

'CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNANCE'

A CONCEPT PAPER

This paper is intended to serve as the basis for a comparative research project on civil society and governance, funded by the Ford Foundation, conducted by researchers in 22 countries, and coordinated by the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, England. It has been developed out of discussions at a workshop involving researchers, Foundation program officers, international co-ordinators and advisors, held at the Institute of Development Studies in June 1998.

This paper is divided into six parts. These deal with:

- (i) the project's aims and concepts,
- (ii) the more specific issues that arise when we consider civil society's actual and potential impact on governance (which we define as the manner in which a country's public business is managed, mainly but not only by governments),
- (iii) the varied contexts within which civil societies operate, with a particular focus on state/civil society relations,
- (iv) plans for an exercise to create maps or profiles of civil society in the various countries under study,
- (v) plans for studies of revealing cases or episodes from the recent histories of these countries in which civil society organizations have interacted with governments, and
- (vi) a set of concluding comments.

I. AIMS AND CONCEPTS

A. *Aims*

The idea of 'civil society' has achieved prominence in political and developmental discourse over the past two decades, particularly in connection with successive waves of democratization, beginning in Latin America and Eastern Europe, and spreading across the developing world. In normative terms, civil society has been widely seen as an increasingly crucial agent for limiting authoritarian government, strengthening popular empowerment, reducing the socially atomizing and unsettling effects of market forces, enforcing political accountability, and improving the quality and inclusiveness of governance. Reconsideration of the limits of state action has also led to an increased awareness of the potential role of civic organizations in the provision of public goods and social services, either separately or in some kind of 'synergistic' relationship with state institutions.

However, general notions of 'civil society' have often been overly optimistic and have disregarded the ambiguities and conflicts inherent in real civil societies. Moreover, the

potentially positive impact of civil society is hard to realize in countries where states are strong and civil organizations still weak, especially amid political conflict and economic decline. We need to come to a clear determination of the character and roles of civil society, the strengths and weaknesses of civil associations in their relations with governance, and the ways in which they can be strengthened and their roles made more creative.

Therefore this research program has three main objectives:

- To gain a clearer analytical and practical understanding of the character and functions of civil society, both in general and in the light of systemic and other variations between and within regions.
- While recognizing that civil organizations can play a number of potentially positive roles, to concentrate on those activities which can enhance (or detract from) the quality of political life and governance in different societies.
- To develop practical measures which can strengthen civil society and enhance its impact as an agent for improving political life and governance -- with particular emphasis on seeking ways to improve government policies toward poor, excluded and vulnerable groups, and to strengthen their access to and influence on the policy process.

The second of the three points above identifies the particular 'niche' in which this project is situated, among the large number of recent and current studies of civil society. We focus on 'governance', a word which refers, crucially, to the sum of interactions between civil society (defined below) and governments. It is thus a word which clearly has a **relational** dimension. Our main purpose is to examine how civil society and governments inter-relate, and how that inter-relationship might be changed in ways that foster better governance.

We take 'good' governance to mean (in general terms) a broad array of practices which maximize the common/public good. More specifically, this term refers to the following things, within civil society and especially within governments: transparency, effectiveness, openness, responsiveness, and accountability; the rule of law, and the acceptance of diversity and pluralism. In all of this, we are also concerned with practices that benefit poor and excluded groups.

As civil society organizations and governments inter-relate, each side influences and affects the other. The vectors flow in both directions. We need to examine the strength and character of the impacts of each upon the other, as they have evolved over time.

B. *Concepts*

Definitions of 'civil society' are bewilderingly diverse and the differences between them are often rooted in alternative social and political philosophies which are hard to reconcile. However, in the context of a research project which covers a broad range of different social and political environments, it is advisable to come to some general agreement about what we all mean by 'civil society'. How do we fashion a notion of 'civil society' that can provide a precise analytical framework to guide empirical research and practical action in a diversity of countries?

In current analysis of civil society in poor, emergent, transitional and industrialized societies, one can discern two underlying understandings of the term - the political and the sociological conceptions. The political conception of civil society is rooted in the Anglo-American tradition of liberal-democratic theory which identifies civic institutions and political activity as an essential component of the emergence of a particular type of political society based on the principles of citizenship, rights, democratic representation and the rule of law. The sociological conception of civil society is that of an intermediate associational realm situated between the state on the one side and the basic building blocks of society on the other (individuals, families and firms), inhabited by social organizations with some degree of autonomy and voluntary participation on the part of their members.

Problems arise because these two notions are often used simultaneously in confusing ways. Each definition also presents our project with problems. The political definition is often criticized for the following reasons:

- ♦ It is normatively tendentious, carrying the assumption that all societies - no matter how diverse in cultural, social and political terms - are destined to follow the path of liberal democratization.
- ♦ Even if one accepts that civil society is uniquely bound up with the historical process of liberal democratization, the latter idea itself has a variety of versions and inherent problems in practice.
- ♦ If one accepts a version of this political definition and attempts to apply it to the analysis of actual civil societies, one is led into an invidious and empirically tricky trawling exercise through different types of social organization, in an effort to decide which of them are truly 'civil' as opposed to those which may be dismissed as 'pre-civil', 'uncivil' or 'anti-civil'.
- ♦ The political definition is also difficult to research because it often extends beyond the activities of concrete organizations to include broader, and more abstract, notions of political participation and public discourse. It also tends to locate 'civil society' in a wide range of processes - informal and formal, individual and organized, sporadic and institutionalized - which make civil society hard to identify and analyze in practice.

The sociological definition, though apparently more straightforward, also presents problems:

- ♦ Are all types of intermediate association to be included -- for example, should the Mafia and other such secret and criminal societies be included, or those organizations which are manifestly intolerant, oppressive or violent?
- ♦ Many 'intermediate' organizations do not embody the characteristics one would wish to associate with truly civic organizations, such as autonomy and voluntary participation -- or do so only partially because they are to some extent dependent on the state or external agencies. How are these to be analyzed?
- ♦ Some influential social aggregations are informal not formal, acting as relatively stable networks between individuals or institutions. Should these be considered as part of 'civil society'?
- ♦ Some definitions of 'intermediate' organizations include firms and households. While these may in strict terms be intermediate between the state and the individual and they may be important for analyzing certain social issues such as labor or gender relations, should they be included under the heading of 'civil society'?
- ♦ In countries with predatory or degenerate regimes the basic rules of civic association may not be determined by formally constituted state authorities, and societal responses take the form of withdrawal and non-compliance, with a focus on survival rather than on activities aimed at improving governance. How do we accommodate this dimension?
- ♦ Some groups and organizations that form part of civil society operate clandestinely, either because they are declared illegal, or because they suffer from systematic state repression. In some contexts, large segments of civil society may be located in the illegal sphere. How are these to be included?

For the purposes of this research program, we will use the following definition:

An intermediate realm situated between state and household, populated by organized groups or associations which are separate from the state, enjoy some autonomy in relations with the state, and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests, values or identities.¹

It is not intended that this definition should impose a strait-jacket on studies of specific societies. We need to be sensibly flexible in our research, as the comments below suggest.

This definition excludes most highly informal associations of the personal network kind, as well as families or households -- since these operate in the private sphere. Civil society, by contrast, operates in the public sphere. But some kinship organizations above the level of the nuclear or extended family (such as lineages and clans) may be important elements of civil society, and should be analyzed as such.

¹ For a more detailed discussion of these definitional issues, see Gordon White, "Civil Society, Democratization and Development (I): Clearing the Analytical Ground", *Democratization* (Autumn, 1994) pp. 375-390.

The definition also excludes firms, but two comments are in order here. Certain types of firms, such as the media and non-profit enterprises, are often important elements of civil society. And if firms or their leaders combine in business associations, those associations should be included as elements of civil society.

That last comment helps to remind us how internally diverse civil society can be. It can include everything from national associations of industrialists to small village-level voluntary associations. Studies of it therefore need to focus at national, intermediate and local levels.

It could be argued that clandestine organizations should be excluded because they do not operate in full public view. But given (i) that they are important in state-society relations in some of the countries which we are studying, (ii) that clandestine groups can transmogrify into associations operating in the open, and (iii) that some of them are forced to operate clandestinely by government bans, we have decided not to exclude them from this exercise.

Finally, political parties present us with some difficulty. They are usually seen, with justification, as part of civil society. But we need to be aware of two problems here. First, parties usually serve as bridges between civil society and government. They straddle the division between the two in ways that may undermine their loyalty and responsiveness to civil society. And since they often exercise state power and act on the imperatives of government, many of them are not wholly OF civil society. They can become involved in government efforts to control, repress, intimidate, marginalize, or coopt civil society in ways that damage it (or parts of it). Second, some parties are so entirely the creations (and/or the creators) of governments or states (or they are so dependent upon governments) that they scarcely qualify as elements or representatives of civil society. We do not propose to exclude parties from consideration as constituent parts of civil society, but researchers in some countries will need to bear these two problems firmly in mind.

It should be apparent from these comments that the above definition, while intended to be practical, is itself an 'ideal-type' in the sense that the idea of 'civil society' in liberal democratic discourse is linked to certain intrinsic characteristics, notably voluntary participation, and separation and autonomy from the state. Social organizations in the real world only embody these characteristics to varying degrees: the boundaries between state and civil society are often blurred, the two organizational spheres may overlap and individuals may play roles in both sectors; social organizations may be partly dependent, in terms of finance or personnel, on state or other agencies; membership in certain organizations may not be fully voluntary, and relations within the institutions may not be either participatory or democratic. In brief, the extent to which a specific civic organization embodies the defining qualities of 'civil society' - separation, autonomy and voluntariness - is a question of degree rather than either/or.

This sociological definition can be used to begin the research through a 'mapping' or 'profiling' exercise which identifies the specific contours and elements of civil society in a given country (see Part IV below). We expect such maps to be very diverse in both sociological and political terms and to vary considerably from country to country.

Work on civil societies in developing countries has produced the following kinds of distinctions between different types of civil actors: between 'modern' interest groups such as trade unions, professional and business associations and 'traditional' organizations based on kinship, ethnicity, culture or religion; between those organizations with specifically political aspirations and roles, and those which are either outside politics or only intermittently involved; between associations which accept the political status quo and those which seek to transform it by changing the political regime or redefining the political community; between highly organized and well resourced interest groups such as trade unions and business/professional organizations and other forms of organization such as NGOs or community associations which have different operating procedures and organizational objectives; between organizations which are intended to protect and extend the narrow interests of their members and those with a wider social or political agenda; and between organizations with extensive membership and those with quite limited membership (but sometimes with broad support from non-members).

We thus expect the roles and activities of various civil organizations to vary widely. We can distinguish several distinct roles which each specific organization may or may not perform:

- ♦ representation of the interests of specific groups in relation to government and to other sectors of society;
- ♦ mobilization of social actors to increase their consciousness and impact;
- ♦ regulation and monitoring of state performance and the behaviour and actions of public officials;
- ♦ developmental or social action to improve the well-being of their own or other constituencies.

Civil organizations also vary in the nature and range of their objectives. Some of them have explicitly 'systemic' aims in the sense that they seek to make an impact on broad political and social structures and processes: for example, by changing an authoritarian into a democratic regime; by deepening the democratic character of an existing democratic regime; changing socio-economic circumstances by improving equity or stimulating particular kinds of developmental action which improve the well-being of poor and excluded people.² Others may have relatively wide social aims, seeking to represent and improve the condition of other social groups beyond their own personnel or membership. Still others may be concerned with more limited goals, seeking to maximize the narrow interests of their own members without concern for, and sometimes at the cost of, external organizations and groups.

We can also expect civil societies to vary considerably from country to country, and the ethical and political character of each constellation of civil actors to be very diverse. There can be no assumption that civil society is 'virtuous' by definition or that it

² Note however, that certain civil society organizations may also act to change democratic into authoritarian regimes, to reduce the amount of participation in formally democratic systems and to worsen socio-economic inequalities.

contains an intrinsic potential for contributing to better governance.³ Nor can we assume that all civil society organizations have explicit concerns with improving the quality of political life and governance. Therefore, one of the first steps in our enquiry will be the mapping or profiling of each constellation of civil society organizations. This will involve a specific set of questions defined by the main concerns of our research, i.e. the relationship between civil society and forms of governance.

- What are the political orientations, objectives and activities of different civil society organizations?
- What kinds of relations do they have with state institutions and policy processes at various levels of government?
- What roles do they play in influencing the content of policies and nature of governance in relation to alleviating poverty and assisting excluded and vulnerable groups?
- In what ways do civil society organizations provide a refuge for groups and individuals who seek to avoid state attention through disengagement from the public sphere?

Civil society organizations can have a constructive impact on political life -- by helping to foster fairer, more honest, transparent, democratic and accountable governance which is more tolerant of diversity and pluralism -- in two ways. First, these organizations can appeal to governments (or even pressure them) to improve their performance in these areas. Second, and in a more subtle manner, they can encourage these things by practicing this sort of governance themselves, within their own organizations. This sets an example for government institutions. It also acquaints ordinary people both with the possibility of better governance (which puts pressure on government to improve) and can provide people with participatory experience that inculcates the skills needed to make such governance a reality.

Of course, the leaders of some civil society organizations -- representing groups which benefit from unfair government practices -- may not wish to see government improve in these ways. And even leaders who might wish to see improvements in official practices do not always operate in this manner within their organizations.

This implies the need for us to examine issues such as accountability, transparency, etc., WITHIN civil society organizations. These organizations are often criticized -- fairly or unfairly -- by people in government for being unelected and thus unaccountable (although it is not as simple as that, since there are other ways of ensuring accountability), and of being secretive about their finances and internal decision making. This dimension needs to be explored since it will reveal how civil society is doing less than it might in promoting good governance, and how changes in practice might enable it to do more.

³ On this point, see J.-F. Bayart, "Civil Society in Africa" in P. Chabal (ed.) *Political Domination in Africa* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), and R. Fatton, Jr., "Africa in the Age of Democratization: The Civic Limitations of Civil Society", *African Studies Review* (September, 1995) pp. 67-99.

II. CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

The contribution made by civil society to good governance is essentially concerned with the means by which organized interests seek to influence and engage with state institutions. In doing so, they usually help to strengthen state legitimacy and relations of trust between public officials and ordinary citizens.

As we noted above, however, not all civic organizations engage in activities designed to promote better governance. Some actively conspire to undermine good governance by aggressively pursuing self-interested goals or by fomenting violence against the state or other organized groups. Others consciously seek to evade or disengage themselves from formal state structures through various forms of collective action in the informal economy.

The contribution of civil society to good governance may be summarized under four headings: public policy and decision making; enhancing state performance; transparency and information; and social justice and the rule of law.

A. *Public Policy and Decision Making*

Civil society organizations can play a role in mobilizing particular constituencies to participate more fully in politics and public affairs. Wealthy and socially dominant groups are better able to organize themselves and, by virtue of superior resources and social status, are able to exert considerable influence over public policy. They can form and support intermediary organizations to represent and articulate their interests in an effective manner.

Poor and socially disadvantaged groups -- marginal peasants, sharecroppers, landless laborers, artisans, informal sector workers, urban slum dwellers, disabled people and certain categories of women -- are usually much less able to exercise influence over public policy and resource allocations. Higher rates of political participation often result from institutional innovations -- such as democratic decentralization -- designed to promote local involvement in decision-making. But such innovations will only be effective if grassroots organizations and social movements can organize the poor and articulate their demands at local and higher levels.

The following research questions appear to be significant here:

- Under what socio-economic and political conditions can grassroots mobilization be effective in influencing public policy?
- What kinds of strategies appear to be most effective at promoting high rates of civic engagement?
- What types of institutions are conducive to higher rates of political participation?

- To what extent do public policy and resource allocations actually benefit poor and marginalized groups?

B. Transparency and Information

Civil organizations are thought to contribute to better governance by improving transparency and increasing the availability of information about the making and implementation of government policy. Activities from within civil society to promote these goals include the discovery, publication and dissemination of information about items of legislation, legal provisions, public expenditure allocations, the implementation of policy and programs, and special enquiries. Such information may be directly published and circulated by groups within civil society, or distributed through new or existing media outlets.

These groups may also seek to mobilize citizens to pressure governments into implementing existing legislation and by taking action to indict public officials who are involved in malfeasance. Efforts to enhance transparency in government may contribute to poverty reduction by helping citizens monitor the delivery of development resources and staunch the appropriation of resources by bureaucrats and local elites. This suggests a more activist role for civil society, in which civic actors back up information and dissemination activities with mobilization and public advocacy work. It also raises questions about the transparency and legitimacy of civic organizations which cannot be taken for granted.

Research in this area could examine the following sets of issues:

- The types of information and dissemination activities pursued by civic organizations to further transparency and accountability;
- The effectiveness of public advocacy and campaigning as means of strengthening government commitment to greater probity and responsiveness, and to implementing the findings of special enquiries and relevant legislation and programs.

C. Enhancing State Performance

The quality and effectiveness of public services and expenditures are integral to good governance. Civil society organizations can contribute here by working directly with government in shaping, financing and delivering public services in a variety of ways. These can take the form of public-private partnerships in which civil society organizations work closely with state institutions in designing and providing health and educational services, by mobilizing funds from among client groups and other sources, by providing services directly, and by monitoring quality and coverage. In some cases this can create the basis for synergy, in which state institutions acquire greater legitimacy and improve their performance by developing responsive working

relationships with civil society that draw on reservoirs of social capital built up in local communities.⁴

Effective state-society partnerships arise in the context of a particular set of institutional and political conditions which may be context-specific and not easily replicable. These conditions and the types of groups that can form such partnerships require more detailed comparative investigation to determine under what circumstances synergy can be fostered. The following issues are of relevance under this heading:

- The nature of the policy environment and the role of the state in governing the activities of civil society (through non-intervention, responsiveness, promotion and regulation);
- The effectiveness of various types of institutional innovations designed to foster complementarity;
- The types of leadership and forms of commitment among public officials and civic organizations which could create mutual trust and a pre-disposition toward partnership;
- The contribution of cooperative relationships and alliance-building between civil society organizations and sympathetic bureaucrats to improving the quality of public services, and the effectiveness with which they are delivered.

⁴ For a discussion see M. Robinson and G. White, "The Role of Civic Organisations in Service Provision: Towards Synergy", *Research for Action* No.37 (Helsinki, WIDER, 1997).

D. *Social Justice, Rights and the Rule of Law*

The fourth area where civil society can make a contribution to good governance is in the field of social justice, rights and the rule of law. There are two main dimensions to this:

- The advocacy role of specialist human rights organizations in pressing for the implementation of existing laws, plus fresh legislative initiatives and institutional reforms to improve the functioning and accountability of state policing and security organs, and
- The protective role of civil society in sheltering individuals threatened by repressive states, defending their rights through the official legal process, for example by providing paralegal services to groups of citizens who do not have ready access to the courts.

An array of issues bear on these matters. These include (i) the adequacy of existing laws and of the courts and the legal profession to ensure their implementation, (ii) the political realities that may impede or facilitate such efforts, and (iii) the social environment which may do the same.

III. BROADER CONSIDERATIONS

A. *Contexts*

We have not as yet made extensive comments in this paper on the varied contexts within which civic organizations have to operate. At least five contextual elements need to be considered in our research, notably the degree to which the following trends have occurred in each country, and the extent and character of their impacts.

(i) Democratization: The spread of democratization in recent years has changed the political and institutional environment in which civil society organizations operate. In some cases civil society was the locus of active opposition to authoritarian governments, and provided a critical breeding ground for political parties. In others civil society was marginalized through state repression or withdrawal from active engagement in politics. Civil society may constitute the locus in which civic values and norms of democratic engagement are nurtured, though conversely greater political freedom can be exploited by self-interested groups to advance narrow, self-interested agendas that can so exacerbate political conflict that it undermines governance.

(ii) Reforms of political structures: Democratization has often entailed the reform of existing political structures or the creation of new democratic structures. This can involve constitutional re-design, the devolution of power to local government, and formal arrangements to widen public access to policy making. These can provide space for civil society organizations to engage in new activities, strengthen their interaction with politicians and public officials, and involve larger number of people in active politics and government affairs.

(iii) Institutional 'rebalancing': Challenges to the fiscal capacity of states, and doubts about their institutional efficacy and political character, have led to efforts to 'rebalance' systems of social welfare provision in favor of market and civil society organizations. This has sometimes meant that civic organizations have taken on responsibilities for providing social goods and public services to their own constituencies and wider communities, requiring a rethink of their organizational structures, financial base and relations with government.

(iv) Economic liberalization: Economic liberalization has a number of contradictory consequences for civil society. In some contexts it may weaken predatory state structures and limit the scope for rent-seeking behavior by political and bureaucratic elites. Some groups are better-placed than others to exploit the opportunities created by liberalization for advancing their own economic agendas, and organizations representing their interests can wield considerable influence over decision-making. The removal of price controls and other restrictions on economic activity are often accompanied by the growth of the informal economy, and the emergence of a dense network of groups and associations geared toward the advancement of collective economic interests. The removal of safety-nets and reduction in government welfare spending gives rise to a proliferation of self-help groups and development associations whose mandate is to provide relief and services to people marginalized or impoverished by market reforms.

(v) Globalization: The process of globalization has had an ambiguous impact on civil society organizations. On the one hand, like other domestic agencies such as the state and private business, they find their autonomy compromised by invasive pressures of global markets. On the other hand, globalization -- particularly in terms of freer flows of information across national boundaries -- has fostered the spread of 'transnational communities' and an incipient global civil society.

The first two of these contextual elements (and, to a lesser degree, the third) warrant attention in this research project. The last two of the five are themes which the Ford Foundation is interested in exploring in a later project on civil society.

B. *Analyzing State-Society Relations*

The second dimension of the broader environment concerns the approaches which governments have adopted toward organized interests, and toward the possibility that unorganized interests might emerge as active forces within civil society.

Numerous strategies are available to governments -- several of which can cause civil society to depart somewhat from the ideal type set out in our definition earlier in this paper. In most cases, they employ a mixture of these.

(i) They may adopt a laissez-faire approach, which can be rather passive, but which can also entail efforts to encourage and enable the emergence and the activities of civil society organizations.

(ii) They may seek to foment or reduce conflict between different sets of interests. Efforts to foment and reduce conflict are often combined -- when governments encourage alliances among some groups in an effort to build a coalition of support for

themselves, while encouraging divisions between such a coalition and others whom they regard with suspicion. They may also cultivate suspicion and division between groups in this latter category.

(iii) They may repress all or some organized interests.

(iv) They may seek to coopt some or all interests, to draw them into relationships of dependency in order to control them – by corporatist or other means.

(v) They may distribute patronage (goods, services and funds) in an effort to cultivate some interests, in ways that may stop short of outright cooptation. Patronage systems vary -- in their scope; in the types and amounts of resources distributed; in the degree of centralization within them; in the degree to which they are personalized or governed by impersonal, institutional rules (to serve, for example, the corporate interests of a party); and in their susceptibility to profiteering by individuals within them.

(vi) They may seek to mobilize all or some organized interests.

(vii) They may use slogans and ideas in their approach to civil society. This may entail a political ideology, nationalistic appeals, cultural values, 'ethnic' or other forms of identity politics, etc.

In investigating all of this, we must be aware that some governments approach these issues with greater clarity of purpose, and with greater effectiveness than others. We should look out for signs of confusion, inconsistency, bungling and incapacities on the part of governments.

At least four other complications may arise:

(i) In some countries, there may be more than one level of government. Regional or local institutions may approach civil society differently from national-level regimes.

(ii) Some countries may have witnessed changes of government in recent times, often by means of considerable political turbulence, with attendant changes of approach to civil society.

(iii) In multi-party systems, the alternative approaches of opposition parties need to be studied, since they often influence the approaches used by those in power. When a government faces no serious opposition, or no opposition at all, this also shapes their approaches.

(iv) In some countries, we may find patchwork patterns. There may be authoritarian enclaves, regions or small centers where bosses or 'traditional' rulers (hereditary chieftains or whatever) retain great influence. We may also encounter cases in which the national leaders are autocratically inclined, but where more liberally-minded leaders exercise some power in pockets. This and point (i) above remind us that governments are not monolithic.

We now turn to the two tasks for researchers in this initial phase of the project -- described in Parts IV and V below. The FIRST task (see Part IV) is a mapping or profiling of civil society in each of the countries being studied. We need to develop a rough overall picture of the full range of civil society organizations, the roles that they play in relation to government, and government's posture toward them. In that exercise, researchers need to pay some attention to two types of civil society organizations: (i) those which do not contribute to better governance, and (ii) those which aim to assist poor and socially excluded citizens. The SECOND task (see Part V) entails studies of cases or episodes which can yield insight into the relationship between civil society and government. The first of these tasks will provide us with a BREADTH of understanding, while the second will provide us with analyses of greater DEPTH.

IV. MAPPING OR PROFILING CIVIL SOCIETY

To obtain an overview of the whole of civil society within each country, researchers should develop a map or profile of civil society organizations. This should not be a hugely time-consuming exercise. What we want is a rough, broad sense of where civil society organizations are strong and weak, more active or less active, etc., to provide background to the in-depth studies of specific cases or episodes outlined in Part V below.

For some countries and regions, plenty of evidence already exists to make this exercise possible. In others, researchers will need to do some new investigations. But we do not expect researchers to do a lot of new, primary research. Maps or profiles should be rather quickly constructed, using existing studies and documents, interviews with people (civil society leaders, scholars, people in government, and others like journalists, lawyers, business leaders, educators, etc.) who know what is going on in their societies.

Researchers should fill in the boxes on a matrix, described just below. It should cover all types of activities by civil society organizations (including activities that do not entail interactions with government), and all types of civil society organizations. Researchers should also develop a text to explain the brief entries within each box in the matrix. In the text, they should concentrate on our main concern -- the interaction of civil society and government.

Down the left-hand side of the matrix, five items which describe different types of "ACTIVITIES" of civil society organizations should be listed vertically. These should be:

1. Representation
2. Mobilization
3. Regulation and Monitoring
4. Developmental and Social Action
5. Other

See the discussion of the first four of these items near the end of Part I of this document. The fifth item, "Other" , is (all too obviously) for activities that do not fit within the first four.

Across the top of the matrix, seven items, covering different "TYPES" of civil society organizations, should be listed horizontally, as follows:

1. Social/recreational organizations⁵
2. Interest-based (including occupational) organizations⁶
3. Service provision organizations⁷
4. Self-help (often community-based) organizations⁸
5. Advocacy groups⁹
6. Cultural/religious/'ethnic' organizations¹⁰
7. Social movements (usually -- in contrast to all six of the types above -- quite large entities which may have little organization, or may have large memberships with an organization at the core)¹¹
8. Others

Some organizations will fall into more than one of the categories above.

The matrix is NOT something which requires detailed, exhaustive answers to all of the questions that it poses. It is meant to be a rough guide to the condition of civil society

⁵ These include youth clubs/teams/associations; sports/recreational associations; students' associations; associations of school/college graduates; clubs which bring together mainly urban elites (both recreational clubs such as country clubs or urban clubs, and 'service clubs such as Rotary).

⁶ Small business associations; associations of largest firms, banks, etc.; professional/occupational associations; trade/labor union; prosperous or small farmers' associations; rural laborers' associations.

⁷ Associations which concentrate in service provision to (large or small) social groups.

⁸ Urban neighborhood associations; cooperative societies; savings clubs or credit unions; non-governmental development organizations (NGDOs) which foster self-help among small groups or communities; other developmentally-oriented grassroots organizations.

⁹ Environmental associations (including those dealing with common property resources); womens' associations; issue-based pressure groups (representing children, disabled people, immigrants, etc.).

¹⁰ These include religious associations; 'tribal', caste or other such associations; linguistic group/literary/cultural associations; associations which seek to promote the beliefs, culture or identity of a 'primordial' group.

¹¹ Religious movements, 'ethnic' or other parochially based (linguistic, 'tribal', caste, etc.) movements; other social movements.

in each country, which will provide context. That context will help to inform choices about which important issues to discuss in more depth, and which cases or episodes (see Part V) should be selected for further analysis.

The text which explains the matrix for each country should provide readers with a broad introduction to several of these issues -- by addressing these questions:

- How and at what levels of government (national, intermediate, local) do political regimes impinge on civil society (see section III-B above)?
- What are the characteristics of civil society, what types of organizations are active in what areas, and what are the limitations and the capacity of civil society organizations in their encounters with government?

For others in the project, this will make it possible to begin comparing countries with a broad understanding of differences and similarities. Figures 1 to 4 appended to this Concept Paper provide researchers with the types of questions, areas of concern, assessment criteria, specific indicators, and potential sources of information that could prove useful in this exercise. But let us, here, briefly identify and comment on these four sets of issues.

Note that for items 1 and 2 below, the information which we seek is very similar to that which will be set out in the matrix discussed above. Items 3 and 4 will carry researchers further into an analysis of state-society relations, which was discussed in Part III-B above.

1. The nature and capacity of civil society organizations. Researchers are here asked to examine the range and diversity of such organizations, their constituencies, strategies, leadership, resources, autonomy and linkages. This will enable them to enlarge, in several important ways, on the information provided in the matrix.

2. The main activities of civil organizations. Here we seek information on activities aimed at promoting policy advocacy and political change. These include efforts at education, mobilization, encouraging political participation, forging linkages with other such groups, etc. This will, again, permit researchers to elaborate on information in the matrix.

3. The domestic policy environment. Here we seek to understand the changes (if any) in recent times that may have affected civil society -- changes in the legal, political, regulatory or economic environment.

4. The impact and effectiveness of civil society activities. Here we seek to assess the degree to which such organizations can influence and change the policies, procedures and character of governments.

In the matrix exercise, and again in this further exercise, we need to pay special attention to efforts by civic organizations (and indeed, the state) to assist, represent or mobilize poor and marginalized social groups. That is a crucial dimension of this project.

V. STUDIES OF CASES OR EPISODES

We have agreed to follow the initial mapping or profiling exercise with a number of studies of revealing cases or episodes in the recent history of each country. Mapping provides us with a greater BREADTH of understanding, while the cases or episodes provide greater DEPTH in our analyses of important dimensions of the relationship (actual and potential) between civil society and government.

Work on cases and episodes enables us to examine change over time -- over long or short periods -- which prevents our studies from being too static. This work will also permit country researchers to focus on issues which are most important in their distinctive societies.

We need to consider a diversity of cases or episodes, with the following points in mind:

(a) **SUCCESSSES AND FAILURES:** Many of our cases or episodes will naturally provide examples of successful encounters between civil society and government, since we are interested in identifying and promoting such successes. But we also need to study cases or episodes in which success was more limited, or which represent failures. If we compare successes with failures, we will learn more about what forces or factors made success possible (because they were absent when things failed) than if we study only successes.

(b) **TYPES:** We should also examine different types of encounters between civil society and government, in at least three senses.

First, we need to examine both **confrontations** between civil society organizations and governments, and **less adversarial encounters** -- to see how each type tends to turn out in a particular country. (Note, however, that in some countries only one of these types of encounter is possible.)

Second, we should try to ensure that the cases and episodes selected are spread fairly widely across the matrix set out in the previous section of this paper. If they are heavily concentrated only in one or two boxes on the matrix, then we will not gain as wide-ranging an understanding of the range of encounters that can occur between civil society and government. (Of course, in some countries, some boxes on the matrix may be nearly empty since few of the types of encounters represented there ever occur.)

Finally, since we are especially concerned with the implications of civil society's encounter with government for poor, excluded groups, researchers should select some cases or episodes which have such implications.

(c) **LEVELS:** Since civil society exists at national, intermediate and local levels, it is useful to study examples of encounters between civil society and government at various levels.

(d) **CASES INVOLVING SINGLE OR MULTIPLE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS:** Some cases or episodes may involve single civil society

organizations, while others may involve several working (or trying to work) in coalitions (or, sometimes, at cross purposes).

There will of course be variations on all of these fronts from country to country. Successes may be common in one place and rare in another. Certain types of encounters will loom large in one place but not another. Crucial episodes may occur mainly at one level in one place and at another level (or at several levels) in another. Researchers will naturally consider these things when they draw up their research plans. Our plea here is simply for the inclusion of as much diversity and balance on these four fronts as seems sensible.

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26 August 1999