

Building Civil Society
for a Humane and Sustainable Future:
toward a Global Role for the Institute of Cultural Affairs in the UK

Submitted April, 1997

by

Martin Gilbraith

MA (Econ) Development Administration and Management

the University of Manchester, Institute of Development Policy and Management

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>PREFACE</i>	4
<i>ABBREVIATIONS</i>	5
1. INTRODUCTION	6
1.1. Context.....	6
1.2. Aim and structure of work	7
1.3. A word on cultural relativism; unloading conceptual baggage	8
1.3.1. <i>Civil Society</i>	8
1.3.2. <i>Democracy</i>	9
1.3.3. <i>Development</i>	10
2. THE IDEA OF CIVIL SOCIETY - PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS AND CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS	12
2.1. Philosophical roots.....	12
2.2. Contemporary interpretations	13
2.2.1. <i>The re-emergence of the idea</i>	13
2.2.2. <i>...and its reconceptualization</i>	15
2.2.3. <i>Defining characteristics</i>	19
2.3. A framework for analysis.....	20

3. APPROACHING THE NEW MILLENNIUM - A TIME OF GLOBAL CRISES.....	22
3.1. 'Getting to the 21st Century' - a crisis of governance	22
3.2. Society as an unbalanced stool	24
3.2.1. <i>Norms of community co-operation</i>	25
3.2.2. <i>Structures of voluntary association</i>	28
3.2.3. <i>Networks of public communication</i>	30
3.3. The demise and rise of civil society.....	32
4. CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS - A NEW BOTTLE FOR A FAMILIAR WINE	37
4.1. Getting to the 21st century - a global journey.....	38
4.2. The Social Process - restoring balance to a triangle	42
4.2.1. <i>Norms of community co-operation</i>	44
4.2.2. <i>Structures of voluntary association</i>	45
4.2.3. <i>Networks of public communication</i>	47
4.3. A global role for ICA:UK.....	49
5. CONCLUSION - A CALL FOR PARTICIPATION	52
<i>APPENDIX</i>	56
<i>REFERENCES</i>	57

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is a dissertation submitted in April 1997 to the University of Manchester for the degree of MA (Econ) Development Administration and Management in the Faculty of Economic and Social Studies, the Institute of Development Policy and Management.

I hereby declare that no portion of the work referred to in this dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institution of learning.

I wish to thank John Burbidge of ICA USA in Seattle, editor of the forthcoming ICAI book on civil society, for his contributions of readings and references, and for the invaluable dialogue on the subject of civil society that we have shared by email over the past year and a half. Also, I thank Richard Alton of ICA International in Brussels, for his role in bringing the idea of civil society to my attention, and to the attention of ICA, through his work for the ICAI conference and book. Further, I am grateful for the assistance of my supervisor Paul Cammack at the Department of Government, the University of Manchester; and to all those whose work I have cited and referred to in the text, without whom this study would not have been possible.

Most of all, however, I must thank all the friends and colleagues I have met and worked with, in Britain and around the world, during my time with ICA. Without them I would not be who I am today, and for that I am most grateful. It is to them that this work is dedicated.

All errors and omissions, of course, remain my own.

Martin Gilbraith
Manchester, April 1997

ABBREVIATIONS

ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
GNP	Gross National Product
IAF	International Association of Facilitators
ICA	Institute of Cultural Affairs
ICAI	Institute of Cultural Affairs International
ICA:UK	Institute of Cultural Affairs: United Kingdom
ICA (MENA)	Institute of Cultural Affairs (Middle East and North Africa)
INTRAC	International NGO Training and Research Centre
LENS	Leadership Effective and New Strategies
LETS	Local Economic Trading System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ToP	Technology of Participation

1. INTRODUCTION

“The good life can only be lived in civil society... The picture here is of people freely associating and communicating with one another, forming and reforming groups of all sorts, not for the sake of any particular formation - family, tribe, nation, religion, commune, brotherhood or sisterhood, interest group or ideological movement - but for the sake of sociability itself. For we are by nature social, before we are political or economic beings” (Walzer 1992, 97).

1.1. Context

The idea of ‘civil society’ is experiencing a renaissance in debates on development and democracy, as ‘third sector’ organizations and grassroots movements demand, and are often granted, greater space in which to contribute to the development and democratization of our societies at local, national and global levels.

As we approach the turn of the millennium, and the end of a century that has witnessed radical and often devastating socio-economic and environmental change, the need has never been greater, nor the time riper, for humankind to plan and act strategically in search of radical solutions to address the great global crises of our times - Korten (1990) has identified these as the crises of poverty, environment and social integration. There are innumerable indications of positive change in many spheres, perhaps evidence of an emerging paradigmatic shift to a dawning ‘solar age’ (Henderson 1993). Yet, the challenge remains for us all to participate effectively in the shaping of a more humane and sustainable future for all.

The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) is a global network of private, not-for-profit organizations and networks concerned ‘with the human factor in world development’, and working actively to foster such participation by facilitating personal, organizational and social transformation in a variety of contexts. ICA:UK is a network of families and

individuals sharing these concerns, most of whom have participated as volunteers in grassroots community development work overseas, and who now live and work in a diverse range of settings in Britain. ICA adopted ‘Participating in the Rise of Civil Society’ as the theme of its recent quadrennial global conference, held in Cairo in September 1996, and is now publishing an edited volume on the same theme (Burbidge forthcoming).

1.2. Aim and structure of work

By drawing on relevant literature and documentary sources, as well as on the author’s personal experience of working with ICA over 11 years in India, Egypt and the UK, this study explores the evolving idea of civil society and the debates surrounding it, with reference to the Institute of Cultural Affairs and ICA:UK.

The aims of the study are two-fold. Firstly, for those enthused by the idea of civil society and the sector’s role in democracy and development, it aims to highlight some of the important dimensions of that role, in theory and in practice, and the practical approach of ICA that is not only working in building and strengthening civil society for such a role, but that is also uniquely appropriate to address to the great crises of our times as viewed from a civil society perspective. Secondly, for those involved with ICA or familiar with its approach, it aims to highlight the relevance and utility of the idea of civil society as an insightful (and newly fashionable) conceptual framework by which to understand and appreciate the work in which ICA has been engaged for over 25 years.

Chapter 2 introduces the idea of civil society in its historical context, and reviews its re-emergence and current place in contemporary debates on democracy and development. Chapter 3 explores how such a civil society perspective may offer insight into the dangers and opportunities of the global crises demanding our attention in the late-1990s, and into their implications for the role of civil society, and for all those concerned with acting, and catalyzing action, for positive change. Chapter 4 demonstrates the particular relevance of the idea of civil society to the Institute of Cultural Affairs and ICA:UK and, conversely, of ICA

and its practical approach to the rising civil society and the challenges it faces. The study concludes, in Chapter 5, by reaffirming the high level of ‘fit’ apparent from a civil society perspective between ICA, its practical approach and the challenges of the contemporary global crisis of governance; and by calling for a dynamic learning approach to a renewal of civic engagement from all those who share ICA’s ‘concern with the human factor in world development’.

1.3. A word on cultural relativism; unloading conceptual baggage

Any discussion of governance and processes of social change at the global level, particularly a discussion based on such concepts as civil society, democracy and development, which are so inextricably linked to historical experience in what has come to be known as ‘the West’, must tread carefully indeed to avoid the potential quagmire of ‘cultural relativism’. As Blunt writes,

“Powerful governments, mainly in the West, and multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, appear to be as willing as ever to prescribe for others universal values they have identified concerning such questions as economic management, democracy, human rights, sound governance and the nature of development itself... There is no simple, unitarian or one best way... Rather, all of these questions are to some extent liable to interpretation in the light of different cultural, institutional and environmental circumstances, hence the term ‘cultural relativism’” (Blunt 1995, 2)

It may be pertinent, therefore, at the outset of this study, to defend the validity of these tools of analysis to the tasks to which they are to be applied, by attempting to relieve them of some of the conceptual and ideological baggage with which they are so often burdened.

1.3.1. Civil Society

As described in Chapter 2, the idea of civil society has its roots in the writings of philosophers of the eighteenth century Scottish Enlightenment. It has been argued that, “because historical experiences vary markedly, exporting concepts [such as civil society]

from the historical context in which they emerged may obscure more than is revealed” (Schwedler 1995, 15). In the context of the Middle East, for example, Wickham has argued that “efforts to locate civil society... reveal more about the preoccupations of Western scholars than they do about new social configurations in the Middle East today” (Wickham 1994, 509). Authors such as Adam Seligman, moreover, have argued that “the idea of civil society was specific to that time [the Enlightenment], and use of the term as a model for contemporary social organization - in both Western and non-Western contexts - is highly problematic because it neglects these roots” (Schwedler 1995, 17).

An idea is not immutable, however. As Norton writes, “a categorical rejection of the idea of civil society in the Middle East is unwarranted, not least because the idea of civil society is fast becoming part of the indigenous intellectual and policy dialogues” (Norton 1993, 213). Chapter 2 will describe how the idea of civil society has been rehabilitated and reconceptualized in modern times, and across cultures, to explain contemporary social conditions and to capture “the emergence of an unprecedented worldwide phenomenon - men and women, groups and individuals, getting together to do things by themselves in order to change the societies they live in” (Darcy de Oliveira and Tandon 1995, 1). This study is based on the premise that, as once again a contemporary, and now a truly global idea, civil society remains a valid tool of analysis.

1.3.2. Democracy

Since 1972, the ‘third wave’ of democratization has seen the number of democracies more than double from 44 to 107, representing more than half of all countries, and reaching every region of the world (Doh 1994, 136). The notion of democracy has thus gained sufficient popularity among peoples and leaders worldwide to occasion triumphalist declarations in the West of the ‘end of history’ (Fukuyama 1992), as the great competing ideologies are said to have been discredited, leaving democracy “the only model of government with any broad ideological legitimacy and appeal in the world today” (Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1989, x).

Yet, these procedural democracies are curiously unempowering. Chomsky has exhaustively documented the limitations of the democratic model of the United States of America, where “formal democratic procedures... are devoid of meaning, as citizens not only do not intrude into the public arena, but scarcely have an idea of the policies that will shape their lives” (Chomsky 1994, 164). Moreover, citizens in emerging and consolidated democracies alike are finding even relatively accountable national political institutions increasingly unable to withstand, still less to shape, powerful and unaccountable global and economic forces of change.

I have argued elsewhere that,

“in the context of ever mounting pressures worldwide for truly accountable democratic governance by which to address the major social, economic and environmental crises of the times, a transitional model of democratization based on a narrow procedural conception of democracy may be seen to be not only an inadequate response to the demands of the rising civil society, but a perilous distraction from the real democratic transformation that is required” (Gilbraith 1996, 15).

Further, I argued that a key challenge of such a transformation will be securing state and corporate accountability to civil society. This study is based on the premise that “there is often no greater obstacle to freedom than the assumption that it has already been attained” (Edwards 1995, 1) and, therefore, that a democracy taken for granted is effectively a democracy forsaken - (re)democratization is an ongoing and global issue.

1.3.3. Development

It is argued by so-called ‘anti-developmentalists’ (Corbridge 1995, 8) that the idea of development is obsolete - it did not work and has become outdated but, moreover, it was ill-conceived from the outset. Esteva, for example, has argued powerfully that the transfer of the biological metaphor of development to the social sphere “converted history into a programme: a necessary and inevitable destiny”, thus giving “global hegemony to a purely Western genealogy of history, robbing peoples of different cultures of the opportunity to define the forms of their social life” (Esteva 1992, 9). Sachs calls for “apostasy from the

faith in development in order to liberate the imagination for bold responses to the challenges humanity is facing before the turn of the millennium” (Sachs 1992, 2).

Although Esteva contends that “those who now use the word [development] cannot free themselves from a web of meanings that impart a specific blindness to their language, thought and action” (Esteva 1992, 10), he observes that “there is nothing in modern mentality comparable to it as a force guiding thought and behaviour” (Esteva 1992, 8). This study attempts to retain the power of the idea of development, free of its web of unwanted meanings and associations, by adopting Serrano’s beautifully simple conception:

“Environment is where we live. Development is what we do to make our life better there”
(Serrano 1994, 349).

From such a perspective, development is clearly not only of truly global relevance, but also wide open to cultural and personal interpretation. It is thus revealed as an essentially political, not a technical issue, and so better understood in the political terms of democracy and civil society, than from the dominant economic perspective.

2. THE IDEA OF CIVIL SOCIETY - PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS AND CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS

“Civil society has come of age, so to speak. With long roots in social history and philosophy dating back to the Enlightenment, the concept of civil society has emerged in current discourse with a force and a resonance that can probably parallel the dawning of the information age” (Serrano 1994, 369).

2.1. Philosophical roots

According to Fernandes, the expression ‘civil society’ was used by philosophers of the eighteenth century Scottish Enlightenment, to distinguish

“a society ruled by common law from a supposedly primitive condition where independent individuals were led by passions and needs. *Societas civilis* represented a break away from *societas naturalis*, instituting a political body where freedom and reason were to be, somehow, reconciled” (Fernandes 1994, 339).

Roniger and Gunes-Ayata have described how, from the late eighteenth century, first in the West and then beyond, modern constitutional democratic regimes emerged from processes of struggle and turbulent change, creating a new public sphere of interaction and communication in which the public organized and expressed itself. This reflected “a move away from absolutist rule, a widening of political participation, and a crystallization of citizenship ideals, civil freedoms, and legal frameworks aimed at subjecting traditional authority to the scrutiny of representative forms of government” (Roniger and Gunes-Ayata 1994, 6). These changes were accompanied by further economic, social and cultural changes including marketization, urbanization, the development of modern science, and of new structures of voluntary association. The idea of civil society thus emerged to reflect “the existence of organized public life and free associations beyond the sphere of the state and free of its tutelage yet oriented toward the public sphere and public policies” (ibid.). In the view

of Habermas, civil society was “a phenomenon of capitalist society that emerges as ‘activities and dependencies hitherto relegated to the framework of the household economy’ shift outward to create a new sphere of activity between the household and the state” (Schwedler 1995, 5).

The idea of civil society thus emerged in connection with the rise of the modern market and state, and cannot be isolated from them. No consensus emerged, however, to produce a clear and unambiguous definition. As Bellin writes,

“Historically, ‘civil society’ has signified everything from the peaceable society humans enjoy under the protection of a Leviathan state (Hobbes), to the stratum of private associations that schools citizens in civic virtue (Tocqueville, Montesquieu), to the constellation of cultural institutions that guarantee the ideological hegemony of the ruling class (Gramsci)” (Bellin 1994, 509).

Hyden has drawn on the ‘founding fathers’ of the idea of civil society to identify four distinct philosophical positions, by distinguishing between a view of civil society as a primarily economic phenomenon driven by private interest, and that of civil society as a sociological phenomenon based on the role of associations as intermediaries between the individual and the state; and between the views of civil society as essentially autonomous of, or organically linked to, the state (Hyden forthcoming). The resulting positions he characterizes by the ‘master advocate’ of each - Locke, Paine, Tocqueville and Hegel. Their philosophical differences are, he argues, reflected still in contemporary debates around the idea of civil society. These positions are discussed further below.

2.2. Contemporary interpretations

2.2.1. The re-emergence of the idea...

The re-entry of the idea of civil society into contemporary debates is attributed to the spectacular popular uprisings against totalitarianism of the late 1980s and early 1990s in Central and Eastern Europe. The concept has since become central to the study of political transitions to the extent that, according to Diamond, “in this third wave of democratization,

no phenomenon has more vividly captured the imagination of democratic scholars, observers and activists alike than ‘civil society’” (Diamond 1994, 4). Bratton has described how widely the idea has come to be applied, in consolidated as well as in emerging democracies:

“The emergence of a democratic opposition to authoritarian socialist party-states in Central and Eastern Europe provided the impetus to the contemporary revival of civil society... The concept was then picked up by analysts of transitions from authoritarian rule in Southern Europe and Latin America... It has also been adopted by social critics who note the decline of civic values in the advanced capitalist countries and has been most recently applied to social movements and political transitions in Russia, China and countries in Africa...” (Bratton 1994, 1).

As an illustration of the extent to which the literature on civil society has burgeoned, even with regard to a region relatively neglected by scholars of democratization (Korany 1994, 511), Schwedler provides a bibliography of no less than 30 pages of references to texts in Arabic, English, French and Turkish to accompany her ‘Toward Civil Society in the Middle East’ (Schwedler 1995). Bratton’s select bibliography with special reference to Africa (Bratton 1994) is also illustrative of the extent to which the idea has become integral to indigenous policy dialogue across cultures¹.

Writing of the United States, and reflecting a concern popularized by Putnam’s influential article ‘Bowling Alone’ (Putnam 1995), Brewster contends that “the yearning for community - for the associational life, for social cohesion, for an anchoring stability that is larger than self-reliance - is possibly the strongest current of the day” (Brewster 1996, 17). The idea of civil society has been picked up by ex-President Bush, in his metaphor of voluntary associations as “a thousand points of light” (the Economist 1993), and “traces of it” were evident in President Clinton’s recent State of the Union speech (Brewster 1996, 17). In Britain, too, the idea is receiving widespread attention even at the highest levels, as reflected in Blair’s vision of a ‘stakeholder society’.

¹ Indeed, the contemporary cross-cultural discourse may now be enriching the rights-based, individualistic liberalism of Western political thought with insights drawn from Confucianism. According to Brewster, the American-Japanese Fukuyama (1995) defines the key to prosperity, ‘social trust’ (a defining characteristic of the contemporary idea of civil society), as a kind of Confucianism that regards individuals as surpassing themselves by fulfilling their obligations to others: “sociability is an end, a goal - not an expedient contract undertaken as a means toward fulfilled individualism” (Brewster 1996, 21)

With regard to development, Hyden has observed that both academic and political discourse has shifted in the 1990s from the primarily economic concerns of the modernization, neo-Marxist and neo-liberal schools of the last 30 years to a new focus on ‘political culture’, in particular the relationship between democracy and development (Hyden forthcoming). He attributes this shift to two main factors. First, the realization that the ‘top-down’ approach to development has not worked, and the concomitant disillusionment from across the political spectrum with the state as exploitative and discouraging of popular initiative - both ‘unresponsive but invasive’ and ‘inefficient but restrictive’ (Mackintosh 1992, 62). Analysts now commonly maintain that “developmental wisdom is lodged not in governmental bureaucracies but in local communities and institutions” (Hyden forthcoming). Second, the crisis of credibility suffered by politicians of democracies and autocracies alike, as political apathy and lack of organization reflect a cynicism and distrust of politics in general². In contrast to the failure of the state and political society to effect development, civil society and the ‘social capital’ it generates have been attributed with great developmental power by writers such as Putnam (1993), as discussed in Chapter 3.

2.2.2. ...and its reconceptualization

Bratton has identified common elements of the contemporary discourse on civil society as including “a critique of state domination of public life, a preference for reform over revolution, and a strategy for political change based upon negotiations and elections” (Bratton 1994, 1). These elements may not be new to the contemporary discourse, but there are significant differences between contemporary and classical interpretations of civil society, as there are among contemporary scholars.

Hyden has described four contemporary schools of thought on civil society (Hyden forthcoming), reflecting the four distinct positions he identified among its founding fathers, as noted above. He describes a dominant ‘associational school’ as reflecting a largely

² In the UK, for example, 76% of respondents of a 1995 poll took the view that “the present system of governing Britain... needs a great deal of improvement” (Jacobs 1996, 106).

Tocquevillean position that regards civil society primarily in terms of its active and autonomous associations. A further ‘regime school’ he characterizes as drawing its inspiration mainly from Locke, and as focusing particularly on democratization of the regime in terms of legal and constitutional issues. Both the ‘regime school’ and the ‘associational school’, however, share an optimism regarding the role of civil society that distinguishes them from the two remaining schools, which remain more cautious. Hyden describes the anti-statist ‘neo-liberal school’, drawing on the tradition of Paine, as emphasizing the importance of structural reform to protect private property rights. The ‘post-Marxist’ school, adopting a largely Hegelian position, similarly recognizes the importance of social structures, but regards structural reform as more likely to reinforce social stratification to the benefit of elite interests.

Three significant differences may be discerned between the civil society of contemporary and classical debates. First, civil society today is seen less as a historical result of the rise of capitalism, “to allow the bourgeoisie to protect their interests against encroachment from the state”, but rather as a sphere of democratic social interaction “to enable all citizens to ensure a degree of government accountability” (Schwedler 1995, 5). It has thus gained an important ethical dimension, now representing, for some, “no less than the ‘virtuous’ struggle for the ‘good life’” (ibid.)³. As Fernandes has observed,

“what was a natural state for the early philosophers and a logical condition for modern politics in Hegel and Marx becomes a goal for our social activists: ‘civil society’ should be ‘built’, ‘reinforced’, ‘consolidated’, to overcome deeply ingrained habits of personal dependencies in public life” (Fernandes 1994, 340).

Second, whereas the civil society and market of the classical debates were regarded essentially as two sides of a coin - the political and economic aspects of ‘society’, which

³ For example, Walzer (1992) and Kemmis (1995). Others remain more circumspect. Norton, for example, warns that “self-interest, prejudice and hatred cohabit with altruism, fairness and compassion, sometimes making unrestrained free play of civil society a chilling thought” (Norton 1993, 211). According to our interpretation below, however, such values would be excluded from manifestation in civil society by definition, as being less than civil. Moreover, as Walzer admits, “there is no escape from power and coercion, no possibility of choosing, like the old anarchists, civil society alone” (Walzer 1992, 102) - our metaphorical stool (below) would equally be unbalanced, whichever leg were shorter.

itself was regarded in contrast to the state - the civil society of contemporary debates is generally conceived of as a third dimension, distinct from both the market and the state. A popular contemporary metaphor likens society to a three-legged stool, resting on the pillars of the state, the market and civil society. As such, the European idea of civil society has become almost synonymous with the American concept of a non-governmental, non-profit ‘voluntary sector’, ‘third sector’ or ‘third system’.

Clark has referred to the voluntary sector in terms of its constituent parts, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), which he defines as “formally constituted, non-governmental, self-governing, non-profit..., not overly partisan... and characterized by some degree of voluntary involvement “ (Clark 1995, 600)⁴. Fernandes has proposed a simple scheme by which to identify the three sectors, by distinguishing between private and public dimensions of behaviour:

private agents	pursuing private ends	=	the market
public agents	pursuing public ends	=	the state
private agents	pursuing public ends	=	the third sector

(adapted from Fernandes 1994, 342)⁵

Referring to the power embodied in each of three systems, Nerfin has characterized them in terms of the symbols of Prince, Merchant and Citizen. He explains:

“Contrasting with governmental power and economic power - the power of the Prince and the Merchant - there is an immediate and autonomous power, sometimes evident, sometimes latent: people’s power. Some people develop an awareness of this, associate and act with others and thus become citizens. Citizens and their associations, when they do not seek either governmental or economic power, constitute the third system. Helping to bring what is latent into the open, the third system is one expression of the autonomous power of the people” (Nerfin 1987, 172).

⁴ Gordenker and Weiss adopt a virtually identical definition of NGOs, but further identify three significant categories of NGOs deviating from it: GONGOs, QUANGOs and DONGOs, ie: government-organized NGOs, quasi-NGOs and donor-organized NGOs (Gordenker and Weiss 1995, 360-1)

⁵ Public agents pursuing private ends, of course, represents corruption, and has not been granted the respectability of recognition as a fourth sector

By association with such concepts as the voluntary sector, third sector and third system, the contemporary idea of civil society has been reconceptualized to refer not only to a new ideal to be struggled for, but also to an actual emerging phenomenon, as discussed in chapter 3.

Third, whereas the idea of civil society emerged in connection with the nation state and the national economy, and while it is often still defined in relation to the state system, it is no longer considered solely at the national level. Largely as yet undemocratic supra-national state structures such as the United Nations conceptually, and actually, require a global civil society to balance their powers and hold them accountable to their citizens - as perhaps even more so does the global economy. Processes of globalization have created an intricately interconnected supra-national economy, and transnational corporations that wield immense power even in relation to states and their institutions⁶. Although lagging behind the state and corporate sectors, civil society has also been linking and expanding across national borders, as illustrated by the explosion in the size and influence of international NGOs in recent years. The Commission for Global Governance reports that their number has increased from 176 in 1909 to 28,900 in 1993 (1995, 32); and the number enjoying consultancy status (categories I and II) with ECOSOC⁷ has increased from 7 and 32 in 1948 to 41 and 354 in 1991 (Gordenker and Weiss 1995, 363). According to Salamon,

“...we are in the midst of a global ‘associational revolution’ that may prove to be as significant to the latter twentieth century as the rise of the nation-state was to the nineteenth. The upshot is a global third sector” (Salamon 1994, 109).

The establishment in 1993 of CIVICUS, the ‘World Alliance for Citizen Participation’, “dedicated to civil society, voluntary action, pluralism, philanthropy and community service” (Darcy de Oliveira and Tandon 1994, 381), represents a significant step

⁶ For example, “of the world’s 100 largest economies, 50 are now corporations - not including banking and financial institutions” (Korten 1996, 6)

⁷ The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, whose arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations, allowed for under article 71 of the UN Charter, gave NGOs their name (Gordenker and Weiss 1995, 361)

toward the institutionalization of this global movement, and the kind of global vision with which the contemporary idea of civil society has become associated.

Thus, while owing much to its roots in the philosophical traditions of the Enlightenment, in the light of these three significant differences, the contemporary idea of civil society may be regarded as being as specific to this time as the classical idea was to its own.

2.2.3. Defining characteristics

Although a variety of definitions of civil society have appeared in recent literature⁸, encompassing some differences as to what the concept may include and exclude, there is broad consensus over its essential characteristics. Bratton offers a concise but comprehensive definition, drawing on a range of contemporary theory:

“Civil society is defined... as a sphere of social interaction between the household and the state which is manifest in norms of community co-operation, structures of voluntary association, and networks of public communication” (Bratton 1994, 2).

Norms of community co-operation are considered critical. Diamond has defined civil society as “the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules” (Diamond 1994, 5), stressing these shared rules as the “irreducible condition” of the dimension of civility, even in the absence of an effective legal order (ibid.). This view is characteristic of the broad consensus that may be termed the “modern, liberal conception of civil society”, by which activity within civil society is characterized by “the norms of equality, participation, tolerance and political inclusion” (Schwedler 1995, 5-6).

Bratton regards the most important values for the construction of civil society to be trust, reciprocity and tolerance, or inclusion: “Trust is a pre-requisite for individuals to associate voluntarily; reciprocity is a resource for reducing the transaction costs of collective

⁸ Ibrahim reports having encountered no less than 76 definitions in recent social science literature (Ibrahim forthcoming)

action; political tolerance enables the emergence of diverse and plural forms of association” (Bratton 1994, 2). United States Senator Bill Bradley has described civil society as “the sphere of our most basic humanity - the personal everyday realm that is governed by values such as responsibility, trust, fraternity, solidarity and love” (cited in Brewster 1996, 18).

Structures of voluntary association are what institutionalizes the civil life, populating and pluralizing civil society regardless of whether or not they are explicitly oriented to political or civic functions. As Bratton writes, voluntary associations range from “the localized, informal and apolitical on the one hand, to national, legally registered, policy advocacy organizations on the other (Bratton 1994, 3). Diamond offers six categories to encompass the wide array of civil society organizations: economic, cultural, informational and educational, interest-based, developmental and issue-oriented (Diamond 1994, 6). Indeed, “the boundaries of civil society have been broadened... to include virtually all nonviolent associational activity between individual citizens and the state” (Schwedler 1995, 5).

Networks of public communication enable citizens and their associations to be politically active, by participating in public debates and airing their aspirations for the governance of their communities and society. Civil society will thus flourish more strongly where media and fora are diverse and not monopolized by the state or private sector. That civil society organizes itself into networks is significant. As Darcy de Oliveira and Tandon have written, “networks, in contrast to the international mechanisms created by corporations and governments, tend to operate horizontally - their centres are everywhere; their peripheries nowhere” (Darcy de Oliveira and Tandon 1994, 8). Civil society is, by definition, participatory.

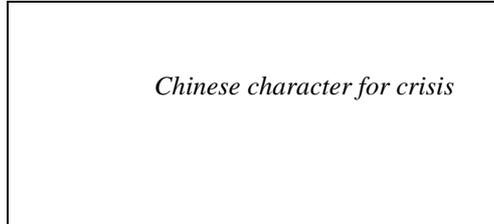
2.3. A framework for analysis

Bratton’s three defining characteristics of civil society and its role as one of three foundational pillars on which a civilization ultimately rests will constitute the basic analytical

framework by which the contemporary idea of civil society will be applied in the following chapters. The contemporary global and ethical dimensions of civil society will also be prominent in the analysis.

The following chapter will explore how the contemporary idea has come to be applied in practice to explain modern social conditions, and to begin to define an agenda for action toward a more humane and sustainable future.

3. APPROACHING THE NEW MILLENNIUM - A TIME OF GLOBAL CRISES



“The Chinese word for ‘crisis’ consists of two ideograms, one denoting ‘danger’ and the other ‘opportunity’. A crisis indicates that an opportunity exists to correct an urgent imbalance. How well that symbol captures the mood of our time” (ICAI 1985, 5)

3.1. ‘Getting to the 21st Century’⁹ - a crisis of governance

Were there no indication of any need for the human family to rethink and remodel the ways it organizes in its efforts to sustain and surpass itself, doubtless the symbolism of the turning millennium would nevertheless provoke a flurry of analysis and speculation, at least from those who subscribe to the Christian calendar, on what new possibilities the future holds, and how to realize the best and prevent the worst. In fact, such indications are now legion, and so widely reported that few would deny that the major global issues facing us today have indeed reached crisis proportions. As we experience “the paradox of an ever expanding international consensus in favour of democracy, pluralism and respect for human rights co-existing with unprecedented levels of human suffering and environmental degradation” (Darcy de Oliveira and Tandon 1994, 4), such commentary is becoming something of a boom industry.

⁹ Korten, 1990

Korten has identified three interrelated global crises now demanding our immediate attention in this last decade of the 20th century - crises of poverty, environmental failure and social disintegration. He explains:

“These three crises relate directly to three major areas of development failure: justice, sustainability and inclusiveness. These failures demonstrate that the systems by which we manage our relationships with one another and with our natural environment are not working. Past approaches to development have, in too many instances, exacerbated the problem. Failure to acknowledge and correct the sources of this failure during the decade of the 1990s will most surely turn the 21st century into a global nightmare” (Korten 1990, 11).

Enough has been written on the scale and nature of these crises, and enough doom and gloom prophesied, that we need not explore them further here. Their challenges confront us daily in our newspapers and our everyday lives, in the rich world as well as the poor, and public discourse the world over is dominated by debates over how best to achieve economic prosperity, manage environmental resources and resolve and avert conflict. The crucial points here are that the underlying issues are global, and not confined only to the ‘developing’ world (although people of less ‘developed’ areas certainly suffer their effects disproportionately); and that the failures are institutional, and not technical. Thus, we must understand that these challenges cannot be escaped, and that they are among the products of the *success* of the dominant development paradigm, not of its failure. More of the same will not help, indeed it will be a recipe for disaster.

‘Governance’ has been defined as “the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs” (Commission on Global Governance 1995, 2). The institutional failure we are experiencing at this symbolic time is a crisis of governance. By offering a constructive way out of the economic paradigm that has so dominated and constrained the search for appropriate forms of governance in recent decades, the re-emergent idea of civil society raises new possibilities and offers new hope for the future. As Darcy de Oliveira and Tandon have observed,

“In the last five years, we have been consistently moving beyond the market-versus-state polarization that was intrinsic during the cold war and closer to a less doctrinarian, more action-oriented approach. The narrow ideological alternative between market and state can now be transformed into a broader, contextual kind of questioning: What kind of state? What

kind of market? And, therefore what kind of third sector?" (Darcy de Oliveira and Tandon 1994, 8).

Moreover, as they continue, "global market mechanisms and structures of world governance can only be democratized through concerted global citizen action... the challenge to planetary citizenship is, therefore, to expand to the global arena the struggle for democracy and human development that has so far been carried out basically at the national level" (ibid.).

Coupled with the danger associated with civic apathy and inertia, however, is the opportunity represented by the newly emerging potential of global civic engagement. As Korten writes,

"For the first time in the history of our species, the possibility exists to engage virtually everyone in a collective process of reflecting on the meaning of the human experience and creating and acting upon a bold and visionary agenda for the informed and intentional creation of our own future"¹⁰ (Korten 1996, 9).

The following sections will explore how the idea of civil society and the related concept of social capital have been applied to explain contemporary social conditions, and to seek ways to best exploit the opportunities and avert the dangers of the current global crisis of governance.

3.2. Society as an unbalanced stool

United States Senator Bill Bradley has, with regard to America, likened society to

"a three-legged stool that is fundamentally out of balance because two of the legs - the capitalist marketplace and the government - have dominated our public life at the expense of the third leg: civil society. The cost of this neglect... has been the proliferation of social problems that neither government nor business is fully equipped to address" (Lampe 1995, 91).

¹⁰ Korten explains: "The stage has been set for such an undertaking by the conjunction of a compelling need, the rapid expansion of global communications facilities, a capacity to organize ourselves in large-scale non-hierarchical networks, and the emergence of a new global consciousness of the inherent interdependence of all life" (ibid.)

Bradley's metaphor is as valid for nations and communities worldwide, and globally, as it is for America. There is, as Darcy de Oliveira and Tandon have observed, "a growing realization that neither the market nor the state alone can meet the challenges of equitable and sustainable development" (Darcy de Oliveira and Tandon 1994, 3). Moreover, the dominant procedural model of democracy cannot meet the challenge of effective democratic governance. As Norton writes, "Democracy... does not reside in elections. If democracy... has a home, it is in civil society" (Norton 1993, 211). How this neglect of society's 'third leg' has led to the global crises described above, and how important is the restitution of civil society to a central role in systems of governance, may be explained in terms of Bratton's three defining characteristics of civil society.

3.2.1. Norms of community co-operation

Game theorists have identified a number of dilemmas of collective action that explain how informed and rational actors may, in the absence of a credible mutual commitment, nevertheless fail to co-operate together for their mutual benefit¹¹. Unfortunately, Hobbes' classic solution to these dilemmas, the Leviathan state that provides a legal framework allowing citizens to trust each other, tolerate and reciprocate, relies on the state itself being trustworthy, tolerant and reciprocal! As Hyden has observed, acceptance of a legal order, like any other form of voluntary co-operation, relies on a foundation of 'social capital'. He defines this as the "normative values and beliefs that citizens share in their everyday dealings", and civil society as "the forum in which [these values and beliefs] are nurtured and developed" (Hyden forthcoming).

Although itself intangible, social capital has real, tangible value. As Coleman writes, "unlike other forms of capital, social capital inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors... [not] either in the actors themselves or in the physical implements of production" (Coleman 1988, S98). However, "like other forms of capital, social capital is

¹¹ For example, 'the tragedy of the commons', 'public goods', 'the prisoners' dilemma' and 'the logic of collective action' (Putnam 1993, 163)

productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible” (ibid.). Putnam offers a simple example:

“In a farming community... where one farmer got his hay baled by another and where farm tools are extensively borrowed and lent, the social capital allows each farmer to get his work done with less physical capital in the form of tools and equipment” (Putnam 1993, 167).

Putnam has shown, in his 20-year study of the Italian experiment in regional government, that social capital embodied in structures and networks of civil society “bolsters the performance of the polity and the economy... strong society, strong economy; strong society, strong state” (Putnam 1993, 176). His conclusion that a decline in civil society and social capital in the West¹² underlie its experience of institutional failure is echoed from across the political spectrum, particularly in relation to the economy, by writers such as Fukuyama (1995) and Hutton (1996).

Not only are norms of community co-operation essential to the effective and efficient functioning of state and market institutions, they are also an essential foundation of healthy families, communities and societies. As Korten writes, “while competitive instincts form an important part of human nature, there is substantial evidence that it is a sub-theme to the more dominant theme of co-operation... humans evolved to belong and co-operate as well as to compete” (Korten 1996, 30). They thus allow an intrinsically more agreeable way to relate to one another than do the competitive and coercive norms embodied in the market and state. However unrealistic or utopian the notion may seem in the modern world, few would not prefer that we all could relate to one another out of principles of altruism and co-operation.

An important characteristic of social capital is that, unlike physical capital, it is a resource that increases rather than decreases with use, and which may become depleted if not used. Korten observes that, as a result of increasing reliance on physical capital and the institutions of the market to provide for people’s needs, “with neither men nor women able to give adequate attention to those non-monetized household and community functions that

¹² as documented for the US in his own article ‘Bowling Alone’ (Putnam 1995), and for the UK in a recent study, ‘The Deficit in Civil Society in the United Kingdom’ (Knight and Stokes 1996)

maintain the social fabric of society, relationships of trust and caring have been giving way to fear and violence” (Korten 1996, 6)¹³. Thus, we may expect the creation and depletion of social capital to be characterized by virtuous and vicious spirals. VeneKlasen elaborates on the relationships between state, market and civil society, and their impact on norms and behaviour:

“while a vital civil society may nurture values such as fairness and reciprocity which can permeate market relations, the market, which treats people as individual consumers, tends to promote competition and inequality which can undermine co-operation. Similarly, family structures and political systems based on patterns of hierarchical, authoritarian decision-making encourage distrust, isolation and dependency. These institutional patterns discourage citizen initiative to identify and solve problems” (VeneKlasen 1994, 3).

The downward spiral is accelerated by conversion of social capital to physical capital, as illustrated all too vividly by the growth of legal, insurance and penal industries in response to rising distrust, fear and violence (Hutton 1996). While welcomed as a growth of the economy, such a conversion represents a corresponding, and perhaps greater, cost to civil society. It may even be that, as Henderson has suggested, “growing social and environmental costs - as well as the increasing monetarization of... formerly unpaid work - are the main ‘growth sectors’ of the GNP” (Henderson 1993, 150). As culture reflects the norms and values of society, it may react to challenges to cultural tradition in ways that further accelerate the spiral. Many writers have attributed the rise of religious fundamentalism and ethnic exclusiveness as to the pre-eminence of western paradigms of politics, science and economics¹⁴.

Also unlike physical capital, social capital is ordinarily a public good whose benefit cannot be restricted to the producer. It therefore tends to be undervalued and undersupplied by private agents, and so must often be produced as a byproduct of other social activities (Coleman 1988, S118). An implication of these characteristics is that generating social

¹³ In response to just one, extreme, example of such violence, the Dunblane massacre in Scotland in March 1996, Hutton concluded that “individuals need to be integrated better into the networks of mutuality and reciprocity on which a well-functioning society rests” (Hutton 1996)

¹⁴ for example: Darcy de Oliveira and Tandon 1994, 4; Amin, cited in Ishemo 1995, 214; Toffler, cited in Grant 1996, 19

capital, even by social activity *for sociability's sake*, may have the potential to reverse a downward spiral of civic apathy and economic and political institutional decline.

3.2.2. *Structures of voluntary association*

According to the Commission on the Future of the Voluntary Sector (1996, 2), “Independent voluntary organizations are the backbone of civil society and a vital indicator of democratic health”. Hyden has identified two primary functions of civil society associations in the context of development and democracy - mobilizing resources, and democratic socialization (Hyden forthcoming).

The potential of the voluntary sector to absorb costs otherwise borne by the state or market, by mobilizing resources otherwise beyond their reach, has not been lost on neo-liberal advocates of a ‘mixed economy of welfare’, or what Robinson (1993) has called the ‘New Policy Agenda’. Responsibility for provision of social goods and particularly services has been increasingly transferred to NGOs and local community organizations, although often in the process shifting the burden of provision to those in greatest need themselves (Mayo and Craig 1995, 4). Care must be taken to devolve effective rights along with their concomitant responsibilities. Nevertheless, neglect of the resource-mobilizing potential of civil society associations not only inhibits efficiency of social organization, in the neo-liberal sense, but also effectiveness in terms of human development goals. As Clark observes, with regard to development policy,

“When a government endeavours to give greater weight to reducing poverty, to redressing ethnic or gender biases, to combating environmental degradation, or to involving the poor and their communities in development decision-making and resource allocation, it is likely to find its normal macro instruments inadequate... Participatory development approaches are required.” (Clark 1995, 593).

While the state and corporate sectors are defined by the coercive power and economic incentive required to induce participation, “third sector organizations are characterized by their reliance on belief in values that transcend utility. To exercise and promote voluntary adherence to values as ends in themselves is their specific *raison d’être*” (Fernandes 1994,

345). Civil society may be considered the home of participation, and the role of civil society associations central to achieving effective and efficient systems of social and economic governance.

With regard to its role in democracy and democratization, Diamond has described ten unique functions of civil society as follows¹⁵:

1. “to monitor and restrain the exercise of state power by democratic states, and to democratize authoritarian states”
2. “stimulating political participation, increasing the political efficacy and skill of democratic citizens, and promoting an appreciation of the obligations as well as the rights of democratic citizenship”
3. “the development of other democratic attributes such as tolerance, moderation, a willingness to compromise, and a respect for opposing viewpoints”
4. “creating channels other than political parties for the articulation, aggregation and representation of interests”
5. “to generate a wide range of interests that may cross-cut, and so mitigate, the principal polarities of political conflict”
6. “recruiting and training new political leaders”
7. “explicit democracy building purposes that go beyond leadership training”
8. “widely disseminates information, thus aiding citizens in the collective pursuit and defense of their interests and values”
9. “the achievement of economic reform in a democracy”
10. “by enhancing the accountability, responsiveness, inclusiveness, and hence legitimacy of the political system, a vigorous civil society gives citizens respect for the state and positive engagement with it.”

(Diamond 1994, 7-11)

As Lampe has observed, “democratic self-government depends not on either politicians or bureaucrats, but [on] citizens willing to enrich the entitlement of liberty with a commitment to service and mutual obligation” (Lampe 1994, 91), and “the appropriate antidote to an over-zealous government and an indifferent economy is an engaged, organized citizenry” (ibid., 92).

¹⁵ Although clearly referring to what I have called a ‘transitional’ rather than a ‘transformative’ model of democratization (section 1.3.2), Diamond’s analysis remains valid for both: “The functions of civil society do not differ between the transitional and transformative models, but the extent to which civil society is able to effectively perform those functions will be critical in determining the path of democratization followed” (Gilbraith 1996, 13)

Although Diamond stresses that “societal autonomy can go too far” (Diamond 1994, 14) and that “civil society must be watchful but respectful of state authority” (ibid., 15), these caveats must be understood in the context of a ‘transitional’ process of democratization with the end goal of consolidated procedural democracy. To achieve what I have called a ‘transformative’ democratization, embracing equitable and sustainable development, civil society must “make its legitimization conditional on full state and corporate accountability to civil society, and the extension of democratic transformation throughout economic and social as well as political spheres, and at all levels, local to global” (Gilbraith 1996, 14). Where civil society associations are weak and ineffective in performing their democratic functions, therefore, economic and social, as well as political, institutions of governance may be expected to fail.

3.2.3. Networks of public communication

Any kind of collective action - social, political or economic - depends on channels of communication by which actors may interact with each other. Large scale societies, polities and economies today rely on means of mass communication in order to function at all, but at the local level interpersonal, verbal communications play an important role. To the extent that channels of communication are few and monopolized by state and corporate power, we may expect civil society to be relatively weak and ineffective; to the extent that civil society is strong and healthy we may expect to find “a multi-stranded web of cross-cutting channels of communication” (Bratton 1994, 3).

Putnam considers social networks, in addition to norms of reciprocity, to be an important source of social capital. Players in the dilemmas of collective action described above find their incentives to co-operate increase as the game is repeated, because each iteration generates further information on the players’ trustworthiness by which they may assess the risks of their alternative courses of action. Thus, where social actors are embedded in dense networks of social interaction and communication, information on the trustworthiness of other actors is readily available and trust is less risky and more widely

practiced. This ‘embeddedness approach’ “predicts that the mix of order and disorder, of co-operation and opportunism, in a society will depend on the pre-existing social networks” (Putnam 1993, 173).

Putnam distinguishes between primarily vertical relations, “linking unequal agents in asymmetric relations of hierarchy and dependence” (ibid.), and primarily horizontal, web-like networks that link agents of equivalent status and power. These latter networks have powerfully beneficial side-effects in terms of social capital because they generate and transmit reputations, reinforce norms of reciprocity and embody successful past collaboration. Vertical relations, in contrast, cannot sustain trust and co-operation because the flow of information is unreliable, as subordinates retain it as a hedge against exploitation, and because the sanctions that support norms of reciprocity are less likely to be imposed upwards, and less likely to be effective. Furthermore, such vertical relations tend to undermine the possibility of horizontal networks developing, because opportunism and defection are encouraged.

Nerfin has contrasted the predominantly vertical institutional linkages serving the Prince and the Merchant with the networks that characterize the ‘third system’ of the Citizen. The former

“rest on a vertical division of labour... are internally and externally competitive and foster bigness... seek and dispense information rather than facilitating communication... breed conformism and dependence... are change resistant and self-perpetuating... [and] as a whole, they hinder rather than enhance freedom” (Nerfin 1987, 186).

Networks, in contrast,

“are co-operative, not competitive... communication is their essence... leadership, if and when needed, is shifting... they adjust quickly to changing circumstances... are resilient in adversity... stimulate imagination and innovation... foster a sense of solidarity and belonging... [and] they expand the sphere of freedom and autonomy” (ibid., 187).

If interpersonal networks of civic engagement are necessary to generate social capital, networks of public communication have the potential to nurture and sustain the norms and values on which such engagement depends, and the social structures and networks within

which it is embodied. Although radio, television and print media are either dominated by commercial interests or subject to extensive state control across much of the world, networks of independent public communication within and across states are expanding in their reach and capacity to elude state and corporate interference, as technologies such as copiers, faxes and the internet are rapidly gaining ground worldwide. Satellite television, while dominated by corporations, represents a further evasion of state control, and rising numbers of people traveling, for work, tourism, as refugees or for other reasons, further stimulates the flow of independent communication.

Although processes of governance based on models of central, hierarchical control have in recent decades succeeded in generating enormous material wealth and enabling great technological achievements (inequitable distribution of their benefits notwithstanding), systems analysts have predicted that flatter, more web-like structures have become both evolutionarily inevitable, and necessary. Kelly, for example, suggests that “in any society with the proper strength of communication and information connection, democracy becomes inevitable” (Kelly 1994, 396); and Henderson argues that,

“under today’s conditions of accelerating change - driven by globalizing forces unleashed by human activities creating such interacting complexities - *only* devolving toward self-managing, smaller more cellular units in much deeper communication with each other, can lead to functioning organizations and the body politic, ie: democracy is *necessary*” (Henderson 1993, 6 - her italics).

Continued efforts by state and corporate sectors to dominate civil society may not only perpetuate an inefficient and ineffective system of governance, and encounter resistance from an increasingly aware and organized citizenry, they may also prove futile in the face of underlying systemic forces at work in society.

3.3. The demise and rise of civil society

Tandon has argued that, in spite of recent, and welcome, recognition of the associations and networks of civil society as constituting a ‘third sector’, parallel to those of the state and the market, “the historical role of civil society and the democratic principle of

people's sovereignty point to the essential primacy of civil society as the only legitimate *first sector*" (Tandon 1992, 38 - his italics). An appreciation of the central historical role of civil society, and of how it has come to be usurped by an expansionist state, and then market, can help us to envision a more humane and sustainable system of governance for the future, and identify the dominance of these latter sectors as the main obstacles to its realization. The emerging phenomenon of the contemporary rise of civil society represents a real and positive development on which to build in order to overcome these obstacles.

We have seen in Chapter 2 how the idea of civil society arose in connection with the modern state and market. Before these institutions achieved their dominance, however, "most matters of governance, production, environmental resource management, culture, values, health and education came under the jurisdiction of the institutions of [what came to be known as] civil society - family, clan, community and neighbourhood associations" (Tandon 1992, 38). Indeed, as Korten observes,

"Since the beginning of history, humans have organized themselves in tribes and villages that have found ways to use available resources and technologies to grow food, harvest water, construct shelter from local materials and treat their ailments. This heritage demonstrates that such forms of civic engagement are among the most natural and pervasive of human drives" (Korten 1996, 17).

The contemporary world system of sovereign states was formalized in the 'Westphalian model' following the Peace of Westphalia in Europe in 1648. This established the principle of sovereign equality of all states, which concomitantly entitled states to claim sole rights to jurisdiction over people and territory within their own borders (Held 1993, 28). As the colonial expansion of Europe led to the global consolidation of this system, states worldwide became recognized as supreme autonomous authorities. They imposed themselves on pre-existing systems of governance, however representative or unrepresentative their regimes, their supremacy assured ultimately by their coercive power. The modern capitalist economy developed in tandem with, and to facilitate, European projects of colonization and industrialization, the world's first experiments in development. As long ago as 1944, Karl Polanyi showed that "the market was the result of a conscious and

often violent intervention by government” and not “the gradual and spontaneous emancipation of the economic sphere from government control” that is often imagined (Esteva 1992, 19).

As Western states had earlier consolidated their power so, in the ‘decades of development’ following the Second World War, new states in the South began also to “take over more and more of the economic, political, cultural and social functions of civil society... [and] actively to dismantle historically rooted associations, neighbourhood and voluntary organizations and citizen initiatives”, labeling them as ‘obstacles to progress’ or ‘enemies of the state’ (Tandon 1992, 38). Most importantly, civil society was stripped of its material base, as common land, water and other environmental resources were declared state property, and often transferred to private ownership¹⁶.

We have seen above how the resulting erosion of social capital can reinforce such a decline of civil society in a vicious downward spiral. In fact, economic power has long since overtaken both state and citizen power, to the extent that, according to Korten, the world is governed by a “global financial system that is running out of control”, socializing costs and privatizing gains (Korten 1996, 24). As Tandon observes,

“The time has come to establish the clear supremacy of civil society and to assure the accountability of both state and business sectors to the sovereign people” (Tandon 1992, 38)

There are innumerable indications that civil society is already on the rise, ranging from the growth in numbers and influence of international NGOs discussed previously, to the growing number of economically and politically excluded and disillusioned who are finding it necessary to disengage from the state and the market in order simply to survive, or to preserve the values that they hold dear. People are creating, as Esteva writes, “in their neighbourhoods, villages and *barrios*, new commons which allow them to live on their own

¹⁶ This process is exemplified by the enclosure movement in the UK which saw “in the years from 1770 to 1830... some 3,280 bills passed by Parliament, by which more than 6 million acres of commonly held lands, open fields, meadows, wetlands, forests and unoccupied ‘waste’ lands, until then the domain of the public at large, were put into private hands and subsequently hedged and fenced and farmed and herded and hunted for private gain” (Sale 1995, 34)

terms” (Esteva 1992, 20). These new commons are in evidence worldwide, from the boomtown of Boosaaso in Somaliland, thriving under the governance of civil society in the absence of a functioning state (Buckley 1996), and the Chiapas rebellion in south-eastern Mexico, calling for “the liberation of local spaces from control by alien political and economic forces” (Korten 1996, 37), to the emerging ‘green economy’ in Britain, where now more than 400 LETS (Local Economic Trading System) groups offer a civil society alternative to trading in the corporate economy (Nicholson-Lord 1996, 5). As Korten writes,

“In country after country people are demonstrating that they are no longer willing to leave it to mainstream political parties and special interest lobbyists to set the terms of the public policy debate. They are acting to reclaim their basic rights and sovereignty as citizens to recreate their societies in ways that better respond to their needs and aspirations” (Korten 1996, 38)

At least in part, the rise of NGOs may be attributed to the end of the cold war and the ‘New Policy Agenda’, “driven by two basic sets of beliefs organized around the two poles of neo-liberal economics and liberal democratic theory” (Edwards and Hulme 1995, 4), which regards private sector and civil society initiatives as effective agents of (transitional) democratization and efficient mechanisms for achieving growth and development¹⁷. As Ishemo observes, however, in some cases, “while “the fall of authoritarian regimes has been a welcome development... the popular content of that change has been hijacked by those committed to the neo-liberal project.... [and] initiatives from below have been constantly frustrated by obsession with the laws of the market” (Ishemo 1995, 211).

The wider rise of civil society, however, illustrated by the phenomenon of the ‘new commons’, represents a new and radical departure from the economic paradigm that underlies the dominant models of governance. According to Serrano,

“Two key elements, at least, make today’s citizen participation different from that of the past. One, it questions the very nature of development itself... Two, civil society has emerged as a

¹⁷ Cooperrider and Pasmore further contend that, as result of technological developments that render barriers to information now ineffective or uneconomic, what they call global social change organizations (GSCOs) “may represent a unique social invention of the post-modern, postindustrial, ie; information rich and service-focused, globally-linked world system” (Cooperrider and Pasmore 1991, cited in Gordenker and Weiss 1995, 365).

worldwide force that is redefining the meaning of development and governance” (Serrano 1994, 370).

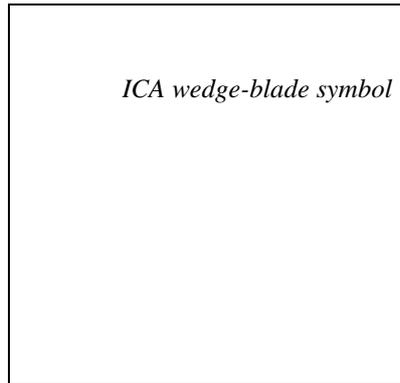
Henderson regards the rise of what she calls ‘citizens’ transformational movements’ as an indication of a paradigmatic shift to a dawning ‘solar age’;

“a new world order based on renewable resources and energy, sustainable forms of productivity and per capita consumption, ecologically based science and technologies and equitable sharing of resources within and between countries. What we see emerging today... are basic value and behaviour shifts, new perceptions and an emerging paradigm, based on facing up to a new awareness of planetary realities and confirmed by a ‘post-Cartesian’ scientific worldview based on biological and systemic life sciences rather than inorganic, mechanistic models” (Henderson 1993, 18-19).

Whether driven by the compelling need to address the contemporary global crisis of governance, or by a vision of ‘riding the tiger of change’ (ibid.) into a new planetary era, those concerned to act, and catalyze action, for positive social change in the late-1990s may draw both inspiration and practical insight from the contemporary discourse and reality of civil society.

In the following chapter, the analytical framework derived from the discussion in chapter 2 will be applied to the case of the Institute of Cultural Affairs to demonstrate the particular relevance of the idea of civil society to ICA globally and in Britain, and of ICA and its practical approach to the rising civil society and the challenges of the contemporary global crises as described above.

4. CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS - A NEW BOTTLE FOR A FAMILIAR WINE



“Not I, not I, but the wind that blows through me!
A fine wind is blowing the new direction of time.
If only I let it bear me, carry me, if only it carry me!
If only I am sensitive, subtle, oh, delicate, a winged gift!
If only, most lovely of all, I yield myself and am borrowed
By the fine, fine wind that takes its course through the chaos of the world
Like a fine, an exquisite chisel, a wedge-blade inserted;
If only I am keen and hard like the sheer tip of a wedge
Driven by invisible blows.
The rock will split, we shall come at the wonder, we shall find the Hesperides”

(D.H. Lawrence, from “The Song of a Man Who Has Come Through” cited in ICAI 1985, 22)

Although ‘civil society’ was chosen as the central theme of ICA’s recent quadrennial global conference held in Cairo in September 1996, and of an accompanying edited volume (Burbidge, forthcoming), many within ICA (this author included) were unfamiliar with the term as little as a year or two ago. Discussion of ‘civil society’ at the conference displayed an unfortunate tendency all too common with concepts that have rapidly become ‘flavour of the month’ - to somewhat lose the original insights behind the idea by using the term rather casually to mean almost whatever is required. Hanson, for example, has observed that, at the conference, her “notebook filled with an avalanche of definitions... but [she] failed to be able

to pinpoint the focus” (Hanson forthcoming). When, in a break-out session she was facilitating, she found that the 30 or more participants were prepared to admit a shared ignorance of a good working definition of civil society, she led them in constructing their own on the spot. The most common property of all the ‘civil societies’ discussed in Cairo was, as Epps notes, their desirability: ‘civil society’ as “the name currently given to what people wish to attain in their social environment” (Epps forthcoming).

Certainly an idea is not immutable, indeed it is through such discourse and debate that the classical idea of civil society has been reconceptualized and applied to yield considerable insight into contemporary and global social conditions. As Ibrahim warns, however, “the concept of civil society is now so much used and overloaded that there is a serious theoretical threat to its sharpness and utility” (Ibrahim forthcoming).

This chapter aims to demonstrate that, far from needing to be redefined afresh, the idea of civil society as discussed in chapters 2 and 3 is of particular relevance and utility to ICA; and, moreover, that it suggests that the practical approach of the Institute of Cultural Affairs and ICA:UK may play a potentially important role toward realizing the opportunities and averting the dangers of the contemporary global crisis of governance. In order to demonstrate this, the case of the Institute of Cultural Affairs will first be presented in something of its historical and global context.

4.1. Getting to the 21st century - a global journey

ICA traces its roots to the Ecumenical movement of the early 1900s, and to the founding in the United States in 1952 of the Christian Faith and Light Community by a group of students and faculty at the University of Texas in Austin. This was “to experiment with a lifestyle of research and study, and to create a curriculum of social and religious studies” designed to awaken people “to the fundamental issues they faced in their lives” (Troxel 1992, 2). After seven families of the Austin community had become teaching staff of the Institute of Ecumenical Studies in Evanston Illinois, they moved in 1963 to a black ghetto

neighbourhood in Chicago's westside, known as Fifth City. Here they worked with residents of the depressed and neglected community to help them to discern their problems and devise practical, locally-based and replicable solutions. As a result, programmes of social and economic development were designed and implemented through voluntary co-operative action, creating a practical operating model of participatory community development. The Fifth City Community Project survived the 1968 Chicago race riots and became a prototype for citizen participation in community renewal around the world.

As the families working through what had become the Ecumenical Institute experimented with corporate living, they came to model themselves on the three-fold community of a religious order, establishing the Order Ecumenical to embody a community of contemplation, service and teaching, following "the heart/being, body/doing, mind/knowing paradigm of consciousness for living organisms" (Troxel 1992, 4). The Order Ecumenical and programme activity through the Ecumenical Institute expanded rapidly such that, in 1967, 14,000 people participated in Institute programmes and courses in North America, and over 2,000 in various countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America (Troxel 1992, 3). By 1972, over 30 community living units, or Houses, were working with 188 congregations in North America to replicate the Fifth City model in a variety local contexts.

As programmes expanded beyond the confines of the Church and became international in scope, and after a decade of operating as a programme division of the Ecumenical Institute, the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) was separately incorporated in 1973 "to further the application of methods of human development to communities and organizations all around the world, based on a secular philosophy" (Troxel 1992, 3). By the mid-1970s ICA had expanded from its base in Chicago to over 100 Houses in 30 countries. The foundational participatory methods of the Fifth City model were further tested, refined and replicated in pilot Human Development Projects with disadvantaged communities in each of the 24 time zones worldwide, and through new private and public sector seminars known as LENS - Leadership Effectiveness and New Strategies.

As national ICAs came to be established around the world, the Institute of Cultural Affairs International (ICAI) was founded in Brussels in 1977 to facilitate the activities of autonomous national member Institutes. By the early-1980s, ICA's programmatic focus on small pilot projects gave way to wide-scale replication and dissemination of learnings. The New Village Movement saw ICA's programme in Kenya grow in 10 years from a single demonstration to involving over 1,500 villages (Richard Alton, pers. comm. 1997), and the International Exposition of Rural Development, a three year exchange programme co-sponsored by the United Nations, drew global attention to over 300 successful locally-managed initiatives in 53 countries, culminating in a major international conference in New Delhi in 1984 and documented in a series of three volumes (ICAI 1985, 1987 and 1988).

At the Global Order Council of 1986 the decision was taken to decentralize ICA, and at the Council of 1988 to dissolve the Order Ecumenical itself. These decisions paved the way for a movement toward local restructuring, reorientation and indigenization of national ICAs worldwide. Programmes continued to build on the proven models that had been pioneered in Fifth City, and on the foundational participatory methods which had been named, with the publication of the first ICA methods 'text book' (Spencer 1989), the 'Technology of Participation' (ToP)¹⁸. Programmes were also, however, able to become increasingly diverse and specific to local circumstances. By 1990, ICAI was describing the wide-ranging work of its member Institutes in terms of four primary themes - enabling sustainable development, facilitating organizational transformation, advancing life-changing learning and promoting international dialogue (ICAI 1990). Broadly speaking, these four arenas still represent the main thrusts of ICA's work globally, as reflected in the four streams of discussion on 'civil society' at the 1996 ICAI global conference - Development, Business, Education and Culture (ICAI 1996).

¹⁸ the ToP methodology, as described in Spencer (1989) and as applied and taught today by ICAs worldwide, comprises two basic group facilitation methods and a system of event planning and orchestration techniques by which these may be combined and applied to design programmes to effectively accomplish a wide variety of tasks. The basic methods are known as the *Focused Discussion Method* and the *Workshop Method*, and common programme applications include the *Participatory Strategic Planning* process (formerly known as

Today, the Institute of Cultural Affairs comprises a network of non-profit organizations in 30 countries federated under ICAI but, also, represents a global movement united by historical connections and a shared global culture, and by its active concern with ‘the human factor in world development’¹⁹. This concern has been articulated by way of explanation of ICA’s usage of the word ‘culture’:

“For us, ‘culture’ is a practical reality - the images, patterns and shared understandings which allow us to do something together.... At the heart of ICA’s work is the conviction that long-term, sustainable development happens only when people grasp the significance of their own lives in the larger scheme of things, when they actively participate in the changes taking place around them instead of merely being targets of that change... One principle prevails - the desire to release the creativity of the people involved and allow them to help to shape their own destiny” (ICAI 1996).

ICA:UK traces its roots to the first courses of the Ecumenical Institute in Britain in 1968, and its evolution in many ways mirrors that of ICA globally. The first House in Britain was established in Teeside in 1971, and ICA was registered locally as a UK charity in 1976 with the launch in the Isle of Dogs, London of one of the original 24 pilot Human Development Projects. Town Meetings held around the country - 200 of them in 1978 - led to replication projects with disadvantaged urban and rural communities in England, Scotland and Wales. Local and international connections were strengthened by the Volunteer Service Programme, which has since 1981 trained and placed over 200 UK volunteers in ICA and related grassroots development projects worldwide, and by Village Volunteers, a sponsorship scheme supporting the indigenous local development workers of ICA in Kenya since 1985 (ICAI 1996, 32). As ICA decentralized globally, leaving local ICAs to recreate their own structural and programme arrangements, a nationwide UK network was established in 1987, comprised mainly of returned international volunteers. This network then assumed responsibility for ICA’s UK programme activity following the dissolution of the last ICA House in Britain, in London in 1989.

LENS - Leadership Effective and New Strategies), the *Leadership Development Lab*, the *Mission and Philosophy Retreat* and many more

Today, ICA:UK comprises a network of around 60 individuals and families, living and working in a diverse range of settings across the country. ICA Development Trust is a registered charity (#293086) and a statutory member of ICAI, governed by Trustees and a Board comprised of network members. The Volunteer Service Programme and Village Volunteers continue to be operated for the Trust by network members, on a voluntary basis. In addition, members provide facilitation services to public, private and voluntary sector organizations, and open and in-house ‘Technology of Participation’ methods training seminars. They also produce a newsletter and organize periodic network social gatherings and other events.

In the following sections we shall see, with reference to the analytical framework derived from the discussion in Chapter 2, that the contemporary idea of civil society and its surrounding debates are effectively re-articulating, and beginning to mainstream, much of what ICA has been learning, practicing and teaching over the years. Moreover, we shall see that ICA:UK is therefore particularly well placed and well qualified to play a potentially important role in the rising global civil society, in working to address the urgent challenges presented by the contemporary crisis of governance.

4.2. The Social Process - restoring balance to a triangle

The relevance to ICA of the contemporary idea of civil society extends well beyond its clear affinity with the global and ethical dimensions discussed in Chapter 2. The trinity of social sectors that has become so much a part of the contemporary civil society discourse resonates powerfully with a social analysis central to ICA’s practical approach and very identity.

The Social Process triangle (Appendix) was created by ICA’s 1971 annual Global Research Assembly, to represent “an inclusive model of the way society works, and a solid

¹⁹ ‘concerned with the human factor in world development’ is a motto featuring prominently in the literature of most ICAs, and of ICAI

methodological framework” (ICA Global Archives Project, 1995, 35). Participants in this global intuitive exercise, almost two decades before the contemporary re-emergence of the civil society idea, created a multi-level triangular model of social processes and their dynamic relationships. By applying the model to global society they then discerned imbalances in the relationships between social processes, identifying these as indicators of system dysfunction.

The civil society analysis of Chapter 3 found society’s ‘3-legged stool’ to be out of balance, dominated by an excessively powerful market and state, to the detriment of civil society and the health and sustainability of the system as a whole. ICA’s identity and practical approach are predicated on a similar understanding of the modern social process (globally and very often locally) as being dominated by the economic and political aspects, to the detriment of the cultural and thus of the whole system. In order to work toward rectifying this imbalance, ICA’s strategic approach to working with individuals, organizations and communities, in all social sectors and both locally and globally, has focused on harnessing the power of the cultural to effect change. The ‘cultural’ of the Institute’s name reflects the extent to which this analysis is fundamental to ICA and its approach.

The political, economic and cultural aspects of the Social Process may be regarded as representing the processes through which the state, market and civil society sectors of the contemporary civil society debates become manifest. The state sector represents the manifestations of political society, uniquely endowed with the responsibility and coercive power to maintain justice, order and welfare in society. The market represents the manifestations of economic society, the mechanisms by which society’s resources, production and distribution are managed. Civil society represents the manifestations of cultural society, the norms, networks and associations through which society’s common wisdom, symbols and style are created and maintained - or, as Hyden describes it, “the forum in which the habits of the heart and mind are nurtured and developed” (Hyden forthcoming). It is apposite, then, that ICA has enthusiastically entered the contemporary civil society discourse. As Burbidge writes in his introduction to the forthcoming ICAI book on civil

society, ICA “might well have called themselves the Institute for Global Civil Society, although it probably wouldn’t have made a lot of sense in 1973” (Burbidge forthcoming).

The following sections will explore, in terms of Bratton’s three defining characteristics of civil society, how ICA has embodied the principles of the contemporary idea of civil society and contributed to the building and strengthening of the sector, and what potential ICA:UK may therefore have to further contribute to restoring the social balance.

4.2.1. Norms of community co-operation

In its corporate lifestyle of voluntary service and its flat and highly participatory organizational structure, ICA has embodied the principle of a community of voluntary association built on shared norms of trust, reciprocity and tolerance. Although many national ICAs now operate on an increasingly professional and hierarchical basis, perhaps weakening to some extent the normative ‘glue’ that binds a community and society together²⁰, the organizational culture and practical approach of ICA in general remains characterized by strongly held norms of voluntary co-operation. This is reflected in the five ‘key organizing principles’ identified by Johnson and Cooperrider as characteristic of ICA in their 1991 organizational study of four ‘Global Social Change Organizations’; alignment, attunement, affirmation, authenticity and action (Johnson and Cooperrider 1991, 232)²¹. ICA:UK remains a wholly voluntary association, built on the shared norms and values of its members, and their shared experience of voluntary participation with ICA worldwide.

In its service and teaching, globally and in the UK, ICA has since its inception facilitated the strengthening of norms of community co-operation and the creation of social capital through its application and dissemination of participatory methods. As a ‘technology

²⁰ there are certainly some who would argue that ICA in Egypt, for example, has suffered in this way as a result of its deliberate policy of expansion and professionalization

²¹ alignment means that “employees understand, value and are intrinsically motivated to achieve the mission or cause of the organization (Johnson and Cooperrider 1991, 233)”; attunement, that “individuals enjoy respect, assist, care about and are deeply committed to one another” (ibid., 235); affirmation, that organizations “actively [find] ways to appreciate the strengths, talents and contributions of each person” (ibid., 242); authenticity, “the way in which people live and enact personal and heartfelt values in response to the compelling vision of the

of participation’, such methods may enable groups, communities and organizations to embark on a virtuous spiral of effective co-operation, strengthened shared norms of trust, reciprocity and tolerance, and increasing civic engagement and institutional vitality. As social capital increases with use, so first-hand experience of effective co-operation further contributes to the strengthening of such norms, and the possibility of still greater and more effective future co-operation. ICA has catalyzed such virtuous spirals of increasing civic engagement in its work with organizations and communities worldwide. On the impact of ICA’s pilot Human Development Project in Bayad el Arab, Egypt, Sayed Ahmed Amin (now a member of the Bayad el Arab Community Development Association), commented:

“We knew that it was impossible to have clean drinking water in the village. We knew that we could not really do anything about our needs ourselves. But, we thought that we had nothing to lose and some good may come of trying to do something. We got our clean drinking water. We also got something much more important, and that is the idea that we really could do something if we really wanted to” (Seagren 1988, 208-9).

Members of ICA:UK have considerable skill and experience in the application of participatory methods and the training of facilitators, and have recently embarked on a programme of public and in-house ‘ToP’ facilitator training seminars. Continuing to develop, demonstrate and disseminate practical and effective participatory methods represents a potentially important contribution for ICA:UK to make toward building civil society and restoring the social balance. The Volunteer Service Programme and Village Volunteers, by facilitating effective international voluntary co-operation, may similarly contribute to generating social capital and building global civil society by fostering increased civic engagement both in the UK and abroad, and across borders.

4.2.2. Structures of voluntary association

Even the most professional of national ICAs continue to reflect some degree of voluntary involvement, by virtue both of their collaborative work with wholly voluntary

organization (ibid., 248); and action, “the courage to ‘leave one’s hiding place and show who one is’” (ibid., 253).

associations, and of their often high degree of organizational ‘alignment’. Many, including ICA:UK, remain largely voluntary themselves, and all may certainly be considered members of the voluntary sector, or third sector, by the definitions presented in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.2). Although its own institutional structures have undergone some radical transformations in its history, ICA continues to offer an innovative and evolving model of global civil society organization. Referred to by Johnson and Cooperrider as ‘Global Social Change Organizations’, they regard such organizations as representing an “exciting, radical change occurring at a global level with the possibility of influencing the sustainability of the planet, and with possible impact on generations to come” (Johnson and Cooperrider 1991, 280).

As well as developing its own organization to test and demonstrate effective structures of voluntary association, ICA has actively facilitated the expansion and strengthening of such structures, formal and informal, through its work with others. In working with communities and organizations of civil society, and in collaborative partnerships involving also agents of the state and private sectors, it has facilitated active citizen engagement in public affairs and has contributed to the strengthening of the institutional structures of civil society, and of their role in society as a whole. In many cases, capacity building and institutional strengthening of voluntary associations has been a primary and explicit goal of ICA projects and programmes, and mobilization of self-help resources and democratic socialization (at least in terms of civic, if not political, participation) have been fundamental to their rationale²².

ICA:UK similarly represents an evolving experiment in forms of structured voluntary association, and also has historically been concerned with building and strengthening such structures through its work. The Village Volunteers sponsorship programme is designed in such a way as to generate unrestricted funding for the capacity building and institutional strengthening of ICA Kenya, and to involve UK sponsors as long-term partners in the

development process by keeping them informed of ICA Kenya's activities and learnings on an ongoing basis.

The Volunteer Service Programme trains and orients international volunteers to play a facilitator role in their placement, contributing process rather than content toward the greater effectiveness of the host institution and its work. It also recognizes that, more than any contribution made during the placement, "a crucial outcome of service abroad is the altered consciousness of the volunteer" (Smith 1990) and its impact on the returned volunteer's future life choices. Many, if not most, returned volunteers consider their experience of service overseas to have significantly altered their understanding of themselves and their role in society and the world, and very many seek to extend and apply those learnings in their lives and work long after their return.

By facilitating active and international citizen engagement, both programmes contribute to the building and strengthening of global civil society - both through mobilization of voluntary human and financial resources, and through the democratic socialization of citizens participating in public affairs.

4.2.3. Networks of public communication

The institutional structure of ICA has historically tended to display those qualities described by Nerfin (section 3.2.3) as characteristic of networks over those characteristic of hierarchies, and this tendency has become further pronounced since its decentralization. ICA International and many national ICAs, ICA:UK included, are particularly reliant for their operations and identities on more or less formal networks of communication and engagement, extending well beyond the boundaries of the formal organizations. While by no means unique to ICA, this means that it has become increasingly meaningless to talk of people as being, or not being, 'in ICA' - rather, people are participating in ICA and its activities in increasingly numerous and diverse ways. ICA:UK, while its programmes are operated in the

²² in Egypt, for example, the mission statement of ICA (Middle East and North Africa) comprises 7 strategic elements by which "to strengthen local community organizations and assist international agencies and

main through the formal structure of a registered charity, is essentially an informal network of associates. The federal nature of relationships common between and within ICAs is reflected in the observation of one ICAI board member who, at the biannual board meeting of ICAI in 1992, suggested that ICA as an institution might be well described by the metaphor of a cell's membrane - much better than by that of its nucleus.

In its work, ICA has striven to expand and strengthen networks of public communication, from interpersonal to global levels. The large-scale replication and dissemination programmes of the 1980s may be considered to have launched ICA into mass networking, an approach maintained still in the cycle of quadrennial global conferences of which "The Rise of Civil Society in the 21st Century" was the most recent. Exchange programmes and events adopting the "Sharing Approaches That Work" theme of the International Exposition of Rural Development continue to be a staple of ICA programmes around the world. The International Association of Facilitators (IAF), founded in 1994 by a group of ToP facilitators in the United States as a global professional association distinct from ICA, represents a new departure in terms of networking. Itself an association of civil society, IAF's stated mission to "promote, support and advance the art and practice of the discipline of facilitation" and its diverse and cross-sectoral membership put it in a position it to, in effect, *civilize* the private and public sectors in parallel to strengthening civil society.

Further, beyond the inevitable network newsletters, a number of ICAs have made the application of tools of mass-communication a key strategy in their work. Of particular note are ICA Canada's magazines *Edges* and *The Node* and its innovative interactive World Wide Web site, ICA (MENA)'s magazine *Ru'ya* (Vision) and its use of video, and ICA International's newsletter *The Network Exchange* and forthcoming book on Civil Society²³. At the interpersonal and organizational or community level, ICA's application and

government departments to meet the real development needs of the community" (ICA MENA 1996, 2)

²³ An increasing number of books also have been arising from the global ICA network in recent years, more or less under an official ICA 'banner', for example: Troxel (1993), Williams (1993), Bergdall (1993) and Troxel (1995)

dissemination of participatory methods may also be considered an important contribution to the building and strengthening of effective networks of public communication.

The network newsletter and events of ICA:UK, its ToP methods training, and also Village Volunteers and the Volunteer Service Programme, may all be considered to contribute to the expansion and strengthening of the complex web of linkages and networks of communication that are an essential component of a healthy and vibrant civil society. Their continuation and expansion represent a potentially important contribution toward restoring the social balance.

4.3. A global role for ICA:UK

Although only relatively recently embracing its terminology, ICA in Britain and globally has for over 25 years embodied the principles of the contemporary idea of civil society, and has contributed intentionally to the building and strengthening of the sector, in the UK and worldwide. Organizationally and programmatically, ICA:UK may be considered well placed and well qualified to contribute effectively to further efforts to restore of the social balance, toward meeting the challenge of the present crisis of governance described in chapter 2.

In a seminal 1980 article, Korten describes the key to an effective ‘learning process’ approach to community organization and development as in achieving a ‘fit’ between the three elements of beneficiaries, programme and organization²⁴ (Korten 1980, 495). The preceding discussions, adopting a civil society analysis, suggest a high degree of fit between ICA, its programmatic work and the urgent needs of global society - the overall thrust of ICA’s programmatic work worldwide fits the need for the strengthening of civil society; ICA’s distinctive competence in terms of its organization and programmatic experience fit the task requirements of such a programme; and ICA’s organizational decision process, based

²⁴ in particular, between beneficiary needs and programme outputs; between the task requirements of the programme and the distinctive competence of the organization; and between the means of demand expression of the beneficiaries and the organizational decision process

on the Social Process analysis, fits with the civil society approach to expressing the demands of the global society. In the global rush to embrace the idea of civil society in the 1990s, the Institute of Cultural Affairs, too, is perhaps an idea whose time has come.

While the analysis suggests that ICA in general, and ICA:UK in particular, may have an important contribution to make toward building civil society, in these times of rapid and accelerating change, any social change organization must continue to evolve, innovate and most of all learn if it is to sustain the appropriateness and effectiveness of its contribution. The greatest resource ICA:UK has to depend on in developing and articulating a new strategic agenda for action at the turn of the millennium continues to be the pooled creativity of all the people who share its concerns - both nationally and globally, and within its own network and in society at large.

In starting to look into where ICA:UK's energies might be most strategically directed, insight may be drawn from the work of those similarly seeking to build and strengthen civil society. Summarizing the discussion of a workshop convened by INTRAC (the Oxford-based International NGO Training and Research Centre), Fowler suggests five strategic areas for NGOs to work to strengthen civil society:

1. "building the founding elements of civil society, informal and formal autonomous associations of people;
2. building supportive capacity such as intermediary NGOs and information channels;
3. forming links and alliances between civic actors;
4. participating in and enabling others to participate in political decision-making; and
5. promoting an enabling environment for civil society: public support, appropriate legislation"

(INTRAC 1996, 4)

Outlining "some challenges and opportunities for action to be explored by this emerging global citizen alliance" (CIVICUS - the World Alliance for Citizen Participation), Darcy de Oliveira and Tandon identify seven strategic areas for action:

1. "enhancing the sector's visibility;
2. promoting interaction and partnership;
3. encouraging private giving and voluntarism;
4. promoting and nurturing an enabling environment;

5. promoting research and outreach;
6. engaging in dialogue with major international agencies, and;
7. enhancing citizens' power to act"

(Darcy de Oliveira and Tandon 1994, 14)

ICA:UK may gain reassurance and confidence from the knowledge that it is already contributing in some of these areas and, further, that it is capable and qualified to contribute also in others.

5. CONCLUSION - A CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has” (Margaret Mead)

This study has explored, in chapter 2, the philosophical roots and some of the contemporary interpretations of the idea of civil society that has in the 1990s emerged with such resonance in current discourse on democracy and development. Adopting the popular contemporary notion of civil society as one of a trinity of social sectors, and adopting norms of community co-operation, structures of voluntary association and networks of public communication as its three defining characteristics, the study has reviewed in chapter 3 how the idea of civil society has been applied to explain, and to seek ways to address, the great crisis of governance facing our global society as we approach the turn of the millennium. For local and global systems of governance to be effective, it concluded, civil society must be afforded a central role - and its restitution to such a role must be central to any strategy for creating a more humane and sustainable future for us all. It showed, moreover, that civil society is already on the rise worldwide, offering insight and strength to all those ready to take their responsibility as citizens to act for positive social change. As Darcy de Oliveira and Tandon have written,

“Citizens are at the centre of the global drama unfolding today. They are the lead actresses and actors in building global democratic governance and human development. The state and the market, and their related institutions, must serve the citizens, not the other way rounds. The security of our common future lies in the hands of a informed, inspired, committed and engaged citizenry” (Darcy de Oliveira and Tandon 1994, 16)

Adopting the same analytical framework, the study has in chapter 4 examined the case of the Institute of Cultural Affairs and ICA:UK, and found them to have for over 25 years embodied the principles of the contemporary idea of civil society, and intentionally

contributed to the building and strengthening of the sector. It concluded that the idea of civil society is not only of particular relevance and utility to ICA and its work, but that ICA in general, and ICA:UK in particular, may be seen from a civil society perspective to display a particularly high degree of ‘fit’ between their organization, their programmatic work and the urgent challenges facing global society. They may therefore be considered particularly well placed and well qualified to contribute effectively to further efforts to restore the social balance, toward meeting the challenges of the contemporary crisis of governance.

Ward has observed:

“The most important change that people can make is to change their way of looking at the world. We can change studies, jobs, neighbourhoods, even countries and continents and still remain much as we were. But change our fundamental angle of vision and everything changes - our priorities, our values, our judgments, our pursuits... a turning of the heart, a ‘metanoia’, by which men [sic] see with new eyes and understand with new minds and turn their energies to new ways of living” (Ward 1971 cited in Commission for Global Governance 1995, 47).

Of course the idea of civil society, while increasingly found to be insightful at this point in history, is only one lens through which to look at the world and ask, ‘what is to be done?’ and ‘what shall we do?’. Perhaps less important than the lens used is that we do look, and that we do ask - and, most of all, that we *do*. Moreover, the world is increasingly understood to be ‘more like a river than a rock’²⁵ (Uphoff 1992), such that no one static perspective, however insightful, may substitute for a constant and dynamic search for new insights and new approaches.

Far from being distinguished only by its affinity with the civil society perspective, as explored in this study, the Institute of Cultural Affairs has been described as being uniquely characterized by its stance of constant searching and questioning. In an influential address to ICA’s Global Order Council of 1986, the then Programme Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, Van Arendonk, remarked:

“If you say you are going to develop man, then you have to know what he is or what he stands for... That is, I think, where you can make a enormous contribution. I have simply not seen any other organization, and I know many, who can make that contribution because of one

²⁵ ie: in a constant state of flux

reason... You are a question mark. You are saying 'we really don't know'... You are searching. You are looking for what it is that we are here for. That is the essence of development" (Van Arendonk 1986, 10).

ICA has shown the courage to raise the most fundamental of questions in development, and has demonstrated the capacity and potential to serve effectively to empower individuals, organizations and communities to address these questions in actively creating their own futures. The Institute of Cultural Affairs, and ICA:UK in particular, represent both a powerful resource and an important avenue for the active participation of citizens in building civil society for a more humane and sustainable future, in the UK and globally.

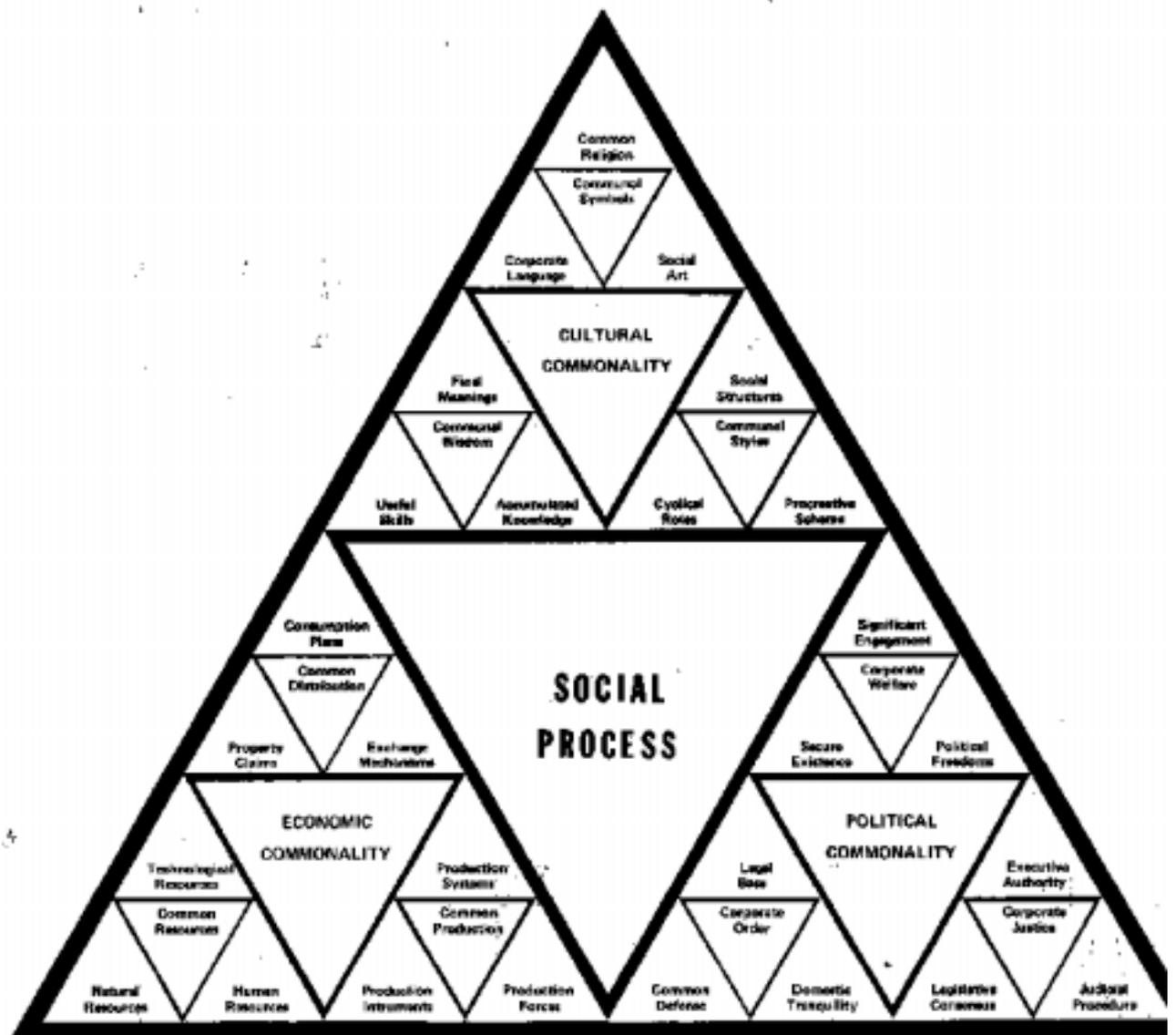
In the light of the high degree of 'fit' revealed in this study, and in the light of ICA's defining culture of participation, it behoves ICA:UK, its members and all those who share its concerns, to take advantage of their unique position and potential, to embrace their critical role as citizens of the rising global civil society, and to participate together to create and implement a new strategic agenda for action as we approach the turn of the millennium.

APPENDIX

The Social Process triangle

created by the 1971 ICA Global Research Assembly

(ICA Global Archives Project 1995)



REFERENCES

- Bellin, E** (1994) "Civil Society: Effective Tool of Analysis for Middle East Politics?" in PS, September 1994, 509-10
- Bergdall, T** (1993) Methods for Active Participation: Experiences in Rural Development From East and Central Africa; Oxford University Press, Nairobi
- Blunt, P** (1995) "Cultural Relativism, 'Good' Governance and Sustainable Human Development" in Public Administration and Development 15, 1-9
- Bratton, M** (1994) "Civil Society and Political Transition in Africa" in IDR Reports 11/6; Institute for Development Research, Boston MA
- Brewster, D** (1996) "The Encumbered Self" in Seattle Weekly, March 29, 1996
- Buckley, S** (1996) "Somalis Make City Thrive Amid Anarchy" in Guardian Weekly, March 17, 1996
- Burbidge, J** (forthcoming) "Introduction" in Burbidge, J (Ed.) From the Bottom Up: Participating in the Rise of Civil Society
- Chomsky, N** (1994) World Orders, Old and New; Pluto Press, London
- Clark, J** (1995) "The State, Popular Participation and the Voluntary Sector" in World Development 23/4, 593-601
- Coleman, J S** (1988) "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital" in American Journal of Sociology (supplement) 94, s95-s120
- Commission on Global Governance** (1995) Our Global Neighbourhood; Oxford University Press, Oxford
- Commission on the Future of the Voluntary Sector** (1996) Meeting the Challenge of Change: Voluntary Action into the 21st Century; Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York
- Cooperrider, D and Pasmore, W** (1991) "The organization dimension of global change" in Human Relations 44/8, 764
- Corbridge, S** (1995) "Introduction" in Corbridge, S (Ed.) Development Studies: A Reader; Edward Arnold, London
- Darcy de Oliveira, M and Tandon, R** (1994) "An Emerging Global Civil Society" in Darcy de Oliveira, M and Tandon, R (Eds.) Citizens Strengthening Global Civil Society; CIVICUS, Washington DC
- Diamond, L** (1994) "Rethinking Civil Society: Toward Democratic Consolidation" in Journal of Democracy 4-17

- Diamond, L, Linz, J J and Lipset, S, M** (1989) "Preface" in Diamond, L, Linz, J J and Lipset, S, M (Eds.) Democracy in Developing Countries; Adamantine Press, London
- Doh Chull Shin** (1994) "On the Third Wave of Democratization" in World Politics 47/1, 135-170
- Economist** (1993) "The Future Surveyed: Between Nation and World" in The Economist, 11/9/93
- Edwards, D** (1995) Free to be Human: Intellectual Self-Defense in an Age of Illusion; Green Books, Totnes
- Edwards, M and Hulme, D** (1995) "Introduction" in Edwards, M and Hulme, D (Eds.) Beyond the Magic Bullet: Performance and Accountability of NGOs; Earthscan, London
- Epps, J** (forthcoming) "Core Values and the Civil Society" in Burbidge, J (Ed.) From the Bottom Up: Participating in the Rise of Civil Society
- Estava, G** (1992) "Development" in Sachs, W (Ed.) The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power; Zed Books, London
- Fernandes, R C** (1994) "Threads of Planetary Citizenship" in Darcy de Oliveira, M and Tandon, R (Eds.) Citizens Strengthening Global Civil Society; CIVICUS, Washington DC
- Fukuyama, F** (1992) The End of History and the Last Man; Free Press, New York NY
- Fukuyama, F** (1995) Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity; Free Press, New York NY
- Gilbraith, M** (1996) "Civil Society, the Promise and Peril of Democratization and Prospects for the Arab World" in Civil Society: Democratic Transformation in the Arab World 58, 11-15; Ibn Khaldoun Centre for Development Studies, Cairo
- Gordenker, L and Weiss, T G** (1995) "Pluralizing Global Governance: analytical approaches and dimensions" in Third World Quarterly 16/3, 357-387
- Grant, L** (1996) "Gurus of the Third Wave" in The Guardian Weekend, 13 January 1996
- Hanson, M** (forthcoming) "The Role of Facilitator in Shaping Civil Society" in Burbidge, J (Ed.) From the Bottom Up: Participating in the Rise of Civil Society
- Held, D** (1993) "Democracy: From City States to a Cosmopolitan Order?" in Held, D (Ed.) Prospects for Democracy: North, South, East, West; Polity Press, Cambridge
- Henderson, H** (1993) Paradigms in Progress: Life Beyond Economic; Adamantine Press, London
- Hutton, W** (1996) "Mutual Prosperity Based on Trust: Investing in social capital can help counter crime" in Guardian Weekly, March 24, 1996
- Hyden, G** (forthcoming) "Building Civil Society at the Turn of the Millennium" in Burbidge, J (Ed.) From the Bottom Up: Participating in the Rise of Civil Society
- Ibrahim, SE** (forthcoming) "The Troubled Triangle: Populism, Islam and Civil Society in the Arab World" in Burbidge, J (Ed.) From the Bottom Up: Participating in the Rise of Civil Society

- ICA Global Archives Project** (1995) The Global Archives of the Ecumenical Institute and the Institute of Cultural Affairs: resources for the future; ICA/EI, Chicago
- ICAI** (1985) The Institute of Cultural Affairs: an Annual Report; ICAI, Brussels
- ICAI** (Ed.) (1985) Directory of Rural Development Projects: Project Descriptions Prepared for the International Exposition of Rural Development; KG Saur, Munich
- ICAI** (Ed.) (1987) Voices of Rural Practitioners: Self-Analysis of Local Rural Development Initiatives Worldwide; KG Saur, Munich
- ICAI** (Ed.) (1988) Approaches That Work in Rural Development: Emerging Trends, Participatory Methods and Local Initiative; KG Saur, Munich
- ICAI** (1990) The Institute of Cultural Affairs: an Annual Report; ICAI, Brussels
- ICAI** (1995) ICAI Location Directory; ICAI, Brussels (internal document)
- ICAI** (1996) The Rise of Civil Society in the 21st Century: ICAI global conference programme; ICA (MENA), Cairo
- ICAI** (1996) ICAI Location Directory; ICAI, Brussels (internal document)
- INTRAC** (1996) "Using Dangerous Words: civil society workshop" in on trac: the newsletter of INTRAC no. 4, April 1996; INTRAC, Oxford
- Ishemo, S L** (1995) "Culture, Liberation and Development" in Development in Practice 5/3, 207-215; Oxfam, Oxford
- Jacobs, M** (1996) The Politics of the Real World; Earthscan, London
- Johnson, P C and Cooperrider, D L** (1991) "Finding a Path With Heart: Global Social Change Organizations and the Challenge for the Field of OD" in Research in Organizational Change and Development 5, 223-284
- Kelly, K** (1994) Out Of Control: The Rise of Neo-Biological Civilization; William Patrick, Reading MA
- Kemmis, D** (1995) The Good City and the Good Life; Houghton Mifflin
- Knight, B and Stokes, P** (1996) The Deficit in Civil Society; The Foundation for Civil Society, Birmingham
- Korany, B** (1994) "Arab Democratization: A Poor Cousin?" in PS, September 1994, 511-513
- Korten, D** (1980) "Community Organization and Rural Development: A Learning Process Approach" in Public Administration Review Sept./Oct. 1980, 480-511
- Korten, D** (1990) Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda; Kumarian Press, West Hartford CT

- Korten, D** (1996) "Civic Engagement to Create Just and Sustainable Societies for the 21st Century", Habitat II Issues paper; People Centered Development Forum, New York NY
- Lampe, D** (1995) "Introduction, Building Civil Society" in Lampe, D National Civic Review 84/2, 88-93
- Mackintosh, M** (1992) "Questioning the State" in Wuyts, M et al (Eds.) Development Policy and Public Action; OUP, Milton Keynes
- Mayo, M and Craig, G** (1995) "Community Participation and Empowerment" in Craig, C and Mayo, M (Ed.) Empowerment: A Reader in Participation and Development; Zed Books, London
- Mead, M** - <http://www.trading.com/ur/quotes/Mead.htm>
- Nerfin, M** (1987) "Neither Prince nor Merchant: Citizen - an Introduction to the Third System" in Development Dialogue 1987/1, 170-195
- Nicholson-Lord, D** (1996) "The Veggie-Box Economy" in Resurgence 177, 4-6
- Norton, A R** (1993) "The Future of Civil Society in the Middle East" in Middle East Journal, 47/2, 205-216
- Putnam, R** (1993) Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy; Princeton University Press, NJ
- Putnam, R D** (1995) "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital" in Journal of Democracy 6/1, 65-78
- Robinson, M** (1993) "Governance, Democracy and Conditionality: NGOs and the New Policy Agenda" in Clayton, A (Ed.) Governance, Democracy and Conditionality: What Role For NGOs?; INTRAC, Oxford
- Roniger, L and Gunes-Ayata, A** (1994) Democracy, Clientelism and Civil Society; Lynne Rienner, Boulder CO
- Sachs, W** (1992) "Introduction" in Sachs, W (Ed.) The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power; Zed Books, London
- Salamon, L M** (1994) "The Rise of the Non-Profit Sector" in Foreign Affairs 73, 109-22
- Sale, K** (1995) Rebels Against the Future: the Luddites and their war on the industrial revolution; Addison Wesley
- Schwedler, J** (1995) "Introduction" in Schwedler, J (Ed.) Toward Civil Society in the Middle East: A Primer; Lynne Rienner, Boulder CO
- Seagren, R** (1988) "Imaginal Education" in ICAI (Ed.) Approaches That Work in Rural Development: Emerging Trends, Participatory Methods and Local Initiative; KG Saur, Munich
- Serrano, I R** (1994) "Humanity in Trouble but Hopeful" in Darcy de Oliveira, M and Tandon, R (Eds.) Citizens Strengthening Global Civil Society; CIVICUS, Washington DC
- Smith, S** (1990) "Volunteering for Equality" in The Ten Year Event: Journey of a Decade; ICA:UK (internal document)

- Spencer, L** (1989) Winning Through Participation: The Group Facilitation Methods of the Institute of Cultural Affairs; Kendall/Hunt, Dubuque Iowa
- Tandon, R** (1992) "Civil Society is the First Sector" in Development 1992/3, 38-39
- Troxel, J P** (1992) "The Results of the Inquiry" in Troxel, J P (Ed.) A Journey of Affirmation: An Appreciative Inquiry into the Institute of Cultural Affairs; ICA, Chicago (internal document)
- Troxel, J P** (1993) Troxel, J P (Ed.) Participation Works: Business Cases from Around the World; Miles River Press, Alexandria VA
- Troxel, J P** (1995) Troxel, J P (Ed.) Government Works: Profiles of People Making a Difference; Miles River Press, Alexandria VA
- Uphoff, N** (1992) Learning from Gal Oya: Possibilities for Participatory Development and Post-Newtonian Science; Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY
- van Arendonk, J** (1986) "New Directions in Development"; ICA, Chicago (internal document)
- VeneKlasen, L** (1994) "Building Civil Society: The Role of Development NGOs" in Interaction Civil Society Initiative: Concept Paper #1
- Walzer, M** (1992) "The Civil Society Argument" in Mouffe, C (Ed.) Dimensions of Radical Democracy; Verso, London
- Wickham, C R** (1994) "Beyond Democratization: Political Change in The Arab World" in PS, September 1994, 507-509
- Williams, RB** (1993) More Than 50 Ways to Build Team Consensus; Skylight Training and Publishing Inc., Palatine IL