-specific expertise is critical, the clear lesson from past experiences is the overriding importance to “communicate, communicate, communicate.” Raising public awareness at all levels – local, national, regional and global – is the hallmark of successful short-term campaigns. It also builds momentum that can contribute to longer-term empowerment and transformation. The power of knowledge also comes from continuous communication and learning within transnational civil society institutional arrangements. It is to some lessons and strategies for those internal institutional arrangements that we now turn.

Internal Institutional Arrangements

Internally, transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements must use knowledge as well as symbols to build common consciousness and identity. The development of binding and bonding cultural symbols is all the more important for these endeavors given their cross-border and multi-level nature. Also, transnational efforts are much more empowered and effective when many members have issue-oriented expertise rather than just a few, for it facilitates mutual understanding as well as a collective ability to project common messages.

There are also strategies available for dealing with the various asymmetries and inequalities that were mentioned in the challenges and opportunities section of this chapter, and for creating participatory, transparent, and accountable forms of internal governance. Some transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements have used transparent organizational chains with clear accountability mechanisms between groups most closely linked to each other. Others have utilized carefully designed participatory action research strategies following many of the principles offered in Chapter Three of this volume in order to provide means by which less-resourced participants are heard and can influence action.

For some initiatives, a division of labor in terms of types of activities implemented by different parties is worked out, and those divisions are communicated and coordinated as much as possible. In order to minimize the likelihood of dominance of one group or set of groups, other transnational civil society efforts utilize a rotating leadership model. In general,
it has been found that vertical links strengthened by strong horizontal links and partnerships can be extremely valuable in improving the quality of internal institutional arrangements. Perhaps the most general lesson of all, however, is that electronic communications can facilitate but cannot substitute for face-to-face, person-to-person contact in building the mutual respect and trust that is critical to empowered, sustainable and desirable transnational civil society efforts.

Box 6. Lessons for Organizing Civil Society Networks

The regional transnational civil society network ALOP in Latin America has found the following tactics and strategies extremely valuable for ensuring a vibrant set of internal institutional arrangements:

- Discussion/dialogue/development of common values
- Small but proactive center with a focus on "strong decentralism"
- Accountability systems – elaborated and formal rules, contracts, continuous communication
- Capacity to renew collective leadership
- Capacity to renew agenda
- A Southern-centered identity in relation to Northern groups/NGOs
- Constructing networks based on organizations and not individuals

Future Needs and Activities

While building transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements requires significant investments of resources, time and talent, these investments can create reusable “institutional assets” and “social capital” for future campaigns and more long-term sustainable change. However, there is a great need to further support the development and strengthening of transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements. This, in turn, can be supported by further documentation of experiences to date, and cross-regional exchanges that animate these experiences beyond words on written pages. Moreover, documentation on transnational civil society efforts and institutional arrangements must be translated into a range of languages to generate more accessible guides to transnational issues and transnational efforts/institutional arrangements.

One implication of the multi-level and complex dynamics of transnational civil society is that many different perspectives are relevant to understanding and contributing to its empowerment, sustainability and legitimacy. In terms of academic disciplines, for example, political science and economics may be required to understand the macro-context, organization theory for the meso-level dynamics of key agencies and groups, and social psychology may be necessary for understanding the actions of key individuals and dynamics of interpersonal relationships. Beyond academic disciplines, efforts and institutional arrangements that involve people from all backgrounds, professions, walks of life and multiple levels increase the likelihood of sustained impact and support.
Chapter Four

It is our hope that this chapter and this volume make a strong case for the value of activist-researcher collaboration. It is certainly one of the important ways by which the legitimacy of transnational civil society, and civil society more broadly, can be enhanced. It is to the subject of legitimacy that we now turn.

Notes to Chapter Four

1 This chapter was drafted and revised primarily by Sanjeev Khagram with constructive comments by the other individuals listed. It was also heavily based on short memos prepared by all the participants in the “Building Transnational Civil Society” workshop held at Harvard University’s Hauser Center for Non-Profit Organizations in January 2001. These memos can be found on the websites of both the Hauser Center and CIVICUS. While the quality of the chapter is a reflection of all those who contributed, all mistakes, errors and omissions are the responsibility of the lead author.


4 Indeed one commentator on a draft of this chapter suggested the possibility of including those transborder efforts and institutional arrangements that seek to generate broader social change from seeking to increase their own political power as another criterion for being in or outside transnational civil society.
Civil Society Legitimacy: 
A Discussion Guide

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Civil society organizations (CSOs) are fostering new initiatives and perspectives on a wide range of issues – protecting human rights, promoting local economic development, challenging violence against women, fostering environmental sustainability, mobilizing indigenous peoples, enabling corruption reform, holding business and government actors accountable for their activities, and many others. As CSOs have become more visible and influential, concerns have increasingly been raised about their legitimacy to take on such roles. Who gave nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), or other civil society actors the right to have so much influence on these questions? Who do they represent, if anyone? To whom are they accountable for their positions and practices? On what basis ought their voices be heard and assessed?

These concerns have been raised in many quarters. Popular analyses of highly visible civil society initiatives question the legitimacy of some participants. International agencies frequently resist challenges from CSOs with questions about their legitimacy and accountability. Researchers and consultants have created a growing list of publications on civil society accountability and legitimacy, and thoughtful activists are also focusing attention on how civil society actors can cope with legitimacy problems.

While some challenges to the legitimacy of civil society actors may be efforts to blunt their influence, it is reasonable to raise questions about the legitimacy of civil society initiatives. Efforts to clarify their bases of legitimacy can be constructive for civil society actors themselves, for their initiatives, and for effective governance as a whole.

This “discussion guide” provides a brief map for CSOs to reflect on their own forms and sources of legitimacy, how that legitimacy may be accepted (or rejected) by key stakeholders, and how they might strengthen their claims to legitimacy. The guide is not a blueprint for establishing legitimacy for all civil society actors, but it is intended to stimulate ideas for how CSOs—particularly those engaged in policy influence—can strengthen their legitimacy.

What is legitimacy? Civil society organizations are legitimate when their roles and activities are accepted as appropriate to their contexts. Mike Edwards defines it as follows:
Chapter Five

“Legitimacy is generally understood as the right to be and do something in society—a sense that an organization is lawful, admissible, and justified in its chosen course of action.”

For policy influence CSOs, legitimacy refers more specifically to the acknowledged right to exert influence on policy formulation and implementation. It is not necessary that observers or stakeholders agree with the activities of a legitimate civil society actor, only that they see those activities to be within the domain of actions that are legally and socially acceptable to the actor. It is also not necessary for CSOs to be legitimate in the eyes of all possible observers—though stakeholders that do not acknowledge that legitimacy are less likely to be influenced.

The legitimacy of CSOs is closely tied to their missions and the strategies by which they seek to accomplish those missions. CSOs adopt a bewildering array of organizational purposes and carry out programs at many different levels. Legitimacy for CSOs that provide health and education services to underserved populations, for example, may be rooted in the quality and quantity of their services. On the other hand, legitimacy for CSOs committed to building grassroots capacities and organizations for self-help may turn on their relations with their local partners. The legitimacy of political influence CSOs, in another contrast, may derive from their relations with the subject matter, the influence target or the citizens they represent. Different missions and strategies, in short, may imply quite different sources of legitimacy, though we believe that they can usually be related back to the general bases described below.

We focus here on the legitimacy of CSOs concerned with influence over policies and institutions, particularly at the international level. So we are particularly interested in legitimacy that recognizes a CSO as an accepted and influential actor in policy domains.

At least four bases for legitimacy are important to CSOs concerned with influencing policies and politics. Legitimacy may be grounded in one or several of these bases. In many cases it is valuable to draw on several. The bases include:

- **Moral legitimacy**: A CSO can ground its claim to legitimacy in transcendent moral values that have overwhelming force in the circumstance. Bringing food to the victims of a famine or campaigning for an end to mutilation of children by abandoned land mines are appeals to moral bases for legitimation. Moral legitimacy may be questioned in terms of the importance of its value claims and in terms of how well the CSO’s activities in fact reflect those values. The impact of claims based on moral authority will depend on the CSO’s ability to make a case that is compelling in terms of the values of critical stakeholders.

- **Technical or performance legitimacy**: A second basis for legitimacy of CSOs is a claim to expertise, knowledge, information, or competence that justifies its actions and its influence on authoritative decisions. When a coalition of international relief and development agencies lobbies the UN about actions to cope with complex emergencies, their claims are in large part grounded in years of experience with providing relief and development support to populations in precisely those circumstances. Challenges to this form of legitimacy focus on alternative data or interpretations that can undermine the technical or performance claims of the CSO.
• **Political legitimacy**: Still other civil society actors claim legitimacy on political grounds, such as democratic representativeness, participation, transparency, and accountability to constituencies for which they speak or act. Democratic legitimacy depends on decision processes that allow those represented to understand decisions and consequences, participate in decisions, influence results, and hold organization leaders accountable. A more general form of political legitimacy may be based on more amorphous popular support for the CSO positions. Claims to democratic legitimacy can refer to either internal or external decision processes. Internal democratic legitimacy depends on processes that enable member participation, transparency and accountability, and so allow the CSO to claim to represent those members. External democratic legitimacy may be grounded in informal popular support to more formally established democratic decision-making with allies and coalition members. Amnesty International, for example, enjoys widespread popular legitimacy without formal systems for enabling widespread participation in decision-making, while some indigenous peoples’ movements have formal processes for accountability to thousands of members. Democratic legitimacy becomes less credible when CSO decision-making does not enable substantial influence by those it claims to represent.

• **Legal legitimacy**: Another base for legitimacy is in compliance with legal expectations, requirements, and mandates set up by duly constituted authorities. This base for legitimacy supports CSOs that have met legal standards for their roles, by, for example, creating boards that meet statutory requirements or complying with auditing regulations. Often questions about this kind of legal legitimacy are raised by government agencies charged with regulating the activities of civil society actors. CSOs may also draw on legal legitimacy in pressing other actors to live up to their own standards and policies. Thus challenging the World Bank or multinational corporations to live up to their own policies or to international regulations draws on the legitimacy of those standards to influence behavior.

While it is tempting to assume that faithfully acting in accord with abstract principles will establish CSO legitimacy, in practice CSOs often deal with diverse stakeholders with quite different standards or expectations. It may be important to construct legitimacy claims to fit the expectations of different stakeholders whose continued support is essential.

These bases all refer to aspects of the CSOs as organizations. The case for organizational legitimacy also turns in part on factors external to the organization. External forces that may affect legitimacy include, for example, the current status of the issue as a “hot” or “tabooed” topic, the characteristics of other actors with stakes in the issue, and the long-term challenges involved in effective action on the problem. CSOs may have little direct control over these forces, but their planning can be greatly enhanced by recognizing forces that will reinforce or undermine their claims to legitimacy.
Discussing Legitimacy

Civil society organizations are often vulnerable to challenges to their legitimacy in part because they have not thought about the bases for their claims, or explored what claims might be persuasive to those they seek to mobilize or to influence. We believe that strengthening CSO claims of legitimacy involves the five steps summarized in the flow chart in Figure 5.1. These steps reflect a roughly sequential process. It is easier to identify relevant stakeholders after defining the CSO’s mission and strategy, and articulating grounds for legitimacy is facilitated by knowing which stakeholders are critical. The first three steps are important prior to launching policy influence campaigns; the last two may be carried out during and after those campaigns.

Figure 5.1: CSO Legitimacy Development Process

| Step 1. Identify organizational visions, missions, and strategies. |
| Step 2. Map stakeholders critical to implementing strategies. |
| Step 3. Articulate grounds for legitimacy with key stakeholders. |
| Step 4. Resolve legitimacy questions with key stakeholders. |
| Step 5. Meet legitimacy standards in implementing programs |

Overall CSO legitimacy turns on a portfolio of campaigns and policy influence activities that build its long-term reputation. Both advocacy organizations and policy issues go through life cycles, and one of the challenges to CSO leadership is to match the stage and capacities of the organization to the demands and risks of the issue, and then construct the appropriate mix of legitimacy bases and claims to support effective action. The discussion of the five steps focuses on frameworks and tools that can be used by CSOs to reflect on their legitimacy, and how they might enhance it with stakeholders who are important to their success.

Step 1. Identify organizational missions and strategies that define legitimacy concerns.

CSOs involved in policy influence campaigns may have quite different missions and strategies for accomplishing them. Even within the boundaries of CSOs that are concerned with influencing national and international policies, there is a wide range of organizational purposes and approaches to achieving them. For example, policy influence CSOs might focus on one or several of the following approaches:

- **Agenda Setting**: Identifying issues and framing them to attract attention of various publics and policy makers is a critical function that is often undertaken by CSOs. Raising issues is often an essential prelude to policy action. Amnesty International, for example, raises issues about violations of human and political rights for public
discussion and action. In a less confrontational style, the International Forum on Capacity-Building for Southern NGOs has articulated issues that undermine the effectiveness of civil society strengthening programs in many countries and regions. The focus in agenda setting initiatives is on getting valid data, interpreting those data to give them meaning, and mobilizing concern among relevant constituencies.

- **Policy formulation**: CSOs may also focus on articulating policy options and campaigning to have them adopted. Transparency International, for example, helped articulate and then campaigned for the ratification of a policy to make corrupt practices illegal for businesses from the OECD countries. Critical activities in policy formulation include data collection and analysis to assess impacts of past policies, design of improved policies, and mobilization and organization of campaigns to encourage their adoption.

- **Policy implementation**: CSOs may influence many aspects of policy implementation. In some cases, CSOs help to develop and carry out policies. Transparency International national branches, for example, work with governments to develop and implement programs for national corruption reforms. CSOs in many countries increasingly work with international actors like the World Bank to design and implement projects that make use of their special resources and access to grassroots concerns.

- **Policy monitoring**: CSOs may monitor and assess policy implementation efforts to make sure that intended effects are achieved. For example, a network of civil society actors spawned by the International Baby Food Campaign monitors corporate compliance with the code of conduct to regulate marketing practices adopted by the UN. The Environmental Defense Fund challenges projects that fail to implement grassroots participation or environmental impact assessments required by World Bank internal policies. CSOs can use their access to local groups to get information and perspectives on how well policy objectives are in fact being met on the ground.

- **Institutional change**: CSOs may also seek to reform institutional arrangements to support evolving policies. Some institutional change initiatives focus on existing transnational institutions, such as the campaign to promote easier access to World Bank project information and vehicles for grassroots protest of project problems. Other initiatives seek to create institutional arrangements to cope with problems not met by existing resources. Transparency International created a new agency to cope with problems ignored by existing arrangements. Institutional change initiatives require understanding current institutions, capacity to design improved arrangements, and skills for changing old or creating new systems.

Different CSOs will adopt quite different elements and combinations of these approaches to accomplish their missions. In practice many civil society organizations and alliances use several approaches – indeed perhaps all five – in the course of a campaign. We separate them for the purposes of analysis, however, because different approaches may target different stakeholders and involve different bases for legitimacy.
The first step in clarifying the organization’s legitimacy is to develop a shared sense of its mission and strategy. More specifically, what are initial answers to the following questions:

- What is the mission of the CSO – its basic purpose or reason for existing?
- How much does its strategy focus on issue identification, policy formulation, policy implementation, policy monitoring, institutional change or other approaches to policy influence?

**Step 2. Map stakeholders and forces critical to implementing organizational strategies.**

Civil society organizations typically deal with multiple stakeholders: constituents, donors, regulators, allies, influence targets, staff and members, to name a few. One way to identify key stakeholders is to use the “strategic triangle” to focus attention on stakeholders essential to effective strategy implementation. This framework suggests that any CSO strategy will require attention to a set of internal and external stakeholders—but different strategies may require attentions to different sets.

The strategic triangle in Figure 5.2 identifies three factors that must be considered in crafting a CSO strategy. First, any CSO strategy will seek to create value, in the sense of making a contribution such as service delivery, capacity-building, or policy influence that improves the quality of life of stakeholders. Second, a viable CSO strategy must contribute to organizational authorization and support, in the sense of helping to build and maintain relations with essential resource providers and regulators. Third, a CSO strategy choice must attend to the operational capacity of the organization and its allies, so that it is able to carry out programs and campaigns that are required by its strategy. Strategies that do not take account of all three sets of concerns are not viable in the longer term. The CSO must create value for some stakeholders; it must mobilize support and authorization from other stakeholders; and it must carry out activities within the capacities of its own and its allies’ resources.

**Figure 5.2: The Strategic Triangle**
The nature and importance of different stakeholders may vary considerably across different CSO strategies. Mapping important stakeholders and assessing their priority is a critical step in assessing and developing organizational legitimacy.

Stakeholder mapping may be quite general, in the sense of focusing on stakeholders related to the CSO’s overall mission, or quite specific, as in mapping the stakeholders relevant to a specific policy influence campaign. For example, Figure 3 presents a simplified map of the stakeholders involved in Transparency International’s (TI) campaign for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Convention against the Bribery of Foreign Public Officials. This example is intended to illustrate the idea of stakeholder mapping rather than to present a fully developed map of TI’s campaign.

TI’s campaign to reduce corruption in international business transactions was organized in part to reduce corruption’s impacts on development initiatives. The constituents who will gain value from this campaign include development project planners and implementers, citizens who benefit from those projects, currently-regulated businesses (like US companies subject to the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977, who cannot compete equally with less constrained bribe-payers from other industrialized countries), and project funders whose resources are diverted by bribes. Beneficiaries of more regulation may be quite satisfied with legitimacy claims grounded in moral opposition to corruption, and claims backed by TI’s expertise in developing policies for reform. Other stakeholders are the targets of TI’s campaign, such as OECD governments that do not regulate bribery (or who even offer tax deductions for bribes as business expenses). These stakeholders may impose different legitimacy demands on TI. They may ask whom TI represents, and why they should disadvantage their citizens by imposing new regulations at the demand of an agency that is not representative of their citizens.

TI’s map also includes a number of stakeholders who authorize its existence and support its operations. Donors and volunteer supporters provide important resources; the German government authorizes its operation as a nonprofit organization; and a transnational network of eminent supporters confers credibility on the organization. These stakeholders may have diverse expectations of TI. The German government may be concerned about...
obedience to its regulations, while donors are concerned about TI's use of their resources, and TI volunteer supporters are concerned about fulfilling its mission.

Finally TI's map also includes stakeholders who are essential to its operational capacity. The most obvious in this regard are its staff and its network of volunteer activists who actually participate in campaigns. TI's chapters in different countries are central to national initiatives, and other organizations, like the World Bank, join campaign activities for their own purposes. The demands for legitimacy from these constituents may also be various: Staff expect TI to live up to the promises that brought them to the organization, while allies expect it to live up to agreed responsibilities in the campaign.

Note that some external forces that are important to creating and maintaining legitimacy may not be immediate stakeholders in the organization's activities. TI's legitimacy, for example, was enhanced by several international corruption scandals in the beginning of the 1990s, transitions to more democratic regimes in several countries that highlighted problems of corruption, and the failure of international institutions and academic disciplines to deal with the issue. So the ineffectiveness of existing institutions was all too visible when TI appeared on the scene.

Mapping stakeholders and contextual forces clarifies the identity of actors who are important to organizational legitimacy, but it also clarifies the diverse expectations and demands to which CSOs must respond. Three questions are critical to this mapping process:

• Which stakeholders are central to value creation, to support and authorization, and to operational capability?
• What demands do they make, and to what extent do those demands pose dilemmas for the organization?
• What other contextual forces are relevant to legitimacy on this issue?

Step 3. Articulate grounds for legitimacy with key stakeholders

The identification of strategies and stakeholders for CSO missions raises complicated questions of legitimacy. What grounds are appropriate to different strategies or activities? Should the CSO establish and preserve legitimacy with all stakeholders? What should it do when the demands from different stakeholders diverge, or when strategy changes raise new issues of legitimacy?

Table 5.1 presents a matrix defined by bases of legitimacy as columns with policy influence strategies as rows. This arrangement allows exploration of the links between strategy and bases of legitimacy. Transparency International, for example, has adopted a strategy that emphasizes agenda setting, as in the use of the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) and the Bribe Payers Index (BPI) to disseminate information about corruption, and policy formulation, as in the campaign to encourage adoption of the OECD Convention against Bribery. TI's legitimacy in implementing these approaches appears to be grounded particularly in moral authority and in performance. The moral authority is grounded in the destructive impacts on development of diverting resources to corruption, and to a lesser extent on the reprehensibility of corruption itself. The performance legitimacy is grounded
in developing good information and expertise about reforms to promote transparency.
The “TIs” in Table 1 illustrate how TI’s strategy might be understood in terms of its bases for legitimacy.

### Table 5.1: Legitimacy for Strategies: Transparency International

| Agenda Setting | TI | TI | – | – |
| Policy Formulation | TI | TI | – | – |
| Policy Implementation | – | – | – | – |
| Policy Monitoring | – | – | – | – |
| Institutional Reform | – | – | – | – |

Assessing legitimacy vis-a-vis stakeholders is more complex. Table 2 uses the list of TI stakeholders from Figure 5.2 to explore legitimacy with different stakeholders. For many constituencies, TI’s legitimacy is grounded in the bases of moral authority and performance, as implied by TI’s strategy. Legitimacy for citizens, funders, and most support and operational capacity stakeholders can be based in TI’s framing of the moral issues posed by corruption, and in TI’s performance as an articulator and designer of reform approaches. Some stakeholders, such as targets of TI campaigns or support and authorization constituencies, may be interested in whether TI has established a legal basis for its work. To the extent that TI relies on shared decision-making with staff, chapters, and volunteer activists, it may create an internal base for democratic legitimacy, even though it does not claim to represent external constituents.

### Table 5.2: Legitimacy for Stakeholders: Transparency International

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Creation Stakeholders</th>
<th>Moral Legitimacy</th>
<th>Technical or Performance Legitimacy</th>
<th>Political Legitimacy</th>
<th>Legal Legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project funders</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy targets*</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support and Authorization</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>TI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>TI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government regulators</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donors</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>TI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer supporters*</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Capacity</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National chapters</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer activists*</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational allies</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>TI</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This analysis makes it clear that different stakeholders have different standards for assessing legitimacy, and their bases may differ depending on the issue in question. Citizens may be more concerned about the moral bases for TI’s legitimacy than business actors or government regulators. TI’s legal legitimacy may be important to regulators or targets, and its democratic legitimacy is relevant primarily to stakeholders involved in participatory decisions.

Note that this diversity of interests can be a source of conflicts among stakeholders about whose interests have priority and which bases are most important. Should TI allocate more resources to demonstrating its legitimacy in moral terms or should it focus on enhancing its performance? Citizens might demand the former and policy targets the latter. Should TI devote resources to shoring up its legal bases or to developing internal participation? Should it emphasize legitimacy with organizational allies rather than government regulators or stakeholders in development projects?

Exploring alternative bases for legitimacy for strategies and stakeholders can be quite complex. Strategy changes may alter the set of stakeholders interested in the CSO’s activities. Exploring these issues sets the stage for deciding how to develop a coherent combination of legitimacy bases. The key questions to be answered in this process are:

- What are the CSO’s grounds for legitimacy, given its strategy and key stakeholders?
- What questions threaten legitimacy with key stakeholders?

For a legitimacy discussion process CSOs could construct tables that lay out the legitimacy implications of their strategies (like Table 5.1) and their stakeholders (like Table 5.2). Cells in the stakeholder table that reflect significant questions could be marked with an asterisk for further analysis. Legitimacy questions are common for CSOs whose stakeholders have diverse and sometimes polarized interests. They are “significant” when they threaten: (a) the continued survival of the CSO; (b) its capacity to achieve its mission; or (c) its opportunities to expand its impacts.

For example, both policy-makers and volunteer stakeholders have been marked with asterisks in Table 5.2. TI could have been dismissed by many policy-makers as a creature of US business (because of the disadvantages imposed by the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act), and so lost its legitimacy to influence international norms about corruption. Alternatively, its network of eminent volunteer supporters and activists might have rebelled at TI’s decision to focus on reforming policies rather than exposing corruption, and so undermined both its support and its operational capacity. Action by the CSO may be crucial to resolve such challenges to legitimacy.

Step 4. Resolve legitimacy questions with key stakeholders.

Not all legitimacy questions from stakeholders can be resolved, of course. When parties see their interests as fundamentally opposed, they may not be willing to concede the legitimacy of each other’s concerns. Regimes that see bribes as an important prerogative of holding power may not see the legitimacy of TI’s work, no matter what TI does. But many disputes over legitimacy can be resolved or at least moderated. At least four approaches offer avenues to resolving legitimacy questions:
(1) Clarifying bases of legitimacy and how they support CSO activities;
(2) Negotiating differences with stakeholders to create common grounds for legitimacy;
(3) Lobbying governments to establish new grounds for legitimate action; and
(4) Contesting to redefine legitimacy bases for reluctant stakeholders.

These approaches vary in their challenge to existing arrangements. Clarifying bases for legitimacy involves reducing misunderstandings. Negotiation engages stakeholders to produce new agreements. Lobbying requires influence on state policies. Contesting confronts differences and power to define critical issues. Moving from interest-based negotiations to struggles over rights and power may require quite different capacities and resources.

Clarifying bases of legitimacy is probably the least expensive option in terms of time and resources. Articulating the CSO’s rationale for its own legitimacy may resolve tensions based on misunderstanding and mistrust rather than serious conflicts of interest. TI justified its adoption of a reform strategy to its supporters on performance grounds, arguing that long-term, widespread change requires reform coalitions with policy-makers and international businesses – and that exposure strategies might alienate those constituencies. While TI may have lost supporters committed to punishing corrupt practices, it has recruited highly placed volunteers who can facilitate long-term reform.

Negotiating bases of legitimacy identifies shared interests and possibilities to create common grounds for legitimacy with key stakeholders. Such negotiations may require careful exploration of the converging and conflicting interests of the parties to articulate agreements that respect and advance many agendas. In developing TI, for example, the founders built an international network of highly placed, well-respected individuals concerned about the impacts of corruption on sustainable development. They explicitly built a reputation as a transnational actor. One of TI’s first successes was getting the Summit of the Americas, including more than thirty heads of state from Northern and Southern nations, to unanimously recognize that corruption was a problem – and so publicly legitimize campaigns for corruption reform.

Lobbying to establish new grounds for legitimacy by government action is costly, but it can have sweeping impacts. Since courts and legislatures are sources of legitimate rules and coercive authority, new legislation can legitimate the operation of CSOs that seek to implement and enforce those policies. Transparency International built on its success with the Summit of the Americas to lobby the OECD countries to ban bribery in international transactions by their businesses. All twenty-nine OECD countries signed a new treaty to that effect in 1997. In effect this treaty increased the public visibility and legitimacy of TI’s work, while it created a new legal context for dealings by industrialized country businesses.

Contesting to redefine legitimacy may be particularly critical for CSOs that do not have easy access to key decisions that affect them. The founders of Transparency International challenged the definition of corruption as an inevitable but undiscussable aspect of international business, but they had the stature to gain access to key decision-
makers by virtue of their personal eminence. Others may have to use more confrontational approaches to gain that access. A confederation of indigenous peoples in Ecuador, for example, gained a seat at the table with government and business leaders to define a new land reform law only after a national strike that paralyzed the country. The redefinition of legitimate participants in key decisions can be a highly conflicted process that is expensive to many or all of the parties.

Once general principles for the legitimacy are articulated, more specific standards for legitimate behavior can be identified. Thus for Transparency International, legitimacy with most external constituencies turns on moral and performance grounds. To maintain its legitimacy, TI must itself meet more specific standards of transparency and integrity in its dealings. The organization and its branches are highly vulnerable to challenges based on their failure to meet their own standards. TI must also meet high performance standards to maintain its credibility. If its analysis of the costs of corruption to sustainable development or the information on which it creates rankings for the CPI and the BPI are shown to be incorrect, its legitimacy with many of its constituents can be seriously undermined.

Standard setting may also require rejecting standards that are inappropriate. It is common, for example, for critics of civil society actors to note that they do not represent clear constituencies. Certainly TI cannot claim to represent the populations who might benefit from its activities, since they do not participate in TI decision-making in any democratic process. But TI claims legitimacy on performance and moral rather than democratic grounds, so criticism of representativeness should be rejected as accurate but irrelevant to its legitimacy.

Resolving questions about legitimacy involves answering to questions like:

- How can disagreements with stakeholders about legitimacy be resolved?
- What specific standards can establish the legitimacy of organizational activities?

The answers to these questions provide the basis for ongoing monitoring and assessment of behavior as legitimate or otherwise.

Step 5. Meet legitimacy standards in implementing programs.

Defining and meeting standards in implementing organizational activities is easier said than done, of course. Meeting high standards is particularly difficult for international NGOs that, like TI, are geographically dispersed, organized by collegial decision-making, and operated across a wide range of political, economic, and cultural systems. Standards may vary considerably across countries and cultures, and consistent enforcement of single standards is difficult even within hierarchical systems, let alone networks of autonomous branches that deal with diverse national concerns and expectations.

Meeting legitimacy standards involves at least four organizational activities as the organization implements its programs:

1. Specifying indicators of legitimacy standards violations;
2. Establishing rules and procedures to inhibit violations;
Chapter Five

(3) Acting to remedy problems with legitimacy standards; and

(4) Enabling organizational learning.

Specifying indicators of legitimacy violations is essential to recognizing problems and threats to CSO legitimacy. Monitoring or assessing violations is not possible if they cannot be reliably recognized. For example, Transparency International recognized early that its legitimacy would be seriously at risk if the organization were itself associated with corrupt practices by its branches or members. When one of its founding members in Ecuador was accused of bribery to get legislation passed, the organization recognized that such events were significant threats to its moral authority and its claims for performance-based and legal legitimacy.

Establishing rules and procedures to inhibit violations can help to identify and prevent future problems. The existence of organizational policies, rules, and procedures against activities that undermine its legitimacy will not always prevent violations, but they can reduce temptation and catalyze quick action when violations occur. Transparency International, for example, now requires formally accredited national affiliates to conform to two rules: (1) they must be non-partisan, and (2) they must forego investigations of individual allegations of corruption. The first standard bars active politicians from decision-making roles, and is in part a response to the experience in Ecuador. The second protects TI’s commitment to building multi-party coalitions to support reform, which might be difficult if potential members were also subject to individual investigations. Within these criteria, national organizations can articulate their own programs and strategies without threatening the legitimacy of the international organization. Violating those rules may be grounds for decertification as an affiliate.

Acting to remedy problems is critical to maintaining legitimacy standards. Hearing but not responding to feedback can quickly corrode legitimacy. Transparency International built its Corruption Perceptions Index from existing surveys, but soon was criticized for focusing on bribe-takers in the developing world rather than bribe-payers in the industrialized countries. The creation of a Bribe Payers’ Index (BPI) to complement the CPI undercut charges of pro-Northern or pro-business bias. Prompt action is particularly important as a response to challenges, since regaining lost legitimacy is often much more difficult than preserving legitimacy already established.

Enabling organizational learning involves being open to challenge and criticism from constituents as well as drawing lessons and new strategies from experience. Although challenges to organizational legitimacy are seldom easy to hear, organizations that tolerate and even encourage feedback about and exploration of their shortcomings are more likely to invent ways to improve performance and remedy violations. Transparency International, for example, has moved quickly to distance itself from national initiatives that do not meet its standards, and it has made substantial efforts to attend to questions raised about indices of perceived corruption. Paying attention to feedback, particularly from key stakeholders, enables CSOs to identify problems and learn from experience relatively quickly, even though the feedback is often uncomfortable to receive.
Building Legitimacy

The issue of civil society legitimacy is becoming increasingly important as civil society actors wield more influence in shaping local, national, and international policies. So clarifying the bases on which its legitimacy rests is a critical step for CSOs, particularly when they are operating in areas characterized by diverse interests and overt political conflict.

Legitimacy building is an ongoing process, played out in the challenges and responses among many actors on complex issues. Figure 5.4 elaborates the sequence of steps summarized in Figure 5.1 by adding questions to be considered at each step. The figure also emphasizes the ongoing nature of legitimacy building by adding arrows to indicate

Figure 5.4: Elaborated CSO Legitimacy Development Process

Step 1. Identify organizational visions, missions, and strategies.
- What is the CSO mission?
- How much does CSO strategy focus on
  - Agenda setting?
  - Policy formulation?
  - Policy implementation?
  - Policy monitoring
  - Institutional change?

Step 2. Map stakeholders critical to implementing strategies.
- Who are key stakeholders for:
  - Value creation?
  - Support and authorization?
  - Operational capacity?
  - What demands and dilemmas do they pose?
  - What other contextual forces are relevant?

Step 3. Articulate grounds for legitimacy with key stakeholders.
- What are key bases for legitimacy:
  - Moral?
  - Technical or Performance?
  - Political?
  - Legal?
- What legitimacy questions are important?

Step 4. Answer legitimacy questions with key stakeholders.
- Identify principles for resolving questions
  - Clarify bases of legitimacy
  - Negotiate differences to gain common grounds
  - Lobby for legislation to create new grounds
  - Contest to redefine existing definitions
  - Identify specific standards for legitimacy

Step 5. Meet standards for legitimacy in implementation.
- Specify indicators of violations
- Establish rules and procedures to inhibit violations
- Act to remedy problems
- Enable organizational learning
feedback loops that preserve or undermine legitimacy by subsequent learning. Legitimacy cannot be established once and then ignored. Even if the CSO remains focused on a single issue, preserving legitimacy involves a continuing learning process as the issue evolves, actors enter and depart the domain, competitors develop new approaches, and external forces create new social and political dynamics within which the issues are posed.

So legitimacy building requires continuing attention as issues, actors, and contexts evolve. The legitimacy bases of today may be less relevant tomorrow. Leaders of CSOs concerned with influencing policy stop learning and evolving their claims to legitimacy at peril to their continuing effectiveness.

This discussion guide is intended to encourage reflection and development of legitimacy frameworks among civil society actors who are beginning to consider the issue as well as those who have been struggling with legitimacy issues for years. Of course this guide does not deal with all the complexities of assessing and developing legitimacy. We have tried to provide a simple – hopefully not simple-minded – approach to complex issues. This framework can be further developed in application to “harder” and more ambiguous cases. But for our purposes here, the Transparency International example has provided more than enough complexity to illustrate the framework.

We hope to further develop the framework and generate more examples in the future. The challenge of legitimacy is not limited to civil society, so we hope that civil society analyses can be tested and deepened in engagement with business and government actors as well as with other civil society agencies – expanding the discourse about the legitimacy of government and business as well as that of civil society. That engagement can help to create more widely shared understanding of the issues, the agencies involved, and norms and expectations under which future problems of governance and social problem-solving can be resolved.
Notes to Chapter Five

1 This chapter is based on a workshop discussion in which many co-authors participated. It was drafted by Dave Brown with inputs and comments from the listed co-authors. We are indebted to Fredrik Galtung at Cambridge University for help with the discussion of Transparency International.


6 Michael Edwards, 2000, op. cit. 20.

7 Vakil, for example, suggests that development NGOs carry out relief and welfare, capacity-building and development, policy advocacy, development education, networking, and research activities at local, regional, national and international levels of analysis. A.C. Vakil, "Confronting the Classification Problem". World.
Development NGOs are a relatively small subset of civil society organizations – which include churches, trade unions, social clubs, business associations, professional networks, community-based organizations, soccer clubs, choral societies, women’s groups, and many other values-based agencies.

* We are indebted to Fredrik Galtung for emphasizing the importance of external factors in creating contexts in which legitimacy claims can or cannot be made persuasively.


Chapter Six

Expanding Practice-Research Engagement for Transnational Civil Society

L. David Brown

The activities and impacts of transnational civil society organizations have been expanding rapidly for at least the last two decades. One aspect of that growth has been an expanding role for engagement between practitioners and activists on one hand, and researchers and scholars on the other. Many of the initiatives of transnational civil society actors have focused on emerging transnational problems that existing international institutions did not recognize or resolve, and improved problem-solving has often demanded new knowledge and theory as well as changes in institutions and practices. So “expanding practice-research engagement for transnational civil society” describes an assessment of the immediate past.

However, the analysis proposed in previous chapters suggests that “expanding practice-research engagement for transnational civil society” is also a proposal for the future. The relevance of some researchers and practitioners to each other’s work is growing rapidly. The first section of this chapter briefly reviews previous chapters, as a reflection of the emergence of practice-research engagement (PRE) as an important contributor to the rise of transnational civil society (TCS). The second section focuses on the future and discusses strategic issues and priorities in expanding PRE contributions for the next decade.

Looking Back: The Expansion of PRE for TCS

This volume is in many ways a direct outgrowth of the engagement between practitioners and researchers with transnational civil society issues over the last two decades. Individuals in leadership roles at the Hauser Center, CIVICUS, the Ford Foundation, and the workshop Advisory Committee have all been involved for many years in efforts to improve practice and generate knowledge about the growing role of civil society actors in the transnational problem-solving and policy formulation. Many have experience as scholarly practitioners, or as activist researchers, or as both (simultaneously or sequentially). So many of the contributors to previous chapters (see Appendices A and B) speak directly from experience of that expansion.

Chapter One briefly describes the context of this initiative, stressing the idea that the Hauser Center/CIVICUS Workshop should be understood as an event in a stream of efforts to understand and strengthen the roles of civil society organizations as catalysts for social problem-solving. The chapter set four goals for this volume: to explore the relevance of PRE to the transnational roles of civil society organizations; to provide initial ideas about how to
carry out PRE; to describe some initial fruits of PRE on TCS activity and on the legitimacy of civil society organizations; and to explore next steps for expanding PRE in the service of transnational civil society.

The workshops from which this volume emerged are described in Chapter Two. The workshops brought together researchers and practitioners and Northerners and Southerners in roughly equal numbers to explore the topics of practice-research engagement and its relevance to building transnational civil society. The workshops were simultaneously efforts to understand many aspects of PRE and to practice it, and the initial design was quite quickly amended by participants to better pursue their interests. One consequence of this evolution was a shift from identifying substantive topics for future PRE to planning strategies for building capacity for PRE in different regions of the world. The workshops culminated in action plans that involved coalitions of participants as well as the original sponsors to carry out follow-up activities like this book.

The practice-research engagement principles discussed in Chapter Three grew out of a workshop background paper, workshop discussions, and subsequent dialogues about initial outlines and drafts. This chapter describes products, methods, costs and benefits, and principles for PRE on civil society issues, risking oversimplification of complex issues to identify concerns that apply across many situations. The hope is that a few general principles can help future PRE initiatives avoid the pitfalls encountered by many of their predecessors.

Chapter Four overviews issues and concerns raised in the workshop about building TCS. The chapter reviews a variety of perspectives on the definition of transnational civil society, the challenges and opportunities it faces, and strategies and lessons learned from current work. In essence the chapter seeks to provide a snapshot of issues and concerns raised by workshop participants about transnational civil society and its roles in the future.

Chapter Five focuses more narrowly on the legitimacy of civil society organizations, particularly those involved in transnational advocacy. Workshop participants agreed that the legitimacy of CSOs is one of the most important problems for transnational civil society actors, and they invested hours in developing ideas about how such legitimacy could be articulated and strengthened. The chapter was initially conceived to be a “legitimacy discussion guide” that could be used by CSOs to reflect on their own bases for legitimacy, so it is an effort to integrate practice concerns with research-based analysis of the issue. It is explicitly a first draft that will be revised on the basis of pilot tests with practitioners.

In essence, the sponsors of this initiative began with the idea that practice-research engagement was already contributing to the emergence of civil society actors as an important force in transnational problem-solving. Workshop participants agreed, though they raised many questions and concerns about both practice-research engagement and transnational civil society in both theoretical and practical terms. The chapters on principles for PRE and on civil society legitimacy are joint efforts to respond – at least in a preliminary way – to specific questions and concerns raised by those discussions. Workshop participants agreed strongly that further work on the issue of expanding PRE for transnational civil society was important.
Looking Forward: Expanding Future PRE for TCS

The closing phases of the workshop focused on strategies for expanding PRE in the service of both regional and transnational civil societies. We largely agreed that the expansion of useful PREs could be hastened for many regions and countries by thoughtful planning and implementation of high priority tasks that are tailored to regional and national concerns as well as transnational issues.

The expansion of PRE as a field or a domain requires a “domain strategy” that guides initiatives. The “strategic triangle” used for assessing civil society organization strategies in Chapter Five may also help to identify choices relevant to expanding PRE for TCS. The domain of PRE for TCS includes many loosely linked organizations and actors, of course, and questions can be asked about how well such loosely organized systems can develop, adopt, or implement strategies. But the questions posed by the strategic triangle may be quite relevant to action to build a domain. The triangle emphasizes three sets of choices that are critical to effective strategy: (1) choices about creating value and the stakeholders who receive that value; (2) choices about support and legitimacy and stakeholders who provide it; and (3) choices about operational capacity and the internal and external stakeholders who constitute that capacity.

From the vantage point of creating domain value, expanding PRE for TCS requires clarifying the contributions that it can make to practitioners and to researchers, its most immediate stakeholders for that value. We need more documentation of specific cases and how they have produced innovations in practice valued by practitioners and new knowledge valued by researchers. More stories are needed that parallel classic tales of symbiotic practice-research relations described in Chapter One: Silent Spring and the environmental movement; the Self-Employed Women’s Association and informal sector theory; conscientization theory and adult education practice; or the Grameen Bank and micro-credit economics. It is important that examples of PRE on issues of transnational civil society are becoming increasingly available, some initiated by researchers and others by practitioners, but all reflecting combined insights. Compelling stories of joint inquiries that reshape theory and practice are critical to helping practitioners and researchers recognize the potential of PRE for creating new value related to TCS concerns.

It is also clear the PRE for TCS is difficult, expensive, and not equally appropriate for all problems. PRE is not a good choice for problems for which available practitioners or researchers have few or non-complementary resources, or where their interests are substantially in conflict. There may be other areas in which joint work is highly likely to produce both new theory and practice innovations. Efforts to promote initiatives in the former are, not surprisingly, less likely to produce value than work in the latter.

This analysis suggests two immediate priorities for clarifying the potential value to be created by PRE in the TCS arena:

1. Identify and document compelling examples of the value created by past PRE initiatives; and
2. Clarify the kinds of challenges for which it is best or least suited.
Chapter Six

The issue of domain legitimacy and support focuses attention on stakeholders whose support confers recognition for and critical resources to the domain and its activities. For the PRE domain, research disciplines legitimate the work of researchers, practice communities recognize or disconfirm practitioner activities, and funders provide resources to support joint inquiry. Strategies for developing the domain need to ensure that PRE initiatives are seen as worthy of continuation by key constituencies who validate their relevance and right to exist.

To what extent do universities and academic disciplines recognize that researcher engagement with practitioners is a legitimate activity? While many disciplines are inclined to be suspicious of research “contamination” by practice priorities and incentives, it is also true that professional schools – concerned with practice as well as academic constituencies – place more value on cooperation with practitioners and may be more willing to accept PRE than institutions with less contact with the world of practice. The recent expansion of university programs for professional civil society practitioners in many countries may set the stage for more acceptance of PRE for TCS. Expanding PRE will require enhanced legitimacy and support from institutionalized research constituencies.

Practice communities may also be dubious about the utility of PRE and the relevance of researchers. The fact that practitioner- and activist-based associations like CIVICUS support systematic inquiry about critical issues suggests that communities of practice may legitimate PRE that is responsive to their concerns. Challenges from resource providers or policy targets that question the validity of practitioner data or interpretations can also increase their interest in researcher resources. Initiatives that increase support for PRE among specific practice communities will also be critical to building domain legitimacy and support.

Resources for PRE initiatives often come from external sources. To the extent that researchers and practitioners need external resources, they will need to persuade resource providers of the value of PRE for generating knowledge and practical innovations. This becomes easier as earlier reservations about the scientific quality of PRE methodologies are answered and as major research-oriented institutions (like the World Bank) recognize the value of some kinds of PRE. Establishing the value of PRE methods for TCS initiatives in the eyes of potential funders is essential, especially for large-scale projects.

The challenges of establishing PRE domain legitimacy and support suggest two further priorities in expanding its role:

(1) Engage methodological criticisms of PRE to clarify its strengths and limitations; and
(2) Build a coalition of funders to develop and disseminate useful PRE methods.

Choices about domain operational capacity shape how practice-research engagement is implemented and how value is co-produced. Critical capacity issues include the availability of individuals or teams that can do joint work, methodologies for co-producing knowledge and practice innovations, and systems and linkages for disseminating and utilizing results.
Much pioneering work to combine practice and research was carried out by individuals who had the skills and commitment to combine both perspectives. Many initiatives described in Chapter Three, for example, involved researchers in practice roles or practitioners with research skills. Many larger initiatives, particularly across national boundaries, require teams that include many diverse skills and perspectives. Building capacity in mixed teams to carry out joint initiatives, and preparing facilitators who can help mixed teams develop structures and processes required for using their differences creatively is also important to fostering the expanding domain.

The methodologies for carrying out PRE projects are another critical element of domain capacity. Wider availability and agreement about the merits of different methodologies is emerging, as several books have recently consolidated knowledge about PRE approaches. Methodological choices can affect operational outcomes and domain legitimacy and support, since researcher audiences in particular are sensitive to methodology questions. More assessment of methodologies and their value for different purposes can be helpful in justifying PRE to research disciplines.

A third concern in domain operational capacity is the availability of networks and vehicles for sharing results and ideas, testing interpretations and outcomes, stimulating new initiatives, and disseminating knowledge and innovations. Such networks can include “practice-friendly” spaces in associations of researchers, such as the Action Research Workshop at the Academy of Management or the Activist-Researcher Affinity Group at the International Society for Third-Sector Research. “Researcher-friendly” initiatives in practitioner associations may also provide opportunities, such as the Participatory Research Network at the International Council for Adult Education or the Civil Society Index Project at CIVICUS. Such networks can foster dialogue and dissemination for joint initiatives, and help enhance legitimacy and support from critical stakeholders. Conferences, special issues of journals and websites may also provide opportunities to build wider linkages and capacities for the PRE domain.

From the point of view of domain operational capacity, priorities for the near future might include initiatives that:

1. Support initiatives to build regional and national capacity for PRE;
2. Disseminate PRE methods for effective TCS inquiry; and
3. Create “PRE-friendly” spaces in existing international practice and research networks for sharing, testing, and disseminating results.

A domain development strategy needs to integrate choices about all three concerns — value to be created, legitimacy and support, and operational capacity. Expanding PRE for transnational civil society requires initiatives that build value for researchers and practitioners while meeting legitimacy expectations of academic disciplines, practice communities, and project funders and mobilizing or creating needed capacities from internal and external resources. More generally, then, the expanding domain of practice-research engagement on transnational civil society can be advanced by work on two priorities that integrate across the concerns:
(1) Support high-quality PRE initiatives that advance understanding and practice of civil society roles in key areas of transnational problem-solving; and

(2) Build an informal network to support PRE domain development around the world.

In the few months since the Hauser Center/CIVICUS workshop, initiatives related to many of the priorities have emerged. With encouragement and participation from many participants in the workshop, the chapters that comprise this volume have been drafted. Some participants have continued initiatives already underway or conceived new examples of PRE activity to build transnational civil society.

An informal transnational network concerned with encouraging PRE for transnational civil society appears to be emerging. Another workshop has already brought together researchers and practitioners to discuss Transnational Civil Society Organization and Issues at the Center for Civil Society of the London School of Economics. This initiative is also encouraging PRE projects on transnational civil society organizations. Other network initiatives are being planned. A workshop on transnational civil society is being organized at the University of Bergen with support from the International Society for Third-Sector Research, and a conference on practice-research engagement in Latin America is being organized by ALOP (The Association of Latin American Development NGOs) and ABONG (Association of Brazilian NGOs). Preparations are also underway for similar discussions in Asia, with PRIA (Society for Participatory Research in Asia) coordinating the planning process.

Participants have also begun to build links to existing researcher and practitioner networks. The CIVICUS Assembly in 2001 will be a distribution point for this volume, and will host a variety of workshops and mini-plenary sessions on PRE and TCS. Panels and presentations have been proposed to researcher networks like ARNOVA (the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organization and Voluntary Action), the International Studies Association, and the International Society for Third-Sector Research.

The evolution of domains, such as the domain of practice-research engagement for transnational civil society, is not a well-understood process. These kinds of domains are not the tightly organized hierarchical systems that can be changed at the whim of a single highly placed authority. They are rather loosely organized collections of organizations and individuals, subject to many conflicting factors and forces. Their evolution responds to a wide range of ideas, norms, technologies, and leadership initiatives. But the rise of interest in PRE is clear, and the growing importance of transnational civil society initiatives is hard to deny. Our working hypothesis is that key interventions that affect important factors – like the priorities identified here – can catalyze domain changes that are developmental.

Strengthening this particular domain can produce an explosion of constructive engagements between practitioners and researchers, and those engagements can in turn help civil society actors make pivotal contributions to transnational problem-solving for sustainable development, economic justice, human rights, and better governance around the world.
Notes to Chapter Six


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Appendix “B”

About the Authors

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Alison Brysk is an associate professor of political science at the University of California at Irvine. Her research focuses on the problems of civil society and social movement organizations concerned with constructive social change, their relations with state actors, and how they are affected by the processes of globalization. She has published The Politics of Human Rights In Argentina (Stanford University Press, 1994); From Tribal Village to Global Village: Indian Rights and International Relations in Latin America (Stanford University Press, 2000); and Globalization and Human Rights (ed.), (University of California Press, forthcoming).

David Cohen is Co-Director and a founder of the Advocacy Institute. He has worked as an advocate and strategist on many of the major social justice and political reform issues in the United States. At the Advocacy Institute, his expertise is used to counsel social justice movement groups in their efforts to gain support for their public agenda, particularly in understanding the place of civil society and the elements of advocacy. He has pioneered the Institute’s work in its international capacity-building programs working with social justice advocates from Bangladesh, Central Europe, China, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Russia, South Africa, Uganda, Ukraine, U.S. and Zimbabwe.

Jane Covey is President of the Institute for Development Research, based in Boston. She has led initiatives to expand and enhance policy dialogue between nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), their governments, and international development donor agencies. She also helped design and lead the Indian NGO Advocacy Fellows Program and the Asian NGO Leadership Fellows Program. Her work includes research and consulting on organizational structure and strategy for U.S. and Asian NGOs. She has written articles and book chapters on NGO development, NGOs in policy influence, and NGO and community involvement in World Bank policy and projects.

Terezinha da Silva is a social planner and member of academic staff at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo, Mozambique. Her main interest focuses on aging, gender and community development issues. She has led gender-training courses for a number of groups including parliamentarians, government officers, media and NGOs. During academic year 2000-2001 she has been a fellow at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Harvard University, U.S., carrying out research focusing on the rights of the elderly.
Michael Edwards is Director of the Ford Foundation’s Governance and Civil Society Unit in New York. He was previously Senior Civil Society Specialist at the World Bank and Head of Research for Save the Children. Michael has written widely on international cooperation, development, and NGO-State Relations. His most recent books are Future Positive: International Cooperation in the 21st Century, and Global Citizen Action.

Peter Eigen is a lawyer and has worked in economic development for twenty-five years, mainly as a World Bank manager of programs in Africa and Latin America. He is founder and chairman of Transparency International (TI), a nongovernmental organization promoting transparency and accountability in international development. From 1999 to date, he has been Adjunct Lecturer at the Kennedy School of Government. He is also a member of the Advisory Council of the Center for International Development there.

Ann Florini is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, where she directs the Project on Transparency and Transnational Civil Society. Her research focuses on broad issues of global governance, with particular attention to the uses and abuses of transparency and the development of transnational civil society. She is currently completing a book on transnational governance and is editor of The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society, jointly published by the Japan Center for International Exchange and the Carnegie Endowment in 2000.

Alan Fowler is an independent advisor and analyst specializing in civil society and international development organizations. He is currently Vice President of the International Society for Third-Sector Research and a founding associate of INTRAC. He was previously a program officer in Nairobi for the Ford Foundation and Visiting Fellow at the World Bank in Washington DC. His most recent books are Striking a Balance: A Guide to Enhancing the Effectiveness of Non-Governmental Organizations in International Development and The Virtuous Spiral: A Guide to Sustainability for NGOs in International Development.

Jonathan Fox is professor of social sciences and Chair of the Latin American and Latino Studies Program at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He is the author of a number of books and works closely with several civil society organizations, including the Bank Information Center (Washington, D.C.), Transparencia (Oaxaca, Mexico), the Oaxaca Indigenous Binational Front (California and Oaxaca), and the Pesticide Action Network – North America (San Francisco). He has also served as a consultant for US foundations, including MacArthur, C.S. Mott, Ford, Packard and Oxfam-America.

John Gaventa is a fellow and Head of the Participation Group at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex in Brighton, UK. He was earlier professor of sociology at the University of Tennessee and Director of the Highlander Research and Education Center. He has worked on the problems of grassroots empowerment and participation in development as an activist and as a participatory researcher. His best known book is Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley.

Finn Heinrich is the Global Project Manager for the CIVICUS Index on Civil Society project. Finn has studied comparative politics and comparative social research at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore Maryland and at the University of Mannheim, Germany. Previous to joining CIVICUS, Finn worked with NGOs in South Africa and Germany on advocacy, youth and intercultural exchange issues. He has conducted several research projects on civil society.
**Angela Johnson** is a Project Manager at the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, Harvard University, working on one national and one international initiative, each focused on practitioner and researcher engagement. Prior to joining the Center, Angela headed nonprofit services at Associated Grant Makers, the New England regional association of donors, working to promote, create, and coordinate programs and services that built the fundraising capacity and philanthropic awareness of Massachusetts' nonprofit sector. Angela has ten years experience in marketing, fund development, events planning, and volunteering for nonprofit organizations.

**Sanjeev Khagram** is assistant professor of public policy at the Kennedy School of Government and is affiliated at Harvard University with the Center for International Development and the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations. His current, interdisciplinary research focuses on the impact of transnational coalitions of nongovernmental organizations, grassroots social movements, and international norms/institutions on development, democratization, ethnic conflict management and environmental sustainability. He is co-editor of the forthcoming volume, *Restructuring World Politics: The Powers of Transnational Agency and Norms*.

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**Nigel Martin** is the Chair and CEO of the Forum International de Montréal, an international think tank that is committed to creating a space for reflection and strategic thinking about civil society and its relations with the multilateral system. The Forum seeks to provide a space within which the nongovernmental community can make more publicly available some of the knowledge that is continuously generated by its work. He brings to the Forum several decades of experience with civil society initiatives on development and social change.

**Mark Moore** is the Director of the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations and Faculty Chairman of the Kennedy School of Government’s Program of Criminal Justice Policy and Management. His research interests are in public management and leadership, in criminal justice policy and management, in community mobilization and nonprofit organizations, and the intersection of the three domains. In the area of public management, he has recently published *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*.

**Gabriel Murillo** is a professor of political science at the University of Los Andes where he was chairman between 1981 and 1993. He teaches courses in political parties, elections, research methods, political participation and civil society in Columbia and in Latin America. He has published works on these issues in many countries throughout the Americas and Europe and has directed politically issue-based research projects funded by entities such as the Ford Foundation, Tinker Foundation and the National Endowment for Democracy.

**Kumi Naidoo** is Secretary General and CEO of CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, which is dedicated to strengthening citizen participation and civil society worldwide. He was previously the founding director of the South African NGO Coalition during which time he served on the task team to draft new NGO legislation. He has also worked extensively in adult education and social and economic justice work in South Africa. He has published several articles on NGOs, civil society and youth and resistance politics in South Africa. A book that he recently edited, entitled *Civil Society at the Millennium*, was launched in September 1999. An activist of the ANC since a very young age, he was expelled from school at age 15 for his anti-apartheid activity. He now holds a doctorate degree in political science from Oxford University where he was a Rhodes Scholar.
Amara Pongsapich is a professor of anthropology and Director of the Social Research Institute at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. Her current work focuses on development social indicators for Thailand, but she has also carried out studies on alternative development and the role of civil society, the social impact of economic crisis in Asia, and socio-political reforms and impacts on Thai society.

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Sarah Titus is a Staff Assistant at the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations at the Kennedy School of Government. In addition to working with L. David Brown and Sanjeev Khagram on the 2000 PRE Workshop at Harvard, she is also involved in a project examining issues facing domestic, grassroots nonprofit organizations as they work towards progressive social change. This fall she will also be assisting the newly appointed Civil Society Fellow at the Hauser Center.