

Globalization and the Civil Society Sector*

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A A “global associational revolution” appears to be under way around the world, a massive upsurge of organized private, voluntary activity in virtually every region of the globe - in the developed countries of North America, Western Europe, and Asia; throughout Central and Eastern Europe; and in much of the developing world.¹ To be sure, voluntary activity and voluntary organizations are by no means new phenomena. Mutual assistance and charitable institutions have long operated in societies throughout the world, the product of religious impulses, social movements, cultural or professional interests, sentiments of solidarity and mutuality, altruism, and, more recently, government’s need for assistance to carry out public functions. Yet the number and variety of such organizations seem to have grown enormously in recent years. The global associational revolution that appears to be under way at the present time may, in fact, prove to be as significant a development of the late 20th and early 21st centuries as the rise of the nation-state was of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

That this development is taking place, and taking place now, is hardly an accident. The contemporary rise of the nonprofit, or civil society, sector is the byproduct of a striking coming together of a variety of historical trends. Many of these trends, moreover, are closely related to the broader contemporary phenomenon of globalization, the growing international connectedness of people and institutions. Indeed, the rise of the civil society sector is both a consequence and a cause of globalization. More precisely, many of the forces driving the contemporary process of globalization are also contributing to the growth of the civil society sector internationally, and

civil society institutions are in turn adding new dimensions to the whole phenomenon of globalization.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine these inter-relationships between the growing civil society presence throughout the world and the broader phenomenon of globalization. To do so, the discussion falls into three parts. Part I analyzes the factors that seem to lie behind the recent growth of the civil society sector internationally and shows how they relate to the forces contributing to growing globalization. Part II then documents the scale and character of the civil society sector that has emerged as a consequence of these forces in countries throughout the world drawing on a new body of research recently completed under the auspices of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, which the present author directs. Finally, Part III looks briefly at the special subset of civil society organizations operating at the cross-national level since these display especially sharply the relationship between globalization and civil society. The central conclusion that emerges from this analysis is that globalization involves more than a shift in the relative positions of nation-states and corporations. A powerful citizen sector has also emerged in this process and is laying claim to an expanded voice on both the national and international stages.

That the past 20-25 years have witnessed a dramatic growth both in the attention paid to civil society organizations and in the scale and importance of these institutions seems to be due to a host of different factors. What is striking about these factors, however, is how closely they parallel the forces that have also been responsible for the parallel growth of globalization.

Communications technology

Foremost among these factors have been the recent dramatic breakthroughs in information technology and expansion of literacy. These changes have affected the growth of civil society organizations in a number of different ways. In the first place, they have increased the demand for them. Improved communications have awakened people to the realization that their circumstances may not be immutable, that opportunities may be better elsewhere, and that change is possible. This has stimulated citizen activism; sparked gender, environmental, and ethnic consciousness; and prompted heightened interest in human rights, all of which in turn have further stimulated the growth of civil society organizations. Coupled with the general economic prosperity in the major world economies since the late 1940's, advanced communications has helped to foster a broader value change emphasizing human rights, individual freedoms, environmental protection, and related life-style issues,² all of which have helped prompt interest in organizations through which these values can be pursued.

Not only has new communications technology helped stimulate the demand for civil society organizations, but also it has helped increase the supply of them. Just as advanced telecommunications have made it possible for corporations to organize production across much wider geographic boundaries, so too they have made it far easier for citizens to join together to meet common needs and to press common demands on public or private authorities. Communication is the lifeblood of organization just as it is of commerce. It makes it easier to concert action, to sustain contact, and to create a sense of belonging. As communications has improved both within countries and between them, organizations have become far easier to build and maintain.

Neo-liberalism and new public management

The ideas of empowerment and human rights transmitted by advanced communications have not been the only ones prompting the growth of civil society organizations. Also at work has been a broader set of neo-liberal economic theories that the new communications technologies have also helped to spread. These ideas gained widespread visibility with the election of Margaret Thatcher in the U.K. and Ronald Reagan in the U.S., and they came to inspire the “structural adjustment” policies of institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. At the center of this body of thought has been a profound questioning of the capability of states, at least on their own, to cope with the inter-connected social welfare, developmental, and environmental problems of our day. The state stands accused in these theories of stifling initiative, creating unresponsive bureaucracies, failing to mobilize grass-roots energies, and generally absorbing escalating shares of national income to the detriment of more efficient private investment.

Although the central thrust of this neo-liberal agenda has been to reduce the functions of the state and expand the role of the market and the private business sector, it has also given new prominence to the nonprofit sector and philanthropy. This is so because neo-liberal politicians and theorists have needed an explanation for how social welfare problems would be dealt with once government spending was cut and government social welfare protections eliminated, and the nonprofit sector and philanthropy have provided a convenient one.³ Initially, this took the form of trumpeting the potentials for private philanthropy, both individual and corporate, to fill in for the shrinking state. As the financial impossibility of this became apparent, however, a frantic search began for a “middle way” between sole reliance on the market and sole reliance on

the state to cope with public problems - a search that is evident in Prime Minister Tony Blair's emphasis on a "Third Way" in the United Kingdom, Gerhard Schröder's "New Middle" in Germany, and strategies emphasizing empowerment of the poor and "assisted self-reliance" in the developing world."⁴ French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin's summary declaration: "Yes to a market economy, no to a market society" seems to summarize the prevailing sentiment well.

Because of their unique combination of private structure and public purpose, their generally smaller scale, their connections to citizens, their flexibility, and their capacity to tap private initiative in support of public purposes, civil society organizations have surfaced as strategically important potential partners in the effort to fashion such new solutions. Having played a critical part in the initial "neo-liberal" project, they have therefore taken their place as well as "a basic part," as one close observer has put it, "of the politics of the third way," though some continue to insist on a sharp distinction between empowerment-oriented citizen action and assistance-oriented nonprofit organizations that presumably function as instruments of domination instead.⁵

The social capital emphasis

Also contributing to the attention civil society organizations have recently attracted is the recent interest in "social capital," those bonds of trust and reciprocity that have been found to be critical preconditions for democracy and economic growth.⁶ Fears about a decline, or general insufficiency, of such trust have come to be a major preoccupation in countries throughout the world, leading to increased interest in civil society organizations as a way to help remedy the deficit. Very likely contributing to the popularity of this argument, particularly among policy-makers, has been its assignment of responsibility for a wide range of social ills not to underlying

inequalities of power or economic opportunity but to the lack of supportive social ties among the disadvantaged. In the developed countries, this line of argument has provided a convenient explanation for rising levels of crime and poverty.⁷ Similar arguments have had great appeal in the developing world as well where they offer an explanation for widespread poverty and underdevelopment that focus on shortcomings among the people of less developed regions rather than on such factors as unequal terms of trade, globalization, or the power of entrenched elites.⁸

Social entrepreneurs

The fact that new communications technologies helped spark increased interest in civil society organizations among disadvantaged populations and neo-liberal elites alike, and that they eased the problems of forming such organizations, is still not sufficient to explain the global associational revolution that has taken place in recent years. Also at work was an increase in the supply of “social entrepreneurs” willing to come forward to form such organizations.⁹ For this, an unusual confluence of developments seems to have been responsible. One of these was the considerable economic growth that occurred in the world economy in the 1960s and 1970s, with all regions sharing in the expansion but growth particularly strong in Central and Eastern Europe and the developing world. What is important about this growth for our purposes here is the contribution it made to the creation of a sizable professional middle class of doctors, lawyers, scientists, educators, and engineers in many parts of the world. Because of the repressive political regimes in many of these countries, however, many of these educated elites found themselves increasingly frustrated politically and socially. Following the oil crisis of the early 1970s, moreover, many of them found themselves economically frustrated as well. In this climate, many seem to have turned to non-governmental organizations as vehicles through which

to give meaning to their lives. Such middle-class leadership was critical to the emergence of private, nonprofit organizations in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Central Europe during this period.¹⁰ As Andras Biro, a Hungarian activist put it: “We are witnessing an escape from the enforced immaturity of the socialist system. For the first time in 40 years we are reclaiming responsibility for our lives.”¹¹ In the process, these educated elites helped convert the demand for civil society organizations into an actual supply of them.

External actors

Finally, a variety of external actors has also played crucial roles in moving the process of civil society development along. The significant expansion of grass-roots nonprofit organizations in much of Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, was triggered in important part by the post-Vatican II effort of the Catholic Church to counter the influence of the Castro Revolution in the region by forming Christian “base” communities through which liberal clerics could aid the rural poor. Western charitable foundations as well as religious organizations committed to grassroots democracy and empowerment of the poor have also played major roles, delivering important financial assistance to the new non-governmental organizations taking shape in many developing regions. In recent years, moreover, multinational corporations eager to ensure a “license to operate” in far-away lands and multilateral organizations like the World Bank that have come to recognize the need to engage citizen energies to implement their development agendas have also entered the scene.

These external actors have provided especially tangible evidence of the impact of globalization on the recent growth of civil society. In turn, however, civil society organizations have also had an impact on globalization. According to one line of the story, in fact, the progress of

globalization has been importantly fuelled by a particular set of trans-national nongovernmental organizations whose “primary concern” is the propagation of an integrating global culture of universalism, individualism, rational voluntary authority, and world citizenship.¹² These trans-national organizations have been credited, in turn, with the creation of counterpart organizations in particular nations that have carried their message of globalization forward.

In short, many of the same factors driving the broader phenomenon of globalization - increased communications, neo-liberalism, growing individualism, expanded education, and the extended reach of trans-national organizations themselves - are stimulating the development of civil society around the world. In this sense, globalization and the “global associational revolution” are opposite sides of the same coin. Even as globalization has stimulated a global civil society movement in opposition to globalization, it has paradoxically been responsible in important part for the fact that such a movement could exist.

The upshot of this set of forces has been the establishment of a civil society sector that is global in reach and substantial in both size and composition. Unfortunately, however, clear recognition of this reality has lagged badly behind.

Despite its growing presence and importance, the civil society sector has long been the lost continent on the social landscape of our world. Only recently has it attracted serious attention in policy circles or the press, and academic interest has long been equally tepid. Even now, social and political discourse remains heavily dominated by a “two-sector model” that acknowledges the existence of only two social spheres outside of the family unit - the market and

the state, or business and government. This has been reinforced by statistical conventions that have kept this “third sector” of civil society organizations largely invisible in official economic data.¹³ Even the most basic information about these organizations - their numbers, size, activities, economic weight, finances, and role - has therefore been lacking almost everywhere, while deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to their growth and decline has been almost nonexistent. As a consequence, the civil society sector’s ability to participate in the significant policy debates now under way has been seriously hampered and its potential for contributing to the solution of pressing problems too often challenged or ignored.

To help fill the resulting gap in basic knowledge about the third sector internationally, we launched an ambitious international project - *the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project* - in 1991. Initially focused on thirteen countries - eight developed and five developing - this project has since been extended to over forty.¹⁴

Objectives

The principal objectives of this project were: (1) to *document* the scope, structure, financing, and role of the civil society sector in these countries for the first time in solid empirical terms; (2) to *explain* why this sector varies in size, composition, character, and role from place to place and identify the factors that seem to encourage or retard its development; and (3) to *assess the impact* these organizations are having and the contributions they make, as well as the drawbacks they entail.

In addition, the project sought to conduct its work in a way that would: (4) *improve awareness* of this set of institutions; and (5) build *local capacity* to carry on the work in the future.

Approach

To pursue these objectives, we formulated an approach that was:

- *Comparative*, covering countries at different levels of development and with a wide assortment of religious, cultural, and political traditions. In particular, work has been undertaken in over 40 countries representing all the inhabited continents and most of the major religions of the world. To date, data have been generated in 36 of these, including 16 developed countries in North America, Western Europe, and Asia; and 20 developing and transitional countries in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Central and Eastern Europe.
- *Systematic*, utilizing a common definition of the entities to be included and a common classification system for differentiating among them.
- *Collaborative*, relying extensively on local analysts to root our definitions and analysis in the solid ground of local knowledge and ensure the local experience to carry the work forward in the future.
- *Consultative*, involving the active participation of local civil society activists, government leaders, the press, and the business community in order to further ensure that the work in each country was responsive to the

particular conditions of the country and that the results could be understood and disseminated locally.

- *Empirical*, moving wherever possible beyond subjective impressions to develop a body of reasonably solid empirical data on this set of organizations.

Definition

Given the comparative and empirical nature of this inquiry, it was imperative to develop a common definition of the entities of interest to us.¹⁵ For this purpose, we adopted a bottom-up, inductive approach drawing on the actual experiences of the broad range of countries embraced within our project. Out of this process emerged a consensus on five structural-operational features that defined the entities at the center of our concern. In particular, we defined the civil society sector as the set of (a) organizations, whether formal or informal and whether registered or not, that are (b) *private*, i.e. not part of the institutional apparatus of the state; (c) *non-profit-distributing*, i.e. that do not distribute profits to their owners or directors and are not primarily commercial in purpose; (d) *self-governing*, i.e. able to put themselves out of business if they so choose; and (e) *voluntary*, i.e. staffed and supported by people as a matter of choice and not as a matter of legal obligation.

While not without its grey areas or borderline cases, this definition has now been tested in countries throughout the world and found to be workable in identifying a set of institutions that is sufficiently broad to encompass the great variety of entities commonly considered to be part of the third or civil society sector in both developed and developing countries, yet sufficiently sharp to be able to distinguish these institutions from those in the other two major sectors - business

and government. Most organized forms of citizen action are covered by this definition, including not just formal service organizations but also social clubs, professional organizations, social movements, and community based cooperatives engaged in community development work, such as the *stokvels*, or revolving credit associations, in Africa. Intentionally excluded, however, are government agencies, private businesses, and commercial cooperatives and mutuals.¹⁶ For the sake of convenience, we will generally use the term “civil society organizations,” or “civil society sector” to refer to the institutions that meet this five-fold structural-operational definition.

Methodology

Armed with this definition, our Local Associates and we drew on a variety of data sources to generate estimates of the scope and composition of the set of institutions so defined. These included: (a) official economic statistics (e.g., employment surveys, population surveys); (b) data assembled by umbrella groups or intermediary associations representing various types of civil society organizations or industries; specialized surveys of civil society organizations, including hyper-network sampling surveys; and population surveys, focusing particularly on giving and volunteering.

Out of this work has come a variety of findings that challenge conventional beliefs about this civil society sector internationally.¹⁷

A major economic force

In the first place, this work has made clear that the civil society sector constitutes a sizable economic presence in countries throughout the world. This is evident most clearly in the human resources this set of organizations mobilizes. With religious institutions included, the civil society sector in just the 36 countries for which we have collected reliable data engaged a cumulative total of 46 million full-time equivalent workers as of the mid- to late 1990s, or an average of 4.4 percent of the economically active population of these countries. This is at least 10 times more people than are employed in the utilities and textile industries in these countries, five times more people than work in the food manufacturing industry, and 20 percent more people than work in transportation and communications. Put somewhat differently, if the nonprofit sector in these countries were a separate national economy, its expenditures would make it the seventh largest economy in the world, ahead of Italy, Brazil, Russia, Spain, and Canada and just behind France and the U.K.

Significant volunteer presence

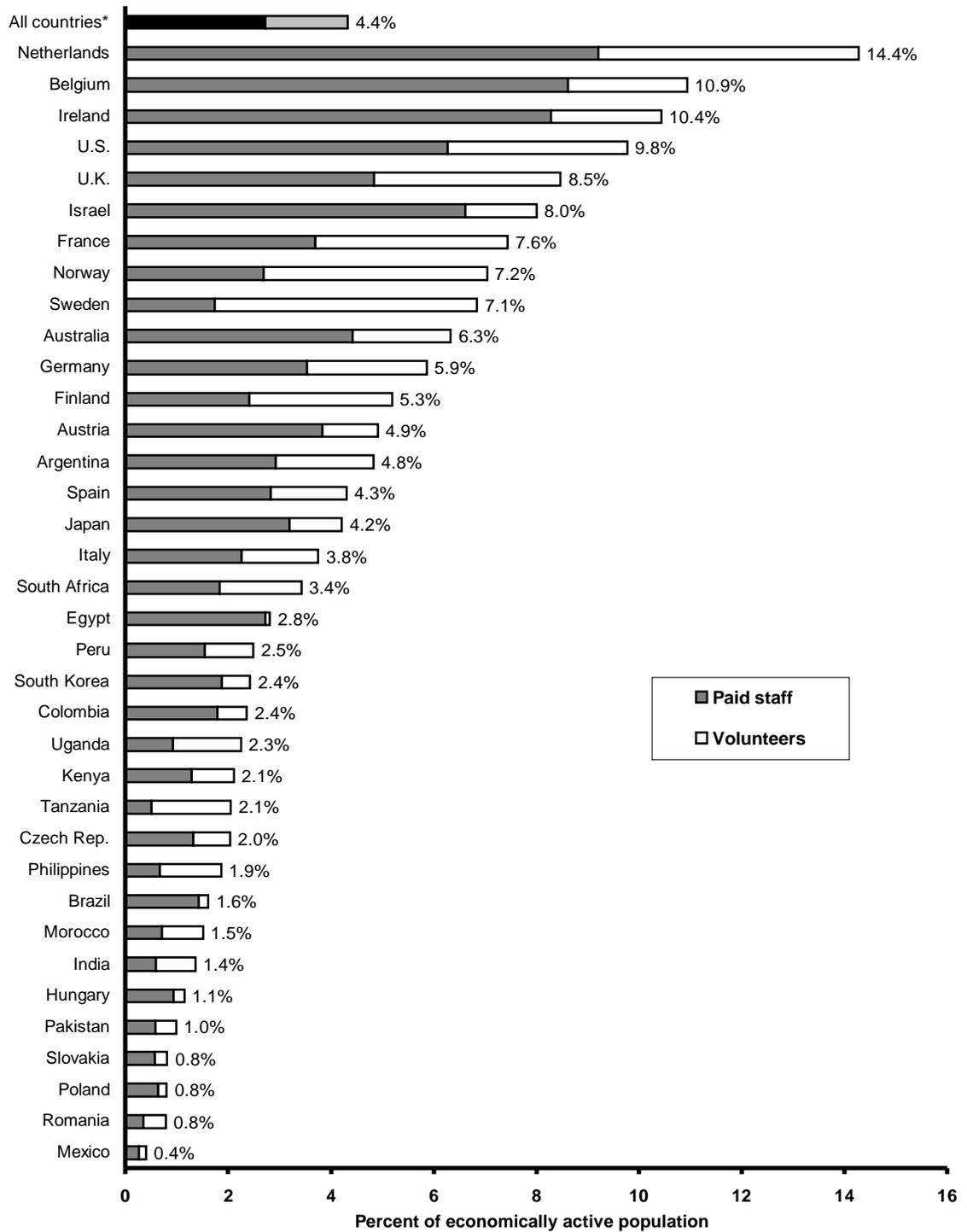
Of these 46 million full-time equivalent (FTE) civil society organization workers, over 20 million, or 44 percent, are volunteers. In fact, of course, the actual number of volunteers exceeds this number by a substantial margin since most volunteers work only part-time. We estimate that 132 million people engage in some volunteer activity in these 36 countries, or about 10 percent of the adult population, on average.

Great variations among countries

While the civil society sector is a sizable force in a wide range of countries, it varies from a high of 14.4 percent of the economically active population in the Netherlands to a low of 0.4

percent in Mexico, with a high degree of diversity in between these poles (see Figure 1). Interestingly, when measured relatively, the United States does not have the largest civil society workforce in the world, as is commonly assumed. Indeed, three other countries of the thirty -six for which we now have data record relatively larger civil society sector workforces and all of these are in Western Europe. Also notable is the fact that the civil society s ector is relatively larger in the more developed countries than in the less developed and transition countries, even when account is taken of volunteer effort, though there are considerable variations within both groups of countries.

Figure 1.1
Civil society organization workforce as percent of economically active population, by country



* 36-country unweighted average.

Source: Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project

Not only do countries vary considerably in the overall size of their civil society sectors, but also they vary in the extent to which these organizations rely on paid as opposed to volunteer workers. While volunteers comprise 44 percent of the combined civil society organization workforce in the countries we studied, this figure varies considerably among individual countries - from a low of under 20 percent in Hungary, Israel, Brazil, and Egypt to a high of over 70 percent in Sweden and Tanzania. This reflects the different historical traditions of these countries. In Sweden and Norway, for example, a strong tradition of social movements and volunteer sports leads to a high level of volunteer mobilization, whereas Hungary is still suffering from the residual effects of enforced volunteering under Soviet-style Communism.

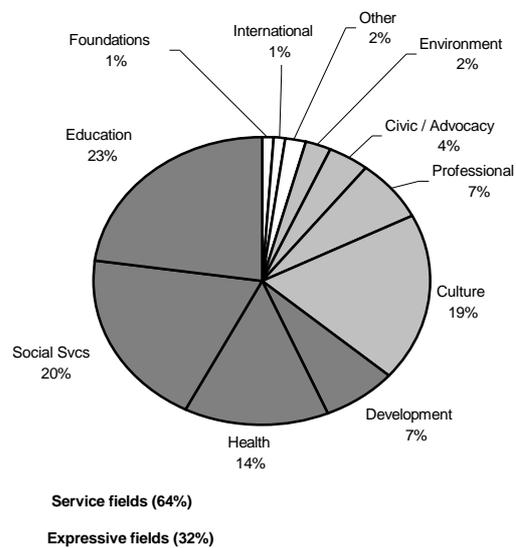
Composition

Civil society organizations are not simply places of work, whether paid or volunteer, of course. What makes them significant are the functions they perform, and these functions are multiple.¹⁸ Indeed, some analysts argue strongly in favor of differentiating the empowerment functions of the civil society sector from its service functions on grounds that they represent very distinct phenomena.

In practice, however, drawing these distinctions is far from easy, particularly since many organizations perform more than one function. Nevertheless, we can make a rough approximation of the composition of this set of organizations by grouping organizations according to their principal activity and then assessing the level of effort each such activity absorbs. For this purpose, an International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations was developed based on the International Standard Industrial Classification, but with additional detail to accommodate the range of activities in which nonprofit organizations are typically involved.¹⁹

We then grouped these activities into two broad groups -- service functions and expressive functions—and calculated the extent of civil society organization effort that goes into each as reflected in the amount of paid or volunteer workforce time. When this is done, it reveals that nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of civil society organization workforce time is absorbed in essentially service functions, chiefly the traditional social welfare services of education (23 percent of the workforce), social services (20 percent), and health (14 percent). At the same time, at least one-third of the effort is concentrated in the sector's more expressive activities such as culture and recreation (19 percent), business and professional representation (7 percent), and civic advocacy and environmental protection (6 percent). If the organizations engaged in "development" work are treated as part of the "expressive" functions rather than the service ones (on the ground that they involve empowerment activities and not simply service delivery), the expressive functions swell to 40 percent of the effort and the service ones shrink to 57 percent.

Figure 1.2
Distribution* of civil society sector workforce by field
and type of activity



* 33-country unweighted average.
 Source: Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project

- While the dominance of service functions seems to hold for most countries, it is by no means uniform. Thus, for one thing, “development” work absorbs a substantially higher proportion of civil society organization energies in the developing countries than in the developed ones (16 percent vs. 5 percent); and in the African countries this figure reaches 25

percent of the nonprofit workforce effort. This suggests an especially marked grass -roots component of the civil society sector in these developing regions, particularly in Africa.

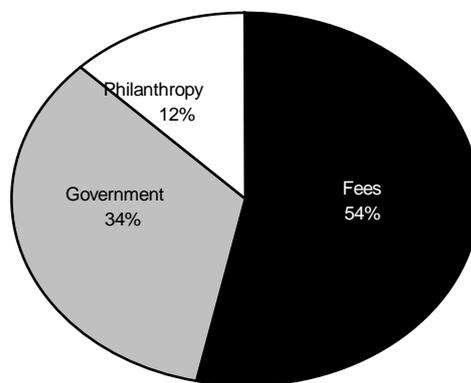
Even among the developed countries, moreover, significant differences are apparent. Thus, social services are especially prominent among the service offerings of civil society organizations in Western Europe whereas health services are more prominent in the United States, Japan, Australia, and Israel. Even more dramatically, in the Nordic countries and in Central Europe the “expressive” functions of the civil society sector are more prominent than the service ones. This likely reflects the far more dominant role of the state in providing human services in these countries and, in the Scandinavian context, the vibrant heritage of citizen -based social movements and citizen engagement in advocacy, sports, and related expressive fields. Clearly, different societies have made different choices about how they handle crucial social functions, which makes the civil society sector an instructive vantage point from which to observe broader social realities.

Revenue sources

How is this civil society activity financed around the world? Perhaps the most striking conclusion that emerges from the empirical record is that far less of it comes from private philanthropy than is widely believed. Rather, the dominant source of civil society organization revenue in the 34 countries for which revenue data are available, is fees and charges.²⁰ Over half (54 percent) of civil society organization income comes, on average, from such commercial sources (See Figure 3). In second place as a source of income for civil society organizations around the world is government. Public sector payments account on average for 34 percent of

civil society revenue in our 34 countries. Private philanthropy - from individuals, corporations, and foundations combined - plays a decidedly smaller role in the financing of global civil society activity, accounting on average for 12 percent of the total.

Figure 1.3
Sources of civil society organization revenue
34-country average



Source: Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project

Fee income is a particularly important source of civil society sector revenue in Latin America, Africa, and Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in the U.S., Australia, and Japan. By contrast, public sector support is the most important source of income for the civil society sector in the Western Europe. South Africa is the only developing country where fee income is less important than government funding, reflecting the post -Apartheid policy of supporting civil society institutions as a means of strengthening democracy and public participation.

This picture of civil society sector finance changes significantly, however, when volunteer time is factored into the equation and treated as a part of philanthropy. When this is done, philanthropy's share of total sector support increases from 12 percent to 30 percent, edging government out of second place as a source of revenue. This demonstrates how much more important contributions of time are to the support base of third -sector institutions as compared to contributions of money. This is particularly true in less developed regions, where monetary resources are limited. But it also holds in the Nordic countries as well, where volunteer work is particularly marked.

Recent Trends

Not only is the civil society sector quite large in a significant range of countries around the world, but also its scale and presence appearing to be expanding, both absolutely and in comparison with the other sectors. Evidence of this is the growth in the recorded number of such organizations. The number of associations formed in France,²¹ for example, increased from approximately 10,000 per year in the 1960s and early 1970s to 40 -50,000 per year in the 1980s and 1990s. Similar striking growth was recorded in the number of civil society sector institutions in Italy in the 1980s, as new forms of "social cooperatives" took shape to supplement strained

state social welfare institutions.²² Developments in Central and Eastern Europe and in much of the developing world were even more dramatic since they often started from a smaller base.

The number of organizations is a notoriously imperfect variable through which to gauge the growth of this sector, however, since organizations vary so fundamentally in size and complexity. What is more, the apparent growth in numbers of organizations may really reflect a change in legal procedures for registering entities that previously existed in a more informal state.

Regrettably, however, reliable time series data on the more tangible dimensions of the civil society sector have been lacking for all but a handful of countries. The data that are available, however, mostly pertaining to developed countries in the early 1990s, are revealing. What these data show is that for the seven countries on which valid time series data could be assembled, civil society employment increased from an average of 3.5 percent of non-agricultural employment in 1990 to 4.5 percent in 1995. Put somewhat differently, employment in the civil society sector grew by an average of 29 percent in these seven countries between 1990 and 1995 whereas overall employment grew by only 8 percent. At the same time, volunteering and membership rates expanded as well. In fact, despite talk of increased “bowling alone,” all of the countries reported increases in volunteering and membership affiliation rates.²³

Regional patterns

In short, the civil society sector has become a major social and economic force in countries throughout the world. At the same time, the size, composition, and character of this sector differ markedly from place to place. While the differences are partly country-specific, there are also broad regional differences. Thus, for example, among developed countries there is

a more or less distinct “Anglo-Saxon pattern” characterized by a sizable civil society sector extensively oriented toward services and financed mostly by fees and philanthropy; a “Nordic pattern” characterized by a relatively small civil society paid workforce but a sizable volunteer presence and an orientation toward expressive functions,²⁴ and a “Western European pattern” characterized by a sizable civil society, heavily engaged in service activities, mostly comprised of paid workers, and heavily supported by government.²⁵ These patterns suggest that the civil society sector is deeply rooted in the broader social structure of each society - in the pattern of class relationships, religious traditions, and historical evolution that exists.²⁶ This “social origins approach” to explaining the evolution of civil society makes clear that while globalization may have stimulated a world-wide expansion of civil society, it has hardly been powerful enough to overwhelm the varied structures that determine what shape this civil society phenomenon will take in particular places.

Not only has the civil society sector emerged as an increasingly significant actor at the national level in countries throughout the world, but also it has emerged as a major force at the international level as well. In part, this has been a *product* of globalization, of the extension of communications technology and the heightened inter-connectedness of people and processes. Nationally based civil society organizations formed around particular occupations or industries or interests have consequently found it useful, indeed necessary, to follow the globalization of these occupations, industries, and interests by forging global links with their counterparts in other countries. In part also, however, the growth of trans-national civil society organizations has

been a *reaction* against globalization. As national corporations have gone global by outsourcing crucial production functions, organizations concerned about environmental protection, worker rights, human rights, child labor, and other matters have had to go global as well, forging links with counterpart organizations in other countries in order to combat some of the perceived ill effects that globalization might otherwise have. This process has been encouraged, moreover, by the series of high-profile international conferences sponsored by the United Nations and other international bodies over the recent years, such as the Rio Conference on the environment in the early 1990s and the Beijing Conference on Women later in the decade. These events have provided venues for civil society activists from different parts of the world to forge alliances and build networks through which to concert action on a global scale.²⁷

The upshot is a significant expansion in the number and activism of trans-national civil society organizations. According to the Association of International Organizations' *Yearbook of International Organizations*, some 18,000 international nongovernmental organizations and internationally oriented nonprofit organizations were registered as of 2001, an increase of 2,000 over the previous decade.²⁸ This probably understates the extent of globalization within the civil society sector, however, for numerous less formal networks and linkages have also emerged.

Many of the resulting organizations are highly complex, moreover, rivaling in their scope and complexity the multi-national corporations with which they increasingly interact. Amnesty International, for example, has more than one million members, subscribers and regular donors in over 140 countries and territories. Care International employs over 10,000 professional staff.

Increasingly, these civil society networks are coming to constitute an independent force on the international scene, challenging governments and for-profit corporations, mobilizing constituencies across national boundaries to lobby for national policy changes, and establishing

linkages with international organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, and others. One common tactic is for civil society activists in one country to appeal to colleagues in other countries or at the international organization level to put pressures on their own governments to protect human rights, promote environmental protection, outlaw land mines, or pursue other objectives. The same tactics are used to pressure corporations to refrain from practices in far-off lands that might be frowned upon in their own home countries by threatening to expose these practices in their home markets. This has led many corporations to seek partnerships with civil society organizations to avoid such confrontations and ensure a sufficient “license to operate.” This, too, has helped promote global ties among civil society organizations.

Recent international developments have focused new attention on the civil society sector around the world and also helped to stimulate the growth of these organizations both domestically and internationally. The upshot is a greater appreciation of the enormous scale of this set of institutions and the considerable contributions they make to both national and international life. As the process of globalization has progressed, the civil society sector has taken its place as an increasingly important, and increasingly prominent, social, economic, and political force.

The global civil society sector and the broader process of globalization, if not offspring of one another, are at least next-of-kin, each with its own origins and growth paths, but each also affected by the origins and growth paths of the other. As such, their mutual interactions are important to chart and understand, both to comprehend how we have gotten to where we are and

to foresee where we are going. It is my hope that this chapter has provided some useful markers along this road.

ENDNOTES

* This chapter draws heavily on: Lester M. Salamon, Wojciech Sokolowski, and Regina Lis t, “Global Civil Society: An Overview,” in Lester M. Salamon, Wojciech Sokolowski, and Associates, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, Volume II (Boomfield, CT: Kumarian 2004).

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