Towards a Global Civil Society: An evaluation of the evolving inter-relationship of Non-Governmental Organisations, International Organisations and the State

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MA Social Development

2006

Summary

Civil society can be regarded as being made up of a number of International Non-Governmental Organisations. These in turn can be regarded as being autonomous organisations yet interdependent on international organisations such as the UN and the World Bank as well as national governments. To what degree this interaction exists and the challenges an increasingly globalised world present to the ongoing integration of worldwide civic movements is a matter for debate. The primary interest diving much of this integration is the widening gulf between the Developed and the Developing World and the perceived inability thus far of civic groups at influencing debate at the global level with the aim of addressing this issue.

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Preface

The purpose of this dissertation is to evaluate the degree to which civil societies around the globe have found influence at the global level of government and to explore the inter –connectivity between civil society at the grassroots level in the developing world to the level of parallel conferences of the United Nations. I also hope to explore the effects that increased representation of civil societies has on the highest levels of government and whether or not international policy making is made more democratic as a result of their input.

This dissertation is largely sourced from relevant secondary sources as located in Journals, online articles and books on the subject. I am greatly indebted to my supervisor Professor Jock Stirrat for his guidance and his patience and grateful too to the support staff at the SocCul office at Sussex University.

Introduction

In the continuing process of making the Bretton Woods institutions and the agencies of the United nations more accountable a more prominent role is being argued for and being given to International Non-Governmental Organisations. Global governance today not only involves governments and intergovernmental organisations but more increasingly NGOs and other citizen movements as well as the growing influence of transnational corporations and also the mass media.

The extent to which this development could be viewed as being problematic raises questions about the power and accountability of an emerging global civil society. Many questions regarding accountability of this emerging international structure arise, especially in relation of the focus of many mainstream NGOs in the developing world.

Since the end of the Second World War there has been a great proliferation in transnational organisations implementing laws and legislation but there has been no corresponding level of accountability of these organisations. I hope to explore the impact that democratic accountability has had on global governance in the form of increased interactions with civil society.

I will set out to define the concept of Global Civil Society using contemporary accounts of its formation with references to its interactions with international organisations such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the IMF. I will explore the reaches of civil society globally; it's differing meanings and contradictions as well as the challenges that will face a global civic movement, both in its construct and in its definition of itself. I will look at the workings and impact of civil societies in the developing world with specific country case studies with the aim of highlighting international linkages.

In this dissertation I will argue that global civil society exists and is a real phenomenon yet its ability to impact on global decision remains largely unknown.

Chapter One - **Civil Society and Global Civil Society**

To define Global Civil Society it is important to first give a satisfactory meaning to the term Civil Society.

Civil Society is the term used to tie together the network of non-state organisations which lobby and exert pressure on the domestic or international community according to their diverse or self-motivated interests

Global institutions such as The World Bank, which recognises the growing part played by Non- Governmental Organizations (NGO's) and Organisations set up for non profit ventures in development, describe what it means by Civil Society in the following way;

"Civil Society organizations refer to a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGO's), labour unions, indigenous groups, Charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations and foundations"[1].

From this we are able to ascertain the basic components which enable us to understand the structure of what is commonly branded Civil Society. For the purposes of this paper I will not include supra state organisations such as the United Nations (UN), the African Union, European Union, the World Bank or IMF in my definition of civil society, for although they are forums for civil society it blurs the issue, I believe, to refer to them as being components of a society as they are primarily forums for national governments. I would also like to clarify what I think constitutes civil society. Some commentators believe it to be a mistake to associate Civil Society too strongly with Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as they argue that it is too broad a meaning to merit so much scrutiny on this particular aspect. I agree, but so much of the current interest in and writing on civil society and its global outreach has been generated by the activities of NGOs on the world stage, working through the supra national level to achieve their aims. I therefore, whilst acknowledging that the term includes much more besides, will concentrate on the NGO aspect of civil society.

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[1] World Bank Website – http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO

(i) Civil Society

The meaning of the term Civil Society has changed much throughout history, with different thinkers attributing varying meanings and levels of importance to it. The English in the 16th century, for example, thought that the term referred to the state and its actions. Today we take it as meaning a society which acts independently and even contrary to the state and its actions.

Writers such as Grotius, Locke and Montesquieu, as well as Hobbes, began to set out the parameters of Civil Society. They saw it as the viewing of human beings as atomised forms, all acting in their own self interest ultimately, but only being able to do this within proper limits set out by law. "Civil Society was a human artefact, created, sustained and capable of being changed by human beings"[2]

In the nineteenth century Hegel's description of what was meant by Civil Society included the market. Again, this is not a component which most contemporary views would include in their understanding of the term. Like the state, the market and Civil Society are separate entities. However, Hegel did recognise the fundamental characteristics of what many writers today still attribute to Civil Society, namely personal autonomy, individual rights, mutual respect and recognition, satisfaction of needs and a minimum structure of public authority. Hegel too identified many of the weaknesses and contradictions that we still see in evidence when examining Civil Society today. He saw it as being unable to regulate itself and thought then that it lacked a moral sense of direction.

It was during the 19th Century that the earliest forms of what we now recognise as Non Governmental Organisations came into existence. They had a global reach from the outset, as they included the British based Foreign Anti-Slavery Society - set up as early as 1839 - and the International Committee of the Red Cross, which was established in 1864. It was in the 19th Century, however, that Civil Society did emerge as something distinct from the state. Hegel described it as 'an achievement of the modern world', yet it remained hard to pin down. The left and the right drew

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[2] Bhikhu Parekh, 'Putting civil society in its place', in *Exploring Civil Society* (Routledge Press Oxford, 2004) p.16.

different meanings from the term. On the left, it became the foundation for Karl Marx's bourgeois society, to the right it became a description for all non-state aspects of society, expanding out of the economic rigidity of the state to include culture and the family as well. The term itself came into disuse during the mid 19th Century as writers turned their attention to the social and political consequences of the industrial revolution.

Civil society became tied up with culture and with the issues of the day, making it hard to recognise at first. The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci is the thinker most associated with this contemporary and modernising definition. As Mary Kaldor pointed out at the Sussex University Martin Wright memorial lecture in 2002, "he was preoccupied with the question of why it was so much easier to have a communist revolution in Russia than in Italy. His answer was civil society. In Italy, he said, 'there was a proper relation between state and society and when the state trembled, a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed.'"[3] This realisation by Gramsci helped him to draw the distinction between a unity based on consent and, as was experienced in more totalitarian states, domination based on coercion. Italy, in other words was protected by its having strong civil societies which stood up to be counted when society was threatened, whilst civic groups in more authoritarian states to work in different ways in order to achieve their aims.

The concept of civil society was very much thrown to the fore during the 20th Century. In the 1970s and the 1980s in particular what had already been considered as Civil Society was, thanks to thinkers like Gramsci, revised heavily. In the process, in many ways, at this point the concept split from the ideas of its history. Two notable resurgences of active Civil Society during the 20th Century occurred in Latin America and Eastern Europe. These two expressions of Civil Society, of the wishes of organised people within the still Communist States of Eastern Europe and the often oppressive political systems throughout Latin America, had both differences of approach as well as similarities. They were both opposed to regimes, in the case of Latin America, military regimes, and in Eastern Europe, totalitarian states. Both Civil

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[3] Mary Kaldor, *The idea of global civil society'* (Martin Wright memorial lecture – 31 October 2002, University of Sussex)

Society movements had at their core the foundation of democracy. They were in this sense very much based upon the model of western liberalism or Americanism. However differences in approach in obtaining their goals show very much that people, however organised, still react to and act within a shared sense of identity and history - a shared consciousness that was identified by some of the earliest writers on Civil Society.

There were, then, differences in approach. Experiences with the Prague spring uprising and the Hungarian revolution in 1956 had taught those seeking change in Eastern Europe that change from the top down did not bring the results that they were hoping for and often had adverse results. A change in their strategy to seeking change from the bottom up was the only alternative. With help from civic lobbying in Western Europe, trade Unions and Civil groups were able to affect change and bring about an altering in the relationship between the state and society. Western governments under pressure from organised groups within their countries put pressure on the governments of Eastern Europe. One result of this was the signing in 1975 of the Helsinki agreement which eastern European governments signed. This gave a platform to groups such as the Workers' Defence Committee in Poland.

It would be wrong to suggest, however, that there was a monopoly of civil discontent in only Eastern Europe and other parts of the world where it was felt that the state was over-bearing and totalitarian. Even in the west during the period of the Cold War there was widespread discontent with governments and forms of governance. During the late 1960s, for example, there was much unrest in the west against actions by the state whereby the people felt powerless to act. Alterative avenues of action were sought, a common thread in the theorizing of civil societies. Widespread protests in the West, perhaps most notably in France did not bring to the fore the notion of civil society as such, but their theories on democracy and revolution did contain elements of what might be in times to come be seen as traits of civil society. For example, Trotsky's theory of dual power and endless revolution and also Mao's notion of a cultural revolution. As Hilary Wainwright points out;

"What these traditions of Trotskyism, syndicalism and cultural-revolution Maoism had in common, reinforcing the sentiments of the movements that had turned to them,

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was a strong belief in more vigorous forms of democracy than the representative parliamentary forms. An underlying reason for this invention of direct forms of democracy was the weakness or absence of representative democracy – indeed any kind of democracy – in the societies where these theories took shape".[4]

The students and workers advocating change in Western Europe had perhaps underestimated the complexity of long established social and cultural institutions. Using the methods of thinkers who had written their theories during pre democratic societies was perhaps bound to fail, or allow the status quo to remain intact. Implicating Maoism or Trotskyism in Paris was an attempt at a revitalising of old European ideas. That it managed to do throughout the 1970s, and globalisation took hold. In the United States, however, with its stronger sense of community democracy, this never took hold to any significant degree.[5]

Both in Latin America and in Eastern Europe, Civil Society groupings talked about withdrawal from the state and the creation of islands within nations which although within were to a large extent separate from the state. In Eastern Europe during the late 1980s this took the form of isolated political movements advocating change. In Latin America, in some cases, this notion was given a very literal meaning by movements such as the Zapatistas in southern Mexico, who, through rebellion[6] in the mid 1990s and military force, had established safe havens for themselves where they were able to operate a state within a state, away from the Mexican authorities.

These late 20th Century surges in Civil Society movements, in these two distinct areas of the world, are notable because many observers point to this being the first tangible form of Global Civil Society at work. Though it is important to state that movements throughout the world had been successfully establishing connections with each other

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[4] Hilary Wainwright, 'Democratic civil society versus neoliberalism' in *Exploring Civil Society* (Routledge Press Oxford, 2004) p.101
[5] The tradition in the United States of participatory democracy at a local level is used to explain the relatively low levels of civil society participation.
[6] This action by the rebel Zapatista movement and the subsequent counter reaction by the Mexican authorities brought to the fore issues of resistance not only to what was seen as an repressive federal structure but also to issues of a wider nature. These included issues of racial and ethnic discrimination as suffered by the indigenous people of the Chiapas state Mexico, affecting issues such as economics, education and land rights.

since the 19th Century[7], it was the emergence of global communications during this period which allowed movements in Latin America to link with like-minded groups in North America, and for people in Eastern Europe to request help and materials from their near neighbours in the West.

It was at around this time, then, that Civil Society acquired a Global meaning. Though this period was still well before the advent of the internet, there was a high level of mobility and communication. This enabled people in North America and Europe to receive information and to apply pressure to their governments and institutions based in their countries to achieve their shared goals. This then had the effect of bouncing pressure back to the countries where the Civil Societies were present. Mary Kaldor writing in *Globalisation and Civil Society* describes the change in focus;

"The new understanding of civil society represented both a withdrawal from the state and a move towards global rules and institutions. Civil society still has the common core of meaning, as the medium through which a social contract is negotiated, pressed for, debated with the centres of political and economic authority. But nowadays, the centres of political and economic authority are global as well as national and local."[8]

This latest incarnation of civil society is that of it working on a trans-national level and wanting to instigate global reform and practice as well as being a player in emerging forms of global governance.

(ii) Global Civil Society

"What is new about the concept of civil society since 1989 is globalisation. Civil society is no longer confined to the borders of the territorial state"[9]

Global civil society has come into being largely as the result of trans-national exchanges that were previously the preserve of the state, and is about a new interconnectedness and of the building of a new construct of rules. A global system of rules, however, which are effectively underpinned by overlapping international governmental structures.

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[7] The Red Cross, Red Crescent and also the Roman Catholic Church were early global players though they weren't acting at such a wide level globally.
[8] Mary Kaldor, 'Globalization and civil society', in Exploring civil society (Routledge Press, Oxford 2004) p194.
[9] Mary Kaldor, *Global civil society – An answer to war* (Polity Press 2003) p.1

There is the need for civil groups to find new avenues in order to influence political parties, or, in some cases, where there was little hope of finding influence, to bypass them altogether, and to form linkages with other like minded groups around the world.

Those optimistic about the concept of global civil society see it as a way of developing a progressive structure for global governance and having an emancipatory effect on development - and even having the potential to end all wars. Its detractors say that because civil society as a concept has its roots in the Western Enlightenment, it therefore spreads a neo-liberal view of civil society with the aim of spreading market economics.

I have already identified some of the earliest Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Anti Slavery organisations as precursors of civil society interconnectedness. These two organisations would have had far less impact had they operated solely in the confines of the state, as their interests - by their very nature - were trans-national. This fits with E.P Thompson identification of the genesis of global civil society as the 'trans-national movement of citizens' which began in significant numbers during the 19th Century. However, it wasn't until the end of the 20th Century, which witnessed a large rise in the number of NGOs, that discussion and study of a global civil society emerged. With parallel meetings NGOs and civic groups now have a substantial input on trans-national policy making.

The notion of a global civil society matured during the period of the Cold War. Western Europe and the United States saw the creation of movements whose aim it was to propel the rights of women and of the environment. These came to the fore largely as a response to rigid governmental and state workings. There are in any case a number of issues that inextricably find common ground around the world. The case of the environment is one obvious example of an issue that transcends state boundaries and on which people the world over share mutual perspectives and interests.

The rise of a global civil society perhaps should be seen as the unsurprising response of civil society to an increasingly globalised world. Today many conditions manifest themselves globally, as evidenced by trans-national methods of producing goods and services, global markets, telecommunications, mass global travel and a mass media which moves news and opinions across the world instantly.

Globalisation, more pronounced since the fall of Communism, is an essential element in the spread of a global civil society. There is much dispute as to the meaning of globalisation however. Michael Edwards *et al* describe it as;

"this reality is globalisation as technology-driven fact: electronic communication, declining transport costs, more flexible forms of economic organisation and the growing importance of mobile assets (such as finance and knowledge) establish an increasingly uniform horizon of production possibilities across national borders, integrating markets around the world and internationalising decisions about jobs and investments".[10]

The consequences of globalisation for much of the world's population is to leave it polarised between the proportion of the global population who are already endowed with many of the facets as outlined by Edwards *et al* above, who are able to make a globalised world work for them, and the remainder, who are finding survival in the globalised world increasingly difficult. It is hoped by many that the emergence of a global civil society will help to influence and democratize this emerging layer of global governance. As the spread of globalisation also has an implication for how the world is governed. For as we have seen the spread of ideas and knowledge is an integral factor.

Civil Societies around the world were no exception and many began to move towards the promotion of global rules and ideas, and a withdrawal from the state. These ideas contributed, many believe, to the revolutions in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s. It was perhaps this, the involvement of Civil Societies in cultivating civil dissent in Eastern Europe, that lead many observers in the West to be caught off guard by the events of the 1980s.

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[10] Michael Edwards *et al*, *NGO's in a global future: Marrying local delivery to worldwide leverage (*Public Administration and Development - 1999) p.118

Writing in the 1980s, Eastern European writers picked up on the links between Globalization and technological change. George Konrad, a Hungarian writer, talked about Globalisation in his book *Anti-Politics,* and the Czech writer Vaclav Havel proposed the 'global technological civilisation'. He wrote that;

"The post-totalitarian system is only one aspect – a particularly drastic aspect and thus all the more revealing of its origins – of the general inability of modern humanity to be master of its own situation. The automatism of the post-totalitarian system is merely an extreme version of the global automatism of technological civilisation. The human failure that it mirrors is only one variant of the general failure of humanity… it would appear that the traditional parliamentary democracies can offer no fundamental opposition to the automatism of technological civilisation and the industrial-consumer society, for they, too, are being dragged helplessly along. People are manipulated in ways that are infinitely more subtle and refined than the brutal methods used in post-totalitarian societies… In a democracy, human beings may enjoy personal freedoms and securities that are unknown to us, but in the end they do them no good, for they too are ultimately victims of the same automatism, and are incapable of defending their concerns about their own personal survival to become proud and responsible members of the polis, making a genuine contribution to the creation of its destiny."[11]

From all the events at the end of the 1980s in Eastern Europe, it was the ideas of human rights and peace, and an active civil society that came to the fore. Some writers have argued that little new ideas emerged from the tumultuous events of those years. To others, however, it is becoming more and more apparent that what has emerged is the beginning of a civil society able to project itself effectively at a trans-national and global level and to achieve its desired results.

One of the main factors that have pushed Global Civil Society to the fore during the 1990s is the clear emergence of a supranational layer of political and citizen groups acting with each other and increasingly engaging with Governmental actors. These include the big 'brand names' of the International Non Governmental Organisations (INGOs) such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and Oxfam, but also a host of hundreds of other organisations.

Though governance has been state-centric since the mid 17th Century, developments in the 20th century have given the citizen extended range and increased scope of

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[11] Vaclev Havel, 'The power of the Powerless' quoted by Mary Kaldor, *The idea of Global Civil Society* (Martin Wright memorial lecture – 31 October 2002, University of Sussex)

interacting with his or her affairs beyond the reach of the state. We've seen that the paradigm of international relations is at present based around the Hobbesian assumption that human beings are naturally avaricious, which therefore justifies the state centric system. Global civil society possess both an empirical and normative challenge to these widely held assumptions, and I will explore these in the next chapter of this paper.

Chapter Two - Exploring Global Civil Society

Global civil society organisations are orientated to changing the public consciousness. Their politics hark back to the observations of the first writers on the European emergence of civil society who recognised that people act in an atomised way, in other words in an inherently individualistic manner. The politics of global civil society are not oriented to a great degree towards the state, although many hope that they can exert influence upon it - after all, the individuals who comprise global civil society all reside in different states and so do not share a single set of laws in common. As Turner (1998) points out, civil society challenges the system by rejecting all comprehensive systems and ideologies, including state sovereignty.

The sphere within which global civil society can operate has expanded a great deal in recent decades, most notably since 1989, in terms of both the resources available and the arenas in which it is able to gain influence. These changes are characterised by;

- An opening of political space beyond the state boundary. This has been particularly evident since the end of the Cold War, the spread of liberal economies and democratic governance, which host civil societies and which sees them play an increasing role in global governance.
- The formation of international government, the United Nations and regional inter state authorities such as the European Union and more recently the African Union.
- Development of communication technologies and the declining costs of these.
- A general increase in the prosperity of the world economy since the end of World War Two.
- A 'value change' over the past 30 years in the West. This stresses the rights and responsibilities of the individual over that of the state.
- An expansion of democracy across most parts of the world with the associated freedoms granted in most countries.[12]

It is the opening up of this 'international space' and the greater recognition of cross border issues such as the environment and human rights which has lead to the broad growth of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). As Jan Aart Scholte points out;

"Civil society is a political space where voluntary associations explicitly seek to shape the rules (in terms of specific policies, wider norms and deeper social structures) that govern one or the other aspect of social life"[13]

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[12] From Helmut Anheier and Nuno Themudo, *Organisational forms of civil society* p.198 – complete

It is important to bear in mind, however, that not all the factors listed above apply to the same degree in all parts of the world. The spread of cheap communications, for example, has not permeated to most parts of the developing world and so this acts as a hindrance to civil societies, denying them the opportunity to easily communicate and participate with partners in the developed world.

Economic disparities must also too be taken into account. Whilst it is true that in general the world economy has prospered since 1945, many parts, including Latin America and Africa, have struggled and found that the process of globalisation often favours the developed world. This has lead to some southern NGOs and civic groups often having different priorities than their potential partners in the north. Most also have inferior representation amongst other global civic players. Other global disparities such as differences in values and beliefs are also important, and are found most often in the Middle East and parts of Asia, based often around the issues of tolerance and Human Rights.

Table 1 shows the growth in membership of International NGOs and therefore by some measure global civil society during the 1990s. The biggest increases shown below are in Eastern Europe and Asia, though the densities in these regions remain comparatively low because of rapid population growth over this period of time.

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[13] Jan Aart Scholte, 'Civil society and democracy in global governance' (CSGR Working Paper 65/01, Jan 2001) p.6

Table 1 : *Membership of International NGO's, 1990-2000*[14]

	1990			2000			Growth 1990-2000	
	Member-ship of INGO's	Member-ship Density *	Share of Total %	Member-ship of INGO's	Member-ship Density *	Share of Total %	Member-ship % of INGO's	Member-ship Density *
Western Europe	6,547	150	38	85,518	221	33	52	47
North America	6,533	24	4	10,257	33	4	57	41
Oceania	4,042	197	3	6,382	280	2	58	42
Japan	2,347	19	2	3,569	28	1	52	48
East Asia & Pacific	9,255	6	6	16,393	9	6	77	55
Europe & Central Asia	8,940	46	5	35,235	74	14	335	62
L.America & Caribbean	22,697	52	15	33,565	65	13	48	25
N.Africa & Middle East	8,242	35	6	11,964	39	5	45	13
South Asia	5,121	5	3	8,136	6	3	59	30
Sub-Saharan Africa	20,076	39	14	32,763	51	13	63	30
World	148,501	30	100	255,432	43	100	72	42

* Per million of population

Globalisation, it is important to note, whilst giving a platform to some NGOs to spread their activities to a global level, can prove a constraint to others. For globalisation is not the equaliser that many hope for in terms of politics, economics and the even distribution of NGOs and other civil society organisations. There are parts of the world, most notably in North West Europe, where there is a greater inter-connectedness and density of NGOs. Held *et al* discovered the correlation between clusters of globalisation and the amount of civil societies present in certain places. This is reflected in the figures in Table 1 with an overwhelming share of the total International NGOs operating from Western Europe. As the concentration is in Europe and the leaders of many of the organisations are from the same place there is at least the perception of a northern bias.

NGOs are mixed on their response to globalisation; some attempt to shape it, others to disengage from it. The globalisation of political culture must also be considered a factor, as must the extent to which the 'northern model' of NGO development practice is becoming the norm. It is worth noting, however, that there is no evidence that this 'northern model' of liberalism will necessarily remain the status quo. Stiles (2000) argues that if the debt burden of developing nations becomes more manageable and

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[14] Source: Union of International Associations (1990; 2000) from *Yearbook of International Organizations*

their economies expand, then their development strategies may move away from this model which involving to such an extent the reliance upon NGOs. Japan at present, for example, places little emphasis on NGOs. Since 1994 only 1% of its Net development aid was channelled through them (Stiles 2000).

There are other factors which do not necessarily come from the environment that a NGO finds itself in, but rather in the way the organisation is structured or run. As Anheier and Themudo point out; "typical organisational dilemmas revolve around questions of ownership, governance and accountability, organisational structure in terms of decentralisation and centralisation, internal democracy, and the type of organisational structure".[15] Worldwide differences due to 'conditions on the ground' influence this, as I will explore in more detail in the following chapter. However, similar dilemmas also affect established International NGOs.

(i) A Global Impact?

"As legitimacy is a function of public perception, the state's monopoly of authority is increasingly strained by a diverse and activated global citizenry"[16]

The increased viability of civil society organisations and NGOs at the global level invites evaluation of the impact that they now have and the role they now play at the level of global politics. Realists maintain that nation states retain their central positions, and that International NGOs are still very much a sideshow to international politics. To assess the impact and reach of global civil society it is best to exclude international organisations such as the United Nations and the European Union as they were formed by and are still dependant on nation states.

Some commentators question the validity of the term 'global' when used in relation to civil politics. This notion encourages the impression that it must be truly global and not merely Western. The term 'international' may, for instance, only really mean an increased interaction between states, whilst 'trans-national' may mean the regular crossing of borders with the inclusion of one other state body. We can see from Table

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[15] Helmut Anheier and Nuno Themudo, *Organisational forms of civil society* p.199
[16] Scott Turner 'Global civil society, Anarchy and Governance: Assessing an emerging paradigm' (*Journal of Peace Research* Vol.35 No.1 – Jan 1998) p.33

1 that there are more civil society organisations and NGO non state actors now than ever, however we cannot assume that there is a greater participation in inter-state affairs as a result.

Globalisation is leading to the globalisation of issues if not always ideals. The multiplying International NGOs, concerned often with local issues are, by forming linkages using new technology, able to contact other interested parties around the globe. This leads to a globalisation of ideas. For example groups whose concern is human rights can establish international contacts, meaning that their awareness of local law can then shift to international law. Indigenous groups around the world found that linking their efforts during the 1960s and 1970s, and by the formation of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, they were then able to more effectively target their national governments. The issue of Indigenous rights across the globe has similar themes no matter in which location the NGO or civil movement may be located. It makes clear sense, then, that when given the opportunity to pool their resources they do so. As Turner points out in his paper '*Global civil society, Anarchy and Governance: Assessing an emerging paradigm*', "Civil society is increasingly global not only because groups are establishing strategic linkages across national borders, but also because of the issues around which NGOs and social movements converge"[17] However, as Fisher (1997) points out; "Not all southern coalitions have been able to avail themselves of transnational networks, and coalitions of northern NGOs have selectively assisted southern groups, depending upon the utility of specific issues for furthering their own agendas."[18]

As mentioned before, possibly the best example of an issue that is likely to span global awareness is that of the environment. This is because it is not a very big leap from local concerns surrounding the environment to an understanding that all of humanity inhabits one integrated bioregion. So activities and practises in one part of that region are bound to have repercussions on it all. We can see today the alarm with which environmentalists view the rapidly growing Asian driver economies of India and China. Their rapid economic development is in turn vastly increasing the amount

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[17] Scott Turner 'Global civil society, Anarchy and Governance: Assessing an emerging paradigm' (*Journal of Peace Research* Vol.35 No.1 – Jan 1998) p.32
[18] William F. Fisher, 'Doing good? The politics and Antipolitics of NGO practices' (Annual Review, 26:439-64, 1997) p.453

of carbon from the burning of fossil fuels into the atmosphere. However, civil society organisations are putting pressure onto their own governments who in turn apply pressure to the governments of the countries concerned. This often has more effect than international treaties or agreements. This environmentalism on a global scale and outreach is in stark difference to the territoriality of the state.

(ii) Challenges

Many challenges and obstacles present themselves to the formation of an effective global civil structure. Many writers doubt that it can be achieved at all, and point to the wide socio-economic differences dividing nations and nation-based civic groups.

Edwards *et al* (1999) argue that global issues which seem to instantly bond civic groups such as Land mines and the environment must not be romanticised, and that with regard to NGOs operating together on the global stage the following questions should be addressed;

- Legitimacy – Who speaks for whom, and how are differences of opinion resolved where individual participants vary in strength and resources?
- Accountability – Who enjoys the benefits and suffers the costs of what the alliance achieves, especially at grassroots level?
- Structure – how does an NGO deal with the challenges of genuinely international governance, decision making and communication?
- Strategy – The need to develop more rigorous arguments and more credible alternatives as a contribution to policy debates. [19]

A difference such as the perceived north-south divide is one such issue that incorporates many of the factors above and this does come to the fore at UN conferences. The northern actors, normally the ones with more money and resources are therefore more able to guide the debate and to also set its parameters. Southern actors often feel isolated and excluded from the decision making process at the pre-conference 'Prepcoms'. This point was picked up by Clark et al in '*The sovereign limits of global civil society'*;

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[19] Summarised from Michael Edwards et al, 'NGO's in a global future: Marrying local delivery to worldwide leverage (Public Administration and Development 1999)

"The experiences of NGOs at the Rio (commonly referred to as the Earth Summit) conference illustrate the types of struggles over frame alignment that may occur during the conference process. Northern NGOs were disproportionately involved in the early preparations for the Rio conference, lobbying official delegates on the conference agenda. This agenda reflected many of the traditional environmental concerns of the north stressing specific sources of pollution or resources in need of preservation. When Southern NGOs showed up in larger numbers at the third Prepcom, they disrupted this lobbying by focusing on issues on the periphery of the official agenda, such as ways in which international debt and multinational corporations contributed to environmental degradation. One Northern NGO reported after the Rio conference that issues dividing northern and southern NGOs included southern assertions of national sovereignty over decision making and resources versus northern support for a global decision making body and the concept of a global "common heritage of resources". On these issues some of the NGOs had more in common with their host governments than each other."[20]

This common split at UN conferences highlights a possible 'spanner in the works' of attempting to achieve a global civil society. To what extent national based NGOs can come to a global consensus on issues when differing parts of the world have differing priorities is an important point.

Early international conferences have resulted in large differences being detected between northern and southern NGOs. These differences were particularly pronounced in the area of womans rights, where the distinction with human rights was often blurred. However with the ending of the Cold War and increased connectivity between Northern and Southern groups many of these differences became less detectable. Networking between groups can help prevent isolation and the groups from becoming weak. The World Social Forum is an important actor in boosting the profile and interconnectedness of particularly Southern NGOs. Scholte (2004) argues that in fact;

"In particular, South-North and South-South conditions have often strengthened the position of weak civil society groups in poor countries. Thus local civil society actors in India had greater effect in demanding accountability from Union Carbide from the Bhopal disaster in 984 when they collaborated with sympathizers across the world."[21]

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[20] Ann Marie Clark et al 'The sovereign limits of global civil society: A comparison of NGO participation in UN World conferences on the environment, human rights and women' (*World Politics* 51.1 – 1998) p.26
[21] Jan Aart Scholte, 'Civil society and democratically accountable global governance' (*Government and Opposition*, Vol.39 Issue 2, 2004) p.225

These networks are not, however, without their faults, and do represent at times another clear challenge to a global civil society. This is because to network requires resources that many organisations do not have. The inability of Southern actors for example to match the resources of the North in terms of communication and travel, amongst other things, causes a global disparity. Differences of opinion and differing priorities exist within the networks too.

Southern NGOs are given limited voice (M. Edwards *et al*) on a global level because donors focus to a large extent on their domestic roles. Therefore southern groups are handicapped to an extent when forging transnational links, limiting international co-operation and in their lobbying potential to the International Organisations. The challenge of building long term constituencies for international co-operation as a prerequisite of global governance structures has also by passed many, in particular northern NGOs with their focus on problems in the developing world instead of structural changes at home.

By the 1990s there was a much more visible and quantifiable common thread of understanding and little sign of the north/south divide which had been evident during much of the time before 1989. Capacity building is more in evidence not only in the north but also particularly in the south, as civil society groups and businesses take on the roles of intermediary NGOs. This sustainability is important to achieve for the southern actors as there is often limited funding and even the record of the northern NGOs is poor in the area of financial sustainability.

In fact, financial sustainability might be exacerbated by the rise of a global civil society. With the proliferation of NGOs and increased levels of government aid spending in the north, especially being given through these organisations, NGO funding is disseminated more and more. Only a handful of governments meet the United Nations recommended 0.7% of GDP, however many argue that international co-operation has increased because of the direct funding of NGOs by governments.

The culture of a state, network or international organisation is an important factor to the composition, size and behaviour of its civil society. For example, though France and Japan are two modern democracies they have comparatively small civil society

and NGO networks. In Canada, by way of contrast, civil society organisations are integrated into its taxation and governance systems to large degree and consequently can do more and act differently than other civil societies. The nature to which a state's culture can permeate its outlook is outlined by Scholte. "The authoritarian heritage of tsarist and communist regimes has done much to keep civil society at bay in contemporary 'democratic' Russia."[22] Some political cultures have a strong tradition of political activism, whereas in others deference is shown to those in authority. In some states where governments are seen as being corrupt, this view may be extended to those working for civil societies, as all those seen to be in authority may be regarded with suspicion.

(ii) Influence of the State

Encounters between state-dominated international politics and global civil politics are, however, widespread. As Clark *et al* notes;

"A well developed civil society potentially influences government in two ways. It enhances political responsiveness by aggregating and expressing the wishes of the public through a wealth of nongovernmental forms of association, and it safeguards public freedom by limiting the government's ability to impose arbitrary rule by force"[23]

States can still sanction the use of violence within their paradigm. It remains to be seen whether or not global civil society can muster a break from the use of violence. In the paradigm of northern civil society organisations some organisations still sanction violence in order to achieve their goals. Some environmental, animal rights and indigenous rights groups have resorted to violence in the past, impacting to varying degrees upon their internation reputations.

The issue of violence for forging a global civil society is a problematic one. As I have discussed, by the very nature of a diverse global civil society the wide range of groups and norms that it incorporates mean that differences of approach and of methodology

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[22] Jan Aart Scholte, 'Civil society and democratically accountable global governance' (*Government and Opposition*, Vol.39 Issue 2, 2004) p.229
[23] Ann Marie Clark *et al* in 'The sovereign limits of global civil society: A comparison of NGO participation in UN World conferences on the environment, human rights and women' (*World Politics* 51.1 – 1998) p.2

can be widespread. If we take as an example the Zapatista movement in the southern Mexican region of Chiapas, we would find a movement which would be recognised as a civil movement in North America and much of Europe, but also an organisation which bears arms and has been in military rebellion against the Mexican state. Despite this method, it is important to include them in the paradigm of global civil society, however, as they do not seek control of the Mexican state nor formal succession from it, and the stated goals of the organisation are that of land rights for the indigenous population of that region. The support and the sympathy evident for a movement such as the Zapatistas internationally was created largely thanks to the linkages that the movement, with its global outreach, has established globally to many NGO's and social groups around the world, most of whom would never advocate violence in pursuit of their own goals.

However, in regard to violence there is a vast difference between the normative paradigm of the state and that of global civil society. This is because in most cases the state was formed through violence and lends itself to violence when it can see no other way of establishing its will. As Turner points out; "It is all too rarely noticed that the greatest perpetrators of violence in the world are not street criminals or terrorists, but rather that much taunted source of law and order the sovereign state."[24]

Some may argue that civil society, given its broadest definition, does use violence as a legitimate tool. The Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka, the Zapatistas of Mexico and Hamas in Palestine all, it can be argued, are broadly civil movements which all adhere to violence as well as other means to secure their aims. It is possible, I think, that different discourses of subjects lend themselves more to violence. The Zapatistas' struggle with the Mexican state over the issue of land ownership is, I believe, more prone to violent confrontation than, for example, environmentalism. As the mainstream of global civil society is in many respects concerned with redefining the parameters of legitimacy in the long term rather than the short term, so in that case the notion of the use of violence is neither practical nor acceptable by the mainstream. This is because global public opinion is the driver for much of the discourse in global

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[24] Scott Turner 'Global civil society, Anarchy and Governance: Assessing an emerging paradigm' (*Journal of Peace Research* Vol.35 No.1 – Jan 1998) p.34

civil society because it is here that the legitimacy of claims is assessed in relation to the contrast of methods.

Public opinion in the vast majority of contexts never condones violence. If violence is perpetrated by some, then others in the same civic movement may rapidly become despondent and either a split in the movement forms or an internal power struggle may take place. Violence used by the anti-globalisation movement at protests in Seattle and in Genoa has led to splits in the movement between those who believe it is acceptable and those who believe it is damaging to the cause.

Violence is still overwhelmingly the parlance of the state however. Turner (1998) provides a useful illustration of the consequences of violence for civil societies with an example of farmers from San Fernando in the Philippines.

"In 1987, they accused Caridad C.Almendras Logging Enterprises of ' logging in critical watershed areas' and 'cutting undersized logs', while it had 'violated it's obligations under the licensing agreement by failing to plant new trees'. After petitioning the Aquino government and receiving no response, the farmers began blocking logging trucks by sitting in the road. After twelve days, a military detachment arrived and attacked the protesters with baton sticks and reportedly inflicting wounds on 24 of he peaceful demonstrators. Media coverage of the event ultimately embarrassed the government into suspending Almendra's logging concession in the San Fernando. Despite the state's use of force against the protestors, they achieved their goal without resorting to violence."[25]

Because of the methods used by the Philippine government in dealing with the claims of the protesters outlined in the above example, public opinion turned against them. Alternatives to violence obviously exist, and civic movements across the world have become adept at focusing their members and supporters' energies into non-violent means of getting their message across.

Other than the discourse of violence there may be other problematic areas in which defining a global civil society may be challenging. The rights of an individual, for example, whether it be set by international or national law, may at times clash with the collective rights of the social movement or organisation. In the Chiapas region of

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[25] Scott Turner 'Global civil society, Anarchy and Governance: Assessing an emerging paradigm' (*Journal of Peace Research* Vol.35 No.1 – Jan 1998) p.35

Mexico the minority Protestants have found themselves the target of discrimination or even expulsion from majority Catholic villages. This may be a political reaction, a mechanism whereby challenges to village leaders can be neutralised. However it does also demonstrate that the discourses most commonly associated with global civil society, such as the environment, human rights and indigenous rights do sometimes overlap and can act at times as a counter balance to each other.

The realist paradigm of the state which I have mentioned earlier is very unlike the one that the emerging global civil society exists in. Unlike the lust for power characteristics of the state, global civil society exhibits, it seems, a commitment to principles. Global civil society's 'trump card' is that it has the ability to influence public values on a global stage. It is able to bypass or operate around actions and directions as desired by the state. Since the advent of the information age public opinion has become a clear and open battle ground, with the apparatus of global civil society and its ideals often more adept at gaining the advantage over the state. As civil society in its global context is a rich tapestry involving millions of individuals acting on a global stage the consensus to violence is made much less easy to reach.

(iii) Summary

Throughout this chapter I have attempted to clarify the paradigm within which a global civil society is emerging. It is clear I hope that this global civil society is borne on the back of globalisation, and therefore the single greatest challenge to it is to make it work to its advantage. Lipshutz (2000) identified an institutional disorder at the heart of globalisation which he thinks represents many challenges for civil societies with a global outlook. Some thinkers today still hold on to a 'realist' view and attune this to the end of the Cold War era and the growth of supra-national organisations. One of these is Carothers (2000) who urges a rethink on our assumptions about the good will of civil society and its ability at fostering democracy. On whether NGOs foster the common good, he argues that civil society made up of single focus groups is only going to struggle with itself to the detriment of representing the public good. Other issues to be addressed range from the problems of legitimacy and structure as outlined by Edwards *et al* above to relations with the parameters of the state and to the bodies of global governance.

Chapter Three - Effects of a Global Civil Society on the Developing World

Surely one of the principal goals of the formation and the study of a global civil society is to measure its influence and effect on what galvanises the majority of NGOs around the world: the combating of the causes of global inequality and of poverty and easing of its effects. No more is this felt acutely than in the Developing world. The poorest nations are often those which suffer from the highest degrees of mismanagement and this often compels civil society to respond. In the developing world the re-emergence of states from colonial and into often an authoritarian post-colonial rule has invigorated civil society.

Actors in the north, through linkages made between civil society organisations, look to similar NGOs and civil groupings in the developing world to affect change in their societies. As I have discussed, differences in approach by civil societies across the globe manifest themselves in relation to policy for developing world actors. Many external actors from the north favour stronger civil societies and a wave of liberalisation in developing nations in an attempt to end corruption and open up the political process. However, many people in developing countries are opposed to this for they feel that the opening up of the political system may mean that it then becomes unstable and weak. Corruption then prospers. There is often too high a price to pay for economic reforms in the mind of many people in the developing world. Many people find themselves poorer as a result of reforms imposed by, for example, the IMF or the World Bank. However, the civil society model through which development funds are distributed has almost become the norm. As Stiles (2000) concludes;

"Given the overwhelming dominance of donors, the stronger presence Grassroots organisations and INGO's, and the relative weakness of developing countries' governments, it is not surprising that the civil society model has emerged as the dominant approach to development."[26]

Co-operation between those in the north and south can also be hampered by northern, and in particular European, civil society due to southern partners' suspicion of the

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[26] Kendall W. Stiles, Grassroots empowerment: States, non-state actors and global policy formulation (Non-state actors and authority in the global system 2000)p.42

north. It is the view of some in developing countries that it was civil societies in Europe which helped to promote colonialism. As Mary Kaldor explains when looking at this in an historical context; "The very success of civil society, linked to capitalism, in north-west Europe explains coercion and brutality elsewhere. If European states went to war with each other within Europe, outside Europe they undertook conquest rather than war and the civil society project was European or white rather than national."[27]

Civil society in Africa during the colonial period was reserved for Europeans only. This hampered the opposition in relation to apartheid in South Africa, as I will explore later, as civil movements for non whites were banned. Similar criticisms of civil society in India have been put forward by Partha Chaterjee who argues that the organs of what in the north would be recognised as civil society are constrained to an elite.

Modern global civil society however has less to do with the ideas of a few in the north, and in particular north-western Europe, than it has with civil rights movements in Eastern Europe and Latin America. Civil societies in these parts of the world were also invigorated, to a large extent due to the spread of power and wealth in the west. Therefore they share that in common with the post-colonial and post-authoritarian societies of the developing world. Contemporary methods of global civil society better reflect the experiences of the social movements of these aforementioned parts of the world and consequently are often more appealing to movements within the developing world.

In the following three examples I have examined case studies from three developing nations, each with three differing relationships and history in regard to civil society and its global manifestations. The experiences of civil society in Nigeria mirrors in many ways that of Eastern Europe, whereas the example of Bangladesh shows very much an indigenous and historically based NGO / civil society scene. In South Africa civil societies for the majority Black population were banned and suppressed and so

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[27] Mary Kaldor, 'The discourse of Civil Society' (*Global civil society: An answer to war*, Polity Press 2003) p.41

they had little option other than to seek connections with and assistance from organisations overseas.

(i) South African Civil Society and the Anti Apartheid struggle

A war cry for a large proportion of global civil society during the later stages of the 20th Century was the struggle to end the system of Apartheid in South Africa. Many observers argue that despite the conditions changing across the globe that can facilitate a global coming together of societies, such as some of the factors I have already mentioned - mass telecommunications and cheap air travel - getting people who are geographically disparate to agree and act as a collective remains very difficult. As the writer Sidney Tarrow argues "it is hard to find, combined in the movement, the conditions necessary to produce a social movement that is, at once, integrated with several societies, unified in its goals, and capable of sustained interaction with a variety of political authorities."[28]

There is, however, one strong exception to this rule. I believe that the transnational anti-apartheid movement, strong throughout much of the late 20th Century, conformed to the ideal of a global civil society very strongly. The anti-apartheid movement also helped to forge networks of civil movements in order to increase pressure on national governments who in turn it was hoped would apply pressure to the government of South Africa. It is worth noting, however, that there are strong reservations over whether or not the political organisations working within South Africa and in exile in opposition to apartheid are what can be considered as civil society. As Deborah James argues in '*Civil society in South Africa*'; "There are two sets of reservations over whether these struggle-ear organisations qualified to be described as, or mobilized in the name of, 'civil society'. First, since they were mostly political oppositional forms in another guise, they were political, even 'state-like', rather than 'civil' in nature."[29] The second reservation refers to South African modernity. She outlines doubts "about whether South African society, overall, is modern enough to sustain a pluralist 'civil society', given its former bifurcation – augmented during

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[28] Quote from Sidney Tarrow, Håkan Thörn, 'Globalization of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (*Anti-Apartheid and the emergence of a global civil society*, Palgrave Macmillan 2006) p.48.
[29] Deborah James, 'Civil society in South Africa' (Exploring civil society: Political and cultural contexts, Routledge 2004) p.149

apartheid – into urban/modern and rural/traditional sectors. The apartheid version of indirect rule legislated that rural Africans be members of separate ethnically defined territories, living on communally held land and hence materially and politically dependant on chiefs".[30]

Deborah James' first point can be countered by involving the notion of global civil society. Whilst true that most writers on this subject draw a clear distinction between the spheres of politics and civil movements in order to define civil society clearly, this distinction I believe becomes somewhat blurred when looking at the civil action around the world which took place on behalf of the anti-apartheid movement.

Though discussions and tensions within the anti-apartheid movement both within South Africa itself and also through the transnational network opposed to it were certainly present, there was also evident enough common ground and common purpose to drive the movement foreward.

The anti-apartheid movement was mostly influenced by the work and actions of those opposed to the system inside the country or by those working in exile. However, the movement was from the outset influenced by external features from the earliest forms of recognisable global civil society and early political struggle. The newly formed ANC in the first half of the 20th Century was, for example, heavily influenced by the writings and ideology of the anti colonial struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi, who lived in South Africa between 1893 and 1914. The African National Congress (ANC) formed early transnational links with sympathetic groups within the old colonial power Britain and also with the government of Sweden. These contacts took place before the anti-apartheid movement really came into life during the early 1960s.

Both the ANC and the Pan African Congress (PAC) were banned by the South African government in 1960 and both were forced to take their struggle underground and overseas. There were differences in approach between the two organisations with regard to their search for overseas assistance. The PAC had success at gaining foreign support but largely from other African nations, many of whom had too recently

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[30] Deborah James, 'Civil society in South Africa' (Exploring civil society: Political and cultural contexts, Routledge 2004) p.151

thrown off the yoke of colonial rule and were eager to establish further African power to the continent. Importantly, The Organisation of African Unity in the early 1960s recognised the PAC and ANC as the legitimate representatives of the African people. Both organisations were different, however, and took their ideas and beliefs from different world views, therefore causing them to seek different friends and allies across the globe. The PAC, for example, was anti-Soviet communist and therefore sought linkages with China for military training and funds. The ANC however was sympathetic to the Soviets and received both arms and training from the USSR and the Eastern Bloc. The armed struggle now being waged by both organisations did lose them, especially the ANC, some 'broad church' appeal - especially in the west - where early stirrings of civil society wanted to dissociate themselves from armed conflict.

The actions of civil society throughout the west in particular in relation to the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa culminated in economic, cultural and sporting boycotts as well as sanctions. Though people at the time pinned different meanings to these actions and the effects they had. As Håkan Thörn points out in *Globalization of the Anti-Apartheid Movement*;

"The different types of boycotts and sanctions also represent different ways to approach transnational politics and mobilization, as they emphasize different channels of political influence. While sanctions as a policy of disinvestment of a state (that through legislative measures enforces a withdrawal of companies from South Africa) emphasised the power of the nation state as the ultimate instrument for putting pressure on South Africa, boycotts and divestment (the sale of stock in multinational companies and subsidiaries in South Africa), represented forms of political pressure that by-passed the nation state."[31]

One form of action, the boycott, is now a recognised tool of international action by civic groups. In the case of South Africa this was organised and promoted from sources largely in the country with the aim of hurting the South African economy and isolating it culturally, therefore putting pressure on the government for change. Some

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[31] Håkan Thörn, 'Globalization of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (*Anti-Apartheid and the emergence of a global civil society*, Palgrave Macmillan 2006) p.60

western universities sold their shares in South African companies; most notably the Chase Manhattan bank in the United States under pressure from the city of New York and Universities therein announced that it would not grant South Africa any further loans.

The sanctions and boycotts that were levelled against the Apartheid government in South Africa, which came to a head in the 1980s, always had the support of those movements within the country and so although there was criticism that the effects of such sanctions might be most sharply felt by ordinary people, civil society movements overseas persisted with calls for sanctions.

The argument about sanctions was, in the case of South Africa, linked to Communism and divisions within the anti-apartheid movement on the ANC's links to Communist countries. Some anti-apartheid movements were opposed to sanctions and thought that increased trade with South Africa would be the answer as that would stir civil societies with the country to resist the regime. They argued that this would increase activity within Trade Unions which then could be focused to anti-apartheid opposition.

A United Nations resolution in 1973 dismissed a long-standing claim from the government of South Africa that to meddle with apartheid was to meddle with its internal affairs. The UN resolution identified for the first time that the ANC and PAC were the true representatives of the South African people. This represented a highly significant move for an international body such as the UN to make. It was recognising political movements operating on a global level from either in exile or within a state as a legitimate government. The ANC was given space at Commonwealth meetings, another significant move and one which resembles the pattern of today's parallel meetings. As Håkan Thörn points out "(in) the case of anti-apartheid shows that the UN can be perceived as a political space where the process of globalisation from above and below sometimes intersect".[32]

The movement against apartheid involved cooperation over many years at local, national and international levels. In many ways it was achieved on a global level by

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[32] Håkan Thörn, 'Globalization of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (*Anti-Apartheid and the emergence of a global civil society*, Palgrave Macmillan 2006) p 72.

taking advantage of the many conduits of Globalisation looked at in this paper. Namely the increasing role of the media and increased travel and mobility. Activists were able to utilise both of these, and representatives of both the PAC and the ANC were sent out across the globe to utilise the mass media for their cause.

The antiapartheid movement required groups to be simultaneously active in transnational politics. Through the appliance of pressure both politically and economically, human rights movements from all backgrounds and communities within South Africa were able to, through common causes, globally effect positive change in their locality.

(ii) Civil Society in Nigeria

The example of civil society in Nigeria is that of one which broadly follows the trends of civil society globally since 1989. Though through separate tribal traditions Nigeria before and during the period of colonialism did posses civil societies, it was not until the resurgence of civil societies following the end of the Cold War and the return to democracy in Nigeria that civil society groups blossomed again. Writers such as Gellner (1994) have recently asserted that civil society exported to Africa is not the same as that found in Europe or other western societies. It is possible that Gellner was trying to locate civic structures and organisations that were recognisable to those studying northern civil societies. However Ṣọlá Akínrìnádé argues in '*On the evolution of civil society in Nigeria*' that;

"Historically, the tendency to form associations and corporations is very strong in many Nigerian societies but particularly so among the Yoruba of the southwest and the Igbo of the southeast, two dominant ethnic groups in the country. The associations are formed for the purpose of promoting and protecting common interests in diverse fields including economics, politics, religion and even recreation and enjoyment."[33]

This description does not appear too dissimilar to the earlier definitions used throughout the 19th and 20th centuries in defining the emerging phenomena of civil

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[33] Ṣọlá Akínrìnádé, 'On the evolution of civil society in Nigeria' (*Exploring civil society: Political and cultural contexts*, Routledge 2004) p.142

society. That it was built on with the emergence of more modern apparatus in Nigeria to encompass global dimensions only reflects the trends in the north.

Civil society re-emerged in Nigeria due to the weakness and corruption associated with democratically elected governments and the threat of a return to authoritarianism. Throughout the military rule of much of the 1990s a collage of civic movements met and challenged the often intimidating and brutal methods deployed by the military government. At first based upon the actions of civil societies in Eastern Europe during the later stages of the Cold War, the movement then became more radicalised as the authoritarian state imposed its will and the failure of any democratisation agenda. As argued by Ebenezer Obadare here;

"If any proof was needed at all about the promise of civil society, it seemed to have been supplied by the events in Eastern Europe where civil society had been used successfully to challenge hegemonic practices."[34]

As I will outline with the example of civil society in Bangladesh, civil society within Nigeria has a long standing history. And as with the example I set out from South Africa, there are worries in Nigeria and in much of West Africa over the meaning and usefulness of the term 'civil society'. It is acknowledged that in the early 1990s in Nigeria everyone with a grievance of some kind against the state labelled themselves as civil society.

(iii) Civil society in Bangladesh

Civil society as a concept is in very regular use in Bangladesh. In Bengali the term *Shushil Shamaj* is used often in relation to this and it literally means 'gentle society'.[35]

The Bangladeshi government in the mid 1990s established a government / NGO consultative council with the aim of establishing better communications between government and the growing number of NGOs operating in the country. The country itself has a long history of NGO and Civil society involvement. This can be traced to

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[34] Ebenezer Obadare, 'Civil society in West Africa' (*Exploring civil society: Political and cultural contexts*, Routledge 2004) p.158
[35] David Lewis, ''Old' and 'new' civil societies in Bangladesh' (*Exploring civil society: Political and cultural contexts*, Routledge 2004) p.113

Self-Help village level organisations which were established throughout Bangladesh from the 1930's onwards.

Many believe that Bangladesh, as an extremely poor country, is at the whim and behest of Western NGOs and is as a consequence perhaps vulnerable to western development fashions because of its dependent position in relation to aid. The spread of NGOs in Bangladesh and the extent to which they work at implementing what are often perceived as western ideals has caused friction, especially in more conservative areas of the country. Lewis in *'Old and new' civil societies in Bangladesh* points to an example in the mid 1990s where;

"In 1994 female NGO field workers were assaulted in Manikganj and Sitatkanda, and more recently in Brahmanbaria BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) schools and staff were attacked (Rahman 1999). For some, this is evidence of clashes between the forces of local religious conservatism and NGOs as purveyors of ongoing disputes over patron-client relations or land-related conflicts in which NGOs are merely convenient scapegoat targets, perhaps by threatening established interests by positioning themselves as 'new patrons' (Devine 1998)."[36]

The above passage provides an interesting insight into the problems faced by NGOs on the ground in Bangladesh. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, the elements of old and new civil societies seem at times opposed to one another in the Bangladesh study. Old civil society such as the Islamic church, which has been established for some time in the rural areas of Bangladesh and integrated into such organisations as the village self-help groups, can come into clashes which are not only ideological in substance but almost resembling a turf war of influence with NGOs.

Religious organisations are also a part of civil society, though perhaps in the older sense of the concept. These clashes with NGOs which express western agendas are very much in the Gramscian mould of civil society behaviour. David Lewis observes one such difference "during 2001 in the Gopibagh area of Dhaka's Mirpur district, the leader of one mosque helped organise a community initiative designed to resist the problem of organised crime (believed to be linked upwards to political parties) experienced by local traders and residents on the neighbouring streets. Once whistles

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[36] David Lewis, ''Old' and 'new' civil societies in Bangladesh' (Exploring civil society: Political and cultural contexts, Routledge 2004) p.116

were issued to local shop keepers and wooden clubs provided to the congregation at the mosque, the activities of local touts and extortionists were believed to be successfully reduced. A number of those accused were perused and then beaten to death by a group of angry citizens carrying out a form of 'instant justice'".[37]

This kind of initiative is in stark contrast to the recognisable practices of any 'new civil society' NGO and offers another illustration of the divisions of practice in Bangladesh. However in Bangladesh there have been numerous accusations of misbehaviour and corruption made against NGOs. Because of the divisions within the sector this may be seen as in-fighting and so it is hard to determine the level of corruption present.

Advocates of the newer forms of civil society within Bangladesh point to the internal structure of NGOs operating in the country and their democratic governance. The notion of a global civil society is crucial to this as if indeed it is the case that western methods of practice are being implemented in Bangladeshi NGOs. The NGOs' outreach work can lead to wider norms of practice and this is distinctive from the practice of the church and some of the aspects in Bangladesh of older civil society practices.

As we have seen there is more than one tradition of civil society active within Bangladesh. These disparate approaches are, however, capable of coming together and forging change, such as in the restoration of democracy in 1990.

(iv) The Developing World, NGO's and Supra-state organisations

The examples of civil society/NGO activity in the countries above show to varying degrees their relationships with international organisations and other civil society organisations from other nation states. Though I have sought to demonstrate the spread of global civil society with these examples there is also the important case of creating a mechanism whereby grassroots NGOs in developing countries are able to

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[37] David Lewis, "'Old' and 'new' civil societies in Bangladesh' (Exploring civil society: Political and cultural contexts, Routledge 2004) p.117

access the resources of much larger players such as the UN, the IMF, and the World Bank.

Peter Uvin has termed the phrases '*scaling up*' and '*scaling down*' as a means by which smaller NGOs, most notably in developing countries, can participate at the world table. To scale up is for such organisations to expand beyond their local level, and for an organisation such as the UN, for example, to scale down is as it suggests to alter its structure and methods to meaningfully engage with the grassroots.

The numbers of small NGOs now number in the millions, they are particularly prevalent in the developing world and, as outlined with the example above of Bangladesh, they often include amongst their number village, farmers, women's and religious groups. Almost all the NGOs that work with the UN and other bodies today do so because of 'scaling up'. Virtually none were created at that level and virtually all have had to work their way up.

This process, it seems, is a clear way by which NGOs based in the Developing World can begin to operate on a larger, more transnational scale and hopefully therefore increase their resources and reach. This then is perhaps one actual method of becoming a part of a global civil society. The incentives are clear; access to greater funding from, for example, some of the Washington based organisations that have budgets far in excess of most Developing World based NGOs. "Grassroots initiatives that are funded solely by internally mobilised resources have a limited capacity to expand activities or touch more people. They need external resources for quantitative, functional and organisational scaling up."[38]

Input on policy is a very strong motive behind much of the formation of a global civil society. Although many NGOs based in developing countries might have only local objectives the cause is quite often internationally based. This is proving the impetus to much of the momentum behind the coming together of civic movements. The obvious example of the environment is one where many NGOs in developing

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[38] Peter Uvin, 'Scaling up the grass roots and scaling down the summit' (*NGO's, the UN, and Global governance*, Lynne Riener Publishers 1996) p.164

countries are formed to tackle local environmental concerns, yet the cause is international in origin. As Peter Uvin argues;

"The poorer the country and the weaker its government, the more important the role and the power of international development organisations. In many African countries, for instance, development is basically managed by the UNDP representative and the World Bank delegation. For local communities, this international presence is often as much of the problem as of the solution."[39]

As well as being able to influence the policies of transnational bodies, many NGOs work to attain an international presence in order to have an influence over their national government. The World Bank encourages NGOs in developing nations to forge links with their national governments and vice versa.

There are, however, problems with growing participation on an international level. Firstly there is a strain on the resources of the NGO that wishes to move in this direction. It is often one that at first it can ill afford but it must in most cases employ extra staff who are professional, and meet the fees for them to travel overseas. Aligning the grassroots organisation to a larger transnational organisation can put a strain on the ideology and the ideals of that organisation. They may also start to loose sight of their original goals. As Uvin points out;

"Increased funding and the requirements attached to it, as well as the need to sustain it over time, create a dynamic in favour of staying in business at any cost. It also can lead to adopting projects for which funding is available, rather than focusing on local needs."[40]

We saw this in the example of the growth to international status of civil society in the example from South Africa. The influences from outside and the possible detrimental effects can cause splits in the organisation. The ultimate goal for some elements of civil society in the country became muddled with the interventions of differing outside involvement.

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[39] Peter Uvin, 'Scaling up the grass roots and scaling down the summit' (*NGO's, the UN, and Global governance*, Lynne Riener Publishers 1996) p.165
[40] Peter Uvin, 'Scaling up the grass roots and scaling down the summit' (*NGO's, the UN, and Global governance*, Lynne Riener Publishers 1996) p.169

It is perhaps sometimes lost in the body of literature about global civil society that for civil societies within national boundaries to reach out there must also be a corresponding effort from International organisations to meet them part way. Many international organisations have come to realise that to achieve their goals they must become more egalitarian and more autonomous with regard to NGOs.

Many of the same criteria that NGOs must attempt to meet in order to scale up their operations to the world stage must be adopted, I think, by international organisations to meet the demand for a more democratic global presence. These organisations must, it seems, restructure not only the way they fund certain projects to meet the findings of NGO field work but also their own internal structures too.

With this process of developing world based NGOs attempting to win international favour, do we not see the marginalisation of the state? In the developing world in particular is this not dangerous? Gramsci maintained that the state and civil society are quite separate realms. Yet we know that with the continued integration of national civil societies with other civil movements from other countries and with international organisations such as the World Bank, IMF and the UN these realms can change and morph alongside one another.

Civil society in the developing world has a proven record of reinforcing and motivating political transition. How this process will be affected by continued 'scaling up' to international organisations by civil societies within developing countries remains to be seen.

In this chapter I have shown how the analysis of civil society is a useful tool for examining political transition in the developing world. The variables present in each state make for useful comparisons, but their feeding into the international sphere brings a degree of hegemony to their practices and it is thus far unclear as to whether or not this is to the benefit of those countries concerned.

Chapter Four - Civil Society towards Global Governance

With the spread of globalisation, the declining powers of national governments and the growth of an internationalised civil society, an emerging sphere of global governance is slowly finding its feet. This globalisation of ideas, movements and policy has for some time seen a reconfiguration of social space. The territory of the state no longer, it seems, holds the degree of dominance over the individual that it once had, rather it is increasingly having to co-exist with global spaces such as in the increasingly globalised forms of civil society. The requirement for regulation of such global spaces is therefore an important matter of debate. Whether this regulation is the business of the United Nations, and to what extent states and increasingly civil society have an input, is what I will explore in this chapter.

(i) Changes in Governance

Though governance has really been about the state since the mid 17th Century, developments in the 20th Century have given the citizen extended range and scope in his or her ability to engage with affairs that fall in many respects beyond the jurisdiction of national governments.

The 20th Century saw many changes in the way that democracy, rights, civil society, development and ultimately governance were viewed. Since the 1970s the political world has been transformed. The majority of the cold-war states, which suppressed civil societies and political liberties, have for the most part adopted the Western model. Donnelly (1999) points out that Cold War states have chosen democracy wherever the people were offered the choice. Those states which were identifiable by their authoritarian rule, often defining themselves by their opposition to communism, have been largely discredited. Military regimes have buckled from South America to Africa.

State sovereignty became the cornerstone long ago of international relations. This has remained the case during the formation of supra-state organisations such as the League of Nations and subsequently the United Nations. Yet the evolution of the

sovereign state is one of war and an anarchic state of existence. Because there remained no overarching governmental authority over the state with any degree of power over it comparable to that which the state holds over its internal affairs, the state could therefore be seen as being 'pre-moral' in its workings.

A shift of the political climate goes some way toward undermining the intellectual arguments of the earlier twentieth century regimes, which previously justified the violation of human rights by appealing to what they argued were the more important factors of security, prosperity and, increasingly, democracy. And as the latter has flourished across the world in the late twentieth century, the universal notion of civil and political liberties has gathered momentum and authority.

Yet it is simplistic to attribute the creeping acceptance of Western models throughout much of the developing world to an idealistic adherence to the notion that governments have a duty to provide legitimacy in the context laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Donnelly points out that while now "only a few states publicly justify systematic denials of internationally recognised human rights … the power of the idea of human rights should not be over-emphasised. Economic failure has been central to the collapse of these regimes'.[41]

Many, indeed, most states require themselves to be understood as legitimate and even prominent in governance terms. The legitimacy of a state can effect everything from food aid, international business transactions, involvement in international affairs and, perhaps most importantly, security from foreign military or territorial ambitions.

The realist view sees states as being able to do as they please with the current level of intra-governmental power and the responsibilities. They require little or no moral justification for their behaviour. The realist assumption of state interactions dominated the first half of the 20th Century and remained the norm up until the end of the Cold War.

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[41] Jack Donnelly, 'Human rights, democracy and development' (*Human Rights Quarterly* 21.3, 1999) p.2

In his article *Global civil society, Anarchy and Governance: Assessing an emerging paradigm* Scott Turner notes that Keohane (1986) listed three core assumptions of realism, these being;

1. The State-centric assumption: States are the most important actors in global politics.
2. The Rationality assumption: World politics can be analysed as if states were unitary rational actors, carefully calculating costs of alternative courses of action and seeking to maximise their expected utility.
3. The Power assumption: States seek power both the ability to influence others and resources that can be used to exercise influence); and they calculate their interests in terms of power, whether as ends or as necessary means to a variety of other ends.[42]

These assumptions, especially in relation to power, show that violence at least of the time of writing was still an underlying factor in the relations amongst states, and plays to the adage that 'war is a mere continuation of policy by other means.' (Clausewitz 1832) It is important to bear in mind, however, that these assumptions were written during the later stages of the Cold War, a global state of affairs which as we have already discussed gave life to much of the contemporary understanding of a global civil society. Yet these assumptions began to be challenged by the ideals of this growing global civil society. Scott Turner outlines this thus;

"Monopoly is challenged by political decentralisation (e.g. indigenous peoples' rights movements); the absolute legitimacy' of state sovereignty is challenged by international standards, discursive diversity and global public opinion, which redefine the parameters of acceptable institutional behaviour (e.g. the international human rights movement); physical force is challenged by a widespread commitment to non-violence within the globalist community; and territory is challenged by international mobility transnational networks of communication and globalist perspectives."[43]

Public willingness, it seems, for there to be greater transnational social and environmental regulation is growing, but there is at the same time a tangible reluctance on the part of traditional intra-state actors such as corporations and state governments for any far reaching reform of transnational government to be carried out. An example of a body which in many respects backs up Scholte's argument is that of the G8. This group of the world's seven largest industrial powers and Russia is

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[42] Keohane in Scott Turner 'Global civil society, Anarchy and Governance: Assessing an emerging paradigm' (*Journal of Peace Research* Vol.35 No.1 – Jan 1998) p.27
[43] Scott Turner 'Global civil society, Anarchy and Governance: Assessing an emerging paradigm' (*Journal of Peace Research* Vol.35 No.1 – Jan 1998) p.28

possibly most distant from the people. The leaders of the G8 hold almost unprecedented sway and influence over political and economic decisions that have effects far beyond the boundaries of their own countries. Yet they represent only 10% of the world's population. The World Bank and the IMF, on the other hand, have virtually every nation in the world represented among their members, yet the quota regime they both use means that there in effect five large shareholders in both organisations and they hold 40% of the vote when it comes to decision making.

It is important to acknowledge that global civil society is not the only actor in chipping away at the assumptions held by the 'Realist view' of global governance and the state systems within it. There are other Non-NGO, non-state actors also at a transnational level. These are working in many ways like NGOs in that they work from the top down and bottom up. They are namely the UN, the European Union and perhaps to a lesser extent the African Union. In this sphere, there are also organisations which some class as terrorist organisations such as Islamic Jihad and Hamas as well as international corporations. All these organisations however, with perhaps the exception of the United Nations, are at odds with the 'Realist view' because they are mostly post-realist in their methods and outlook. The European Union, though the basis of it was formed after the Second World War, does not conduct its activities in a state-centric realist way but rather, due to the way in which it is structured, it tries to find common ground to proceed within its constituent parts. The nation states who are members of the European Union have all ceded a certain amount of state sovereignty which its advocates say in turn has empowered the sovereignty of the individual within the supra-state structure. The African Union has voiced its intention to follow this model, though the success of such a union remains to be seen for a union of countries almost all of which are stricken by poverty and with varying degrees of democracy. A natural consequence of this state of affairs is that civil movements are often stunted and unable to fully exploit the potential for connectivity with other NGOs overseas, particularly in other developing countries.

The one organisation which many global movements and International non-governmental organisations hold their trust in is the United Nations, though this too is mixed in terms of its democratic credentials. The obvious discrepancy is in the one member one vote system at the UN, so that for example the world's smallest state -

the Vatican City - is afforded a single vote, as is China, the world's most populous state. This is clearly disproportionate. An organ of the UN with increasing global prominence and one which often holds the attention of the world, the Security Council is dominated by its five permanent members who are in many ways a vestige of the Cold War. They are reluctant to cede any of their powers on the council or to allow for an expansion to allow permanent members from, for example, Africa or South America.

(ii) Civil society and the United Nations

With the spread of globalisation, the declining powers of national governments and the growth of an internationalised civil society, an emerging sphere of global governance is slowly finding its feet. The globalisation of ideas, movements and policy has for some time seen a reconfiguration of social space. The territory of the state no longer, it seems holds the degree of dominance over the individual that it once had, rather it is increasingly having to co-exist with global spaces such as in the increasingly globalised forms of civil society. The requirement for regulation of such global spaces is therefore an important matter of debate.

There are now over 250 supra-state organisations active in the world today. There still is substantial influence exerted on these from the more powerful states, however many of the more prominent organisations such as the United Nations have built into written Charters mechanisms that resist and counter any overt control by one member state or another.

An empirical measure of NGO involvement in global government is to measure the involvement of Non Governmental Organisations in attendance at United Nations conferences and parallel conferences. This gives us a measure of sorts of not only how many NGOs may be active at the global level, but also of their growing influence at such conferences and perhaps as a result at the level of global decision making.

For example less than 300 NGOs attended the Stockholm conference on the environment in 1972. In 1992 1,400 NGOs registered to attend the Earth Summit in Rio and 18,000 attended the parallel NGO forum. At the 1975 Mexico City

conference for International Womans Year, 6,000 people attended the NGO forum and 114 NGOs gained access to the official conference. Ten years later at the 1985 closing conference of the UN decade on Women in Nairobi 13,500 people registered for and many more attended the parallel NGO forum.[44]

UN conferences at least with their growing acceptance of non state partners, have authorized accredited participation in the preparation of conferences at separate events, or what are known as 'Prepcons'. State actors and governments have still remained unwilling to a large extent to involve NGOs at the final stages where documents have been drawn up.

Observers, however, disagree over the outcome in the long term of NGO activities. AM Clark et al point out that; "Despite the undeniable profusion of nongovernmental actors and activities at UN conferences, there is little consensus on the long term consequences of these global interactions on the substance of international politics."[45]

It is this clear lack of empirical evidence that has given so much fuel to the detractors of the activities of NGOs, as well as to those who claim that they serve little purpose at such events and achieve little. However, other writers have pointed out the uses that governments now attribute to NGOs. Some governments have set up what are known as GONGOs or Government Organised NGOs which are largely viewed with suspicion by NGOs, largely because of fear of governmental encroachment on their activities. It is also a sign of the extent to which NGOs are pushing the global agenda that governments are employing them more and more in terms of their overseas aid budgets and imitating them by copying their tactics with the intention of achieving their results. Most NGOs and states have a routine co-operative relationship, though Clark *et al* (1998) note that there seems to be an alternate dialogue between NGOs and NGOs, and governments and governments. They have nominative relations at institutions such as the United Nations and according to Gaer (1996) "Human rights

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[44] From Ann Marie Clark et al 'The sovereign limits of global civil society: A comparison of NGO participation in UN World conferences on the environment, human rights and women' (*World Politics* 51.1 – 1998)

[45] Ann Marie Clark et al 'The sovereign limits of global civil society: A comparison of NGO participation in UN World conferences on the environment, human rights and women' (*World Politics* 51.1 – 1998) p.21

NGOs are the engine for virtually every advance made by the United Nations in the field of human rights since its founding"[46]

While relations with the United Nations and even the other large international development institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank are on the whole progressive, worldwide there is still friction between aspects of civil society and the state. Governments are divided over the role of NGOs at conferences. This is critical because governments still have a large say over the input and levels of participation of NGOs on the world stage despite the allowances that have been made by the UN for NGO participation at parallel conferences.

(iii) Effects of a Global Civil Society on Global Governance

Is global civil society today faced with the challenges that national based civil societies were faced with in Latin American and Eastern Europe during the second half of the 20th Century? Must they now learn to deal with the challenges of near totalitarian supra-state bodies which are unresponsive to their populations in the ways that the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe were? Is global civil society merely about stepping up a gear whereby it challenges on a world stage what smaller groupings did within nation states? The advocates of promoting a global civil society sat that it can contribute by adding a democratic dimension to the somewhat authoritarian world governance structures.

Though in democracies there is a degree of national accountability, national or regional parliaments such as that of the European Union rarely take any action to a transnational level. This is because it is rarely if ever an election issue for them. In many democracies of the north voter participation is in decline, in any case (Scholte 1999). In Europe this is the case with both national and European elections.

Many high profile NGOs are based in close relation to governance apparatus. Because of the perceived changing nature of governance structures civil society organisations

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[46] From Scott Turner 'Global civil society, Anarchy and Governance: Assessing an emerging paradigm' (*Journal of Peace Research* Vol.35 No.1 – Jan 1998) p. 31

have shifted their emphasis from the local (national governments) to supra national organisations.

Most writers acknowledge that there are both positive ways in which inter connected civil movements can act on a global scale, and negativities that may arise as a result of this. Jan Aart Scholte, writing in his paper 'Civil society and democracy in global governance', identifies six possible contributions global civil society can make to a global discourse, as well as acknowledging some negative outcomes. I think it is important to briefly summarise Scholte's main points in order to critique them against existing transnational organisations.

- First Scholte identifies that civil society might enhance democracy in global governance through public education activities. He thinks that for democracy to be effective it must rely upon informed citizenry. Mass media right down to presentations and leaflets for schools and universities play a role.
- Giving a voice to stakeholders is, Scholte argues, a means by which civil society can pass on ideas and information from the lowest levels and those less empowered to government and trans-governmental agencies.
- The very intervention and presence of civil society fuels the debate about global governance and more diverse subjects are discussed and discussions about policy have become more critical.
- Scholte also argues that the involvement of civil society can increase the transparency of global governance. Many citizens are often not aware of which decisions are taken at the global level.
- Civil society can also hold to account such agencies as the IMF and the World Bank which otherwise may not be directly accountable to any citizens. Through an accountability function civil society can push authorities in global governance to take greater responsibility for their actions and policies.
- The final point Scholte makes is that of legitimacy. He argues that legitimate rule occurs when people acknowledge that an authority has a right to govern and that they have a duty to obey its directives.[47]

For many of these positive outcomes to be achieved it seems that Civil societies such as NGOs need to have a sufficient amount of resources to be made available.

The growing acknowledgement that an emerging layer of government is forming because of the globalisation of politics has also led to the realisation that the ordinary citizen has little or no way of controlling and influencing it. As Scholte again argues;

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[47] Summarised from Jan Aart Scholte, 'Civil society and democracy in global governance' (CSGR Working Paper 65/01, Jan 2001)

"On the whole, current arrangements to regulate global communications, global ecology, global markets, global money and finance, global organisations and global production rest – at best- on the thinnest consent of the affected publics."[48]

(iv) Dangers of NGO involvement in Global decision making

There are also notable dangers for civil society encounters with global governance. Scholte (2001) identified some of these and he argues too that there is a danger that civil society can actually detract from democratic governance and that it can in cases obstruct popular rule.

Scholte argues that civil societies, NGOs and other international organisations do not as a rule have the promotion of democracy on their agenda. His inclusion to accommodate the extremes such as Neo-Fascists and groups such as Hamas, as I have discussed earlier in this paper, is a point also argued by Carothers (1999) who believes that civil societies do not inherently represent the public good, for if you are including everything non-governmental then organisations such as, as an extreme example, even the Russian mafia must also be involved[49]. I think it is important to presume, however, that only organisations with a democratic agenda would play any kind of role in global governance, at least through such organisations such as the UN and the World Bank who have broadly democratic constitutions.

Global democracy may also suffer if the interventions of civil society are ill-conceived. This may be an unintentional consequence of going global but many NGOs need to go international to address their local issues. This can have both a negative effect on them and the international organisation they are working with.

Sholte also identifies that democracy might suffer when the agencies of global governance are ill-equipped to handle inputs from civil society. Both the United Nations and the IMF have in recent years made provision for increased numbers of NGOs to participate in their forums, though it can be argued that this response and the response of other international organisations has been reactive rather than pro-active.

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[48] Jan Aart Scholte, 'Civil society and democracy in global governance' (CSGR Working Paper 65/01, Jan 2001) p.12
[49] Thomas Carothers, Think again: Civil society' (*Foreign Policy*, winter 1999-2000, Jan 2000)

The danger that civil society may get too close to government and its agencies must also be taken into consideration. For example civic groups may come uncritically to render services to governments agencies or take funds from them. The reliance of many NGOs on state funding, some fear, also diminishes their independence. This has the danger of causing 'mission blur' where perhaps organisations will 'cross over' to work with organisations they had previously challenged. Government control, according to some, remains ultimately decisive. Clark *et al* (1998) affirming this view wrote that;

"Governments are standing firm in their claims to ultimate sovereignty over the issues that seem to most affect their ability to control the distribution of power and resources whether at home or abroad."[50]

A further danger is that if an NGO suffers from inadequate representation, then those inequalities it then risks passing on to governments and government agencies. "The capacities of civil society to advance democracy in global governance can be compromised if the participants are – as is currently often the case – drawn disproportionately from middle classes, men, Northern countries, whites, Christians, and urban dwellers."[51]

Another problem related to representation is that civil society in the south and in former communist countries becomes monopolized by Western-styled and funded NGOs. Grassroots circles may then become unintentionally marginalised. This fear of a 'Northern monopoly' is not new in development. However the extent to which development has become an industry funded by Northern governments through NGOs has yet to be fully assessed. There is what many view as a growing corporate manner about some international NGOs and a market which sustains the growth and contributes to the spread of global governance. This has lead in parts to disillusionment with aspects of civil society.[52]

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[50] Ann Marie Clark, 'The sovereign limits of global civil society: A comparison of NGO participation in UN world conferences on the environment, human rights and women' (*World Politics* 51.1 1998) p.34
[51] Jan Aart Scholte, 'Civil society in global governance' (*CSGR Working Paper* 65/01, Jan 2001) p21
[52] Mary Kaldor, '*The idea of global civil society*' (Martin Wright memorial lecture – 31 October 2002, University of Sussex)

Scholte's final point is that civil society groups can have low democracy criteria even within their own groups, even if their purpose is to campaign for democracy. They may purport to speak on behalf of certain constituencies, but often do not consult them.[53]

As Scholte's points above help to illustrate, there are circumstances whereby the involvement of civil society in global governance can detract from democracy and the effectiveness of the civil society itself. Therefore many argue that it is important for international NGOs in particular to demonstrate and prove their democratic legitimacy and not allow themselves to become too closely aligned to national governments or in some cases international organisations such as the World Bank.

(v) Summary

There remains relatively little theoretical analysis of global civil society as an alternative paradigm to state-centred realism. However, from some of the points above it is clear that Civil society is now a vital actor at the global level and is able to help democratise that level of governance. However, it still appears that in the contemporary world the building of new transnational systems of governance has so far been carried out in a technocratic way not necessarily a democratic way. It is hard to see that if at present the democratic credentials of international organisations are not strong, how civil society can democratise them. They are still actors at the margins of many conferences although their representation at such conferences is growing.

It remains unclear at the international level that the increase in NGOs with shared goals will amount to the same as a growing and strengthening global civil society. Governments, whom NGOs at the international level are still divided over the role of NGOs at conferences. There is a disparity between the style of lobbying as favoured by the US and UN democratic practices. Cross fertilization is also a concern of lobbying is also a concerns Clark *et al* state;

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[53] Based on Jan Aart Scholte, 'Civil society in global governance' (*CSGR Working Paper* 65/01, Jan 2001)

"If evidence of cross-fertilisation shows up at conferences where NGOs rather than governments have linked concerns across issue areas, we contend that it can plausibly be attributed to the growth of global civil society."[54]

Governments are beginning to include NGOs and civil society in general more and more in the processes of implementing policies and are eager it seems for them to take on the workload at the international level. It is yet to be seen if this will fully extend to an input in governance as well.

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[54] Ann Marie Clark *et al* in 'The sovereign limits of global civil society: A comparison of NGO participation in UN World conferences on the environment, human rights and women' (*World Politics* 51.1 – 1998) p.31

Conclusion

It is perhaps too soon to establish if a global form of civil society has fully emerged. The achievements of national based groups are perhaps uneven and complexities associated with the meaning and purpose of certain civil movements create what can be portrayed at times as a 'mission blur' in relation to global policy making.

Gramsci writing in the 20th Century thought that civil society was an arena where class hegemony forged consent. Today the contemporary discussion treats civil society as a place of disruption and also consent. Today with globalisation many trends of social interaction disregard state boundaries and it is becoming increasingly clear that national governments and more so international organisations are unable to manage by themselves. Governance now in reflection of increasing global trends is moving increasingly far away from the Statist realities that prevailed when Gramsci wrote. Our realities now involve much more than the state.

In the information age, public opinion is a clear battleground and if the turnout of the electorates in the liberal democracies of the west are dwindling whilst memberships of civil society groups are growing it leads many to the common sense conclusion that national governments must form linkages with these groups with the purpose of policy formation.

Global civil society is in many respects new and therefore still difficult to describe let alone quantify. Writers contest its meaning and significance. Some contest its existence while others describe the term as either too 'fuzzy' or too broad. One way however of giving some understanding to it is to look at its interactions with the United Nations and other international bodies committed to conversation with civil groups. It is clear here that through increased participation at parallel summits aided by increased national funding, civil society is playing an increasingly important role in policy formation and implementation.

Civil society on the global stage is ultimately a rich tapestry involving millions of individuals on a global stage. They are supportive of or participating of a myriad of organisations, social movements and NGOs. This could perhaps be most accurately be

described as the political arm of Globalisation and it is a test for existing governmental institutions as to how well they can adapt to Globalisation and incorporate the structural changes as demanded by an increasingly numerous and vocal global civil society.

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