

**Report for The Ford Foundation**

**Mapping Regional Civil Society Networks in Latin America**

**Submitted by**

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## Introduction

Political and institutional arrangements in Latin America are currently in a process of reconfiguration unleashed by manifold processes of globalization and the attendant unraveling of now moribund state-centered development strategies. Central to this reconfiguration has been the emergence of an ensemble of new social and political actors, among the most salient of which are new social movements and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), many of them linked to *sui generis* local, regional, and transnational networks. To explore these transformations in more detail, this research project focuses on transnational civil society networks. The project seeks to identify the key transnational networks currently operating in Latin America; to clarify their goals and organizational features; and to map the linkages between these networks and other relevant actors. By examining the new role of emergent regional civil society networks and their relations of conflict and cooperation with both supranational organizations and state-centric practices and arrangements, this project contributes to the broader theorization and empirical investigation of the parameters of possible alternative scenarios of social and political transformation in the Americas.

The project is guided by considerations about what many authors in the social sciences identify as an unprecedented explosion of new transnational non-state actors involved in shaping politics and policy-making, both in the international spaces in which they operate and as well as in more conventional national arenas. For some, these transformations promise to open up new spaces for democratic participation and to provide more effective mechanisms for promoting social welfare and sustainable development. For others, it is not as clear that the internal dynamics of these new organizations do indeed encourage more effective participation, or whether these organizations provide more effective representation to civil society compared with older, state-centered modes of political participation. This mapping research project will permit us to critically assess these rival visions.

The report is organized in four sections. First, we offer an overview of the literature, critically examining some of the most significant work on networks and the notion of “global civil society” as a prelude to posing a series of middle-range research questions. A second section, to provide context, provides a brief chronological narrative overview of the phases of the project itself. The third section provides a review of our empirical results, as well as a critical evaluation of current trends shaping regional networks in Latin America. Finally, we provide a working bibliography focusing on theoretical and conceptual contributions relevant to the study of transnational movements and networks. Additionally, the Appendices at the end of this Report contain: (1) various databases containing the empirical materials collected by the Project; (2) the survey instrument used to collect data on regional networks; (3) a list of interim work products prepared by the principal investigators during the project’s execution.; and (4) five papers written for this project by members of our collaborating teams based in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, and Mexico.

## 1. The Social Science Literature on Networks

Previously, we have argued that new networks, frequently acting in conjunction with public and private supranational organizations, are central components of an emergent political constellation that is playing a crucial, albeit still inchoate, role in shaping political and policy debates in the region (Korzeniewicz and Smith 2000a and 2000b). What are networks? The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) provides several uses of the noun, and the following synthesizes some of the principal definitions: “work in which threads, wires, or similar materials, are arranged in the fashion of a net; a piece of work having the form or construction of a net, a collection or arrangement (of some thing or things) resembling a net; of structures in animals or plants; a complex collection or system of rivers, canals, railways, or the like; an interconnected chain or system of immaterial things; an interconnected group of people, an organization.”

These varied definitions from the OED provide important initial insights into the complexity of the concept of networks. For some, networks suggest arrangements or a “space” in which participants enjoy autonomy and equity vis-à-vis other participants (as in the metaphor of a net or web) characterized by a flow of ideas and resources. For others, networks entail structure, and these structures can be characterized as being constituted through hierarchies among participants. For some, the interconnections within a network, and the objectives of their members, tend to be in constant flux. For others, these networks involve organization, and these organizations are likely to be characterized by both informal and formal arrangements.<sup>1</sup> As a starting point, our project takes defines networks as interconnected groups of people. Beginning with this definition, we aim to critically evaluate the particular forms and arrangements that characterize such linkages when the latter are adopted by individuals and/or organizations on a regional basis (that is, across national boundaries).

### *Networks and Symbolic Politics*

One interesting strand within the literature advances the claim that networks represent novel forms of social organization distinct from either markets or bureaucratic hierarchies. According to this interpretation, networks are characterized by voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of exchange and communication (Powell 1990; Keck and Sikkink 1998: 9). Transnational issue and advocacy networks<sup>2</sup> are comprised of a

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Theunis (1992: 124) argues that “Today, the network concept stands out as one of the most adequate proposals for institutional strengthening and development in that it allows organizations to articulate by means of a network in order to confront growing challenges without having to enlarge the institution’s formal structure. Individual weakness may be overcome [...] A network is more than just an institution, its constitute[s] a space for organizing a permanent flow of ideas and resources between the group of institutions participating in the network.”

<sup>2</sup> NGO-based networks may also be of the “operational” variety, whose primary objective is the design and implementation of development-related projects. Issue and advocacy networks frequently have multiple linkages to operational NGOs. However, rather the provision of services, issue and advocacy NGOs pursue different missions, namely the promotion of a specific cause and to influence policies and practices of governments and multilateral funding agencies. For a detailed discussion of “operational” NGOs, see World Bank Operational Directive 14.70.

shifting array of “relevant actors working internationally on an issue who are bound by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services” (Keck and Sikkink 1994: 2; see also Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Taking advantage of the Internet and other modern communications technologies, networks move politically valuable information quickly and credibly to where it can have the greatest impact.<sup>3</sup> According to analysts, networks are unequaled in their use of symbols, actions, and narratives to capture the attention and sympathy of distant audiences; at stake in these issue areas are contested conceptions of how we are to frame our understanding of events. In addition, networks gain leverage by calling on more powerful network members to affect a situation where a weaker members’ influence is limited. Finally, issue and advocacy networks are accomplished in the politics of accountability, where the aim is to induce more powerful public and private actors—local, national, and international—to act on the often vague policies and principles they previously endorsed (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Castells 1997). A study commissioned by the International Development Research Council of Canada study captures the consensus of this literature emphasizing that networks should be interpreted as: as social arrangements; forms for social exchange; gateways to opportunities; builders and sustainers of member capacities; enablers of creativity and risk-taking; mechanisms for advocacy at multiple levels; interfaces with other sectors; and platforms for action.<sup>4</sup>

These networks are perceived as comprising a shifting array of relevant actors working internationally who are bound by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services (Keck and Sikkink 1998). As just mentioned, many social scientists argue that these regional networks—like the grassroots social movements and local and national networks in which they are embedded—represent organizational forms that are distinct from either markets or bureaucratic hierarchies, and that these networks are generally characterized by voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of exchange and communication (Keck and Sikkink 1998). The potential transformative capabilities of these regional networks arise from their capacity to use their assets to advantage in the politics of information, symbols, leverage, and accountability. As in the broader case of movement organizations and actors, networks can be seen “as actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers” (Snow and Benford 1992: 136). “Networked” actors and social movements constitute central components of emergent political constellations (encompassing older state and societal actors as well as a variety of public and private supranational organizations) that are playing a crucial, albeit still inchoate, role in shaping political and policy debates in the Americas.

<sup>3</sup> For recent analyses of the role in constituting transnational actors played by the Internet, see Almeida and Lichbach (2001), Lance (2002), and Meyers (2001).

<sup>4</sup> A study is cited in The Ford Foundation’s internal document “Mapping and Assessment of National and Regional Networks in Latin America” provided to the authors.

Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink argue that transnational advocacy networks affect state behavior by acting simultaneously as principled and strategic actors that

‘frame’ issues to make them comprehensible to target audiences, to attract attention and encourage action, and to ‘fit’ with favorable institutional venues. Network actors bring new ideas, norms, and discourses into policy debates and serve as sources of information and testimony. . . . They also promote norm implementation, by pressuring target actors to adopt new policies, and by monitoring compliance with international standards . . . they seek to maximize their influence or leverage over the target of their actions. In doing so they contribute to changing perceptions that both state and societal actors have of their identities, interests, and preferences, to transforming their discursive positions, and ultimately to changing procedures, policies, and behavior (1998, 2-3).<sup>5</sup>

Framing, norm-brokering, and identity construction by networks frequently seeks transborder allies through what the same authors refer to as the “boomerang” effect.

When channels between the state and its domestic actors are blocked, the boomerang pattern of influence characteristic of transnational networks may occur: domestic NGOs bypass their state and directly search out international allies to try to bring pressure on their states from outside [...] Linkages are important for both sides: for the less powerful third world actors, networks provide access, leverage, and information (and often money) they could not expect to have on their own; for northern groups, they make credible the assertion that they are struggling with, and not only for, their southern partners. Not surprisingly, such relationships can produce consideration tension (Keck and Sikkink 1993, 12-13).

In short, the potential transformative capacity of these networks arises from their capacity to use their assets to advantage in the politics of information, symbols, leverage, and accountability. <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Drawing on Goffman (1974), framing “refers to an interpretative schemata that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of action within one’s present or past environment” (Snow and Benford 1992: 137).

<sup>6</sup> While Keck and Sikkink concede in their conclusion that the international political arena may be undergoing structural changes, the major part of their book remains focused on analyzing how networks influence state policies and norms based on their symbolic and leverage politics. Hence, they do not pay a lot of attention to the possibility that the organizational practices of networks (rather than only their rhetoric, values, campaigns, etc.) may engender new political-structural arrangements that are yet difficult to fathom. They do emphasize that these are struggles over power and meaning (rather than a conflictless emergence of international norms, as the world polity people would have it) that cannot be easily understood within a state-centric framework. But by virtue of the design of their study (focusing on campaigns rather than networks or the institutions they target) they cannot establish what variables might be significant to understand new institutional arrangements. The contribution of this project is precisely to contribute to developing a vocabulary and some analytical tools for identifying such variables by paying attention to the organizational features of networks and to how they interact with/ insert themselves into current institutional arrangements in Latin America.

*NGOs, Networks, Coalitions and Movements: Toward a Global Civil Society?*

Some analysts go even further to aver that transnational networks are harbingers of an incipient but nevertheless robust “global civil society” defined by Wapner (1995, 313) as “the domain that exists above the individual and below the state but also across national boundaries, where people voluntarily organize themselves to pursue various aims.”<sup>7</sup> According to this view, global civil society is destined to fundamentally transform the nation-state system and to inaugurate new, more participatory forms global governance and “cosmopolitan democracy” and “multiple citizenships” at local, national, and supranational levels (Held 1995a and 1995b; He 2000). Some authors (see Avritzer 2002) also speak of a broader view of democratic possibilities defined by the articulation of a new “public space” or “public sphere” of autonomous association, participation, and deliberation by citizens.

Other authors have argued that transnational collective action adopts different forms: transnational nongovernmental organizations, transnational advocacy networks, transnational coalitions and transnational social movements, with the first form of organization being more formal and professionalized, and the three remaining forms representing different modes of action and levels of articulation and coordination of tactics (from no sustained coordination in the case of advocacy networks, to shared tactics in the case of coalitions, and coordinated, disruptive mobilization in the case of movements) (Khagram et al. 2002: 6). In this scheme, transnational movements represent “the most difficult and rare form of transnational collective action” (Khagram et al. 2002: 8). The authors expect such movements “to be more effective than other forms of transnational action” and “to have a higher level of transnational collective identity” (Khagram et al 2002: 8), thus contributing to the creation of a “transnational public sphere” (Guidry, Kennedy, and Zald 2001).

*Networks and emerging political arrangements in Latin America*

A theoretically and methodologically diverse literature on the so-called “new social movements” (see Escobar and Alvarez 1992 and Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998) has enriched understanding of citizenship (Jelin and Hershberg 1996) and the problems of collective action of subaltern populations (Smith and Korzeniewicz 1997) in the new market-driven context. Particularly relevant contributions have focused on “associative networks” (Chalmers, et al. 1997), “social movement webs” (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998), and NGOs and the “third sector” in the delivery of public services (e.g.,

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<sup>7</sup> Different conceptualizations of global civil society alternatively stress elements taken from the Marxist, Hegelian, Lockean, Tocquevillean, and Habermasian “critical theory” traditions. See Lipschutz (1992), Wapner (1997), and Cohen and Arato (1992). Most approaches, however, follow a simple conceptualization according to which civil society encompasses actors operating outside the market and as “public and political association outside the state” (see Brysk 2000: 153).

Fisher 1997; Reilly 1995 and 1998; Salamon 1999). However, this literature is of little help in delineating the makeup of the new political matrix emerging in the region, and, paralleling the literature on state-centric politics, and is largely silent about the changing roles of NGO-based networks and the consequences of shifts in policy prescriptions on the part of many supranational organizations. Recent path-breaking works on “activists beyond borders” (Keck and Sikkink 1998) and “solidarity beyond the state” (Smith, Chatfield, and Pagnucco 1997) are particularly pertinent to our research. Also relevant is the recent efforts to theorize the world polity and global civil society in international relations theory (Lipschutz 1992; Rosenau 1995; Finnemore 1996; Cox 1999), along with closer analyses of agency that is lacking in the more structuralist thrust of world-system approaches in sociology (see, for example, Wallerstein 1991 and Boli and Thomas 1999).

A largely unrelated body of literature consisting of theoretical and comparative work on the politics and political economy of state-centric development (Cavarozzi 1992 and 1997) and the impact of market-oriented restructuring in accelerating the transition toward new practices and institutional arrangements (Haggard and Kaufman 1995; Smith, Acuña, and Gamarra 1994a and 1994b; Oxhorn and Ducatenzeiler 1998) provides another piece of the puzzle explaining the great transformation undergone by Latin America in recent decades. A related literature has probed the unexpected elective affinities between neoliberal economics and neopopulist politics (Roberts 1995; Weyland 1997) and the “decentered” (Lechner 1998) and the “delegative” and informally institutionalized characteristics (O’Donnell 1999) of contemporary Latin American democracies. Continuing deficits of political participation and representation (Hagopian 1998) and the interaction between economic crisis, alterations in class structures, and electoral competition (Portes 1985; Roberts 2002; Portes and Hoffman 2003) also have generated important analyses. Although the extant political economy literature sheds considerable light on traditional political forces, there is virtually no analysis of the new NGO-based issue and advocacy networks. This weakness stems, in part, from the scarcity of empirical research on institutional transformations entailed by the new modalities of the region’s insertion in the world-economy (e.g., Korzeniewicz and Smith 1996) and the broader processes of “modernization via internationalization” (Przeworski 1995). Theorization and empirical work on networks and emergent forms of transborder politics should be privileged in this research agenda.

Variiegated, multi-layered processes of globalization of production, trade, and finance in the post-Bretton Woods era have been accompanied by shifting patterns of representation within civil society. Labor unions, social movements, international NGOs, transnational issue and advocacy networks, and related actors have responded to globalization by pursuing —sometimes simultaneously, sometimes sequentially—a broad range of strategies: from collaboration and participation within existing institutional arrangements, to contestation, opposition, and confrontation with what are perceived to be the driving forces of globalization. The global expansion of markets is thus accompanied, in what Polanyi (1957) would identify as a “double movement,” by social pressures for regulating and governing those very same markets. In a process organized “from above,” world elites and policy-making bureaucracies seek to address these

pressures and continue advancing the expansion of markets through what has become a non-stop series of bilateral meetings and formal multilateral summits, as well as “private” encounters and forums designed to construct new institutional arrangements. Simultaneously, actors and organizations of civil society engage in collective action seeking to shape and transform these arrangements “from below.”

Beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the collapse of the post-war Bretton Woods international monetary system, the erosion of the compromises underlying the Keynesian welfare state in high-income nations, and the crisis in the 1980s of state-led development models in peripheral and semiperipheral countries (Ruggie 1982; Cox 1987) have given rise to what some analysts have termed a new international “non-system” (Gilpin 2000). The vertiginous acceleration of all forms of globalization, including not only trade, production, and finance but also ideas, norms, culture, and forms of intersubjectivity,<sup>8</sup> has laid bare a crisis of “global governance” with new imperatives for consensus formation and international coordination (Cerny 1995; Prakash and Hart 1999; O’Brien, et al. 2000). These exigencies, in turn, have given rise not only to a more vigorous role for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, two pillars of the previous Bretton Woods system, but also to greater prominence of organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), now superseded by the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as to a semi-institutionalized system of presidential summits, most notably the G-7 meetings of the leaders of the advanced industrialized countries.

This “globalization from above,” spearheaded by the governments of high-income nations, and implemented through the IMF, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the WTO has largely responded to the agenda advanced by transnational financial and business interests and has also sought out non-governmental organizations, international non-governmental organizations, and transnational advocacy networks as representatives of civil society in an effort to find interlocutors with whom globalizing elites can negotiate the terms of a sustainable process of global development.

By contrast, the United Nations has been more active and more open in its efforts to create global constituencies able to address a broad range of issues, ranging from global warming and the environment, promoting human rights, banning land mines, expanding gender and sexual rights, and so on (Nelson 1995 and 1996; Otto 1996). While not necessarily the UN’s stated objective, this process has provided new incentives for the emergence of new organizations and networks seeking to represent “global civil society.” These new instances of representation perceive themselves to constitute “a parallel

<sup>8</sup> We want to make clear that globalization should not be thought of in economic fashion. As Stark (1998, 69) notes, globalization “refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole. It is a social process in which the constraints of geography on political, economic, social, and cultural arrangements and practices recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding.”



arrangement of political interaction...focused on the self-conscious constructions of networks of knowledge and action, by decentralized local actors that cross the reified boundaries of space as though they were not there” (Lipschutz 1992, 390). Crucial in this emergence of “parallel arrangements” have been the summits organized by the United Nations: the UN conferences on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (1992); Human Rights in Vienna (1993); Population in Cairo (1994); Social Development in Copenhagen (1995); Women in Peking (1995); and Housing in Istanbul (1996) (see Gordenker, Weiss, and Watson 1996; Foster and Anand 1999). With regard to Latin America, analysts of all persuasions agree that the 1992 UN conference in Rio de Janeiro marked a turning point in the evolution of civil society participation in transborder activities.

Many of the NGOs, international non-governmental organization, and transnational advocacy groups that have participated in the UN-sponsored world summits have also engaged multilateral financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF (for example, the “Fifty Years is Enough” and the Jubilee 2000 campaigns) that promote the neoliberal agenda of deregulating domestic markets, promoting foreign investment, expanding free trade and market integration, and eliminating controls on international capital flows. In the process, these groups apply the skills and perspectives learned through their participation in the UN system, but at least some of them have shifted from an emphasis on supporting multilateralism and multilateral institutions toward more oppositional or confrontational strategies operating largely at the margin of existing institutional arrangements (Smith, Catfield, and Pagnucco 1997; O’Brien, et al. 2000; Wallach and Sforza 1999; Wallach 2000; Florini 2000; Martens 2000). Jackie Smith has observed that

As activists organized around global problems such as persistent poverty, violations of human rights, gender inequality, and environmental destruction, they learned about the UN system and global negotiating processes. They cultivated both global networks and skills that allowed them to better monitor the behavior of governments in international negotiations. After years of working to promote specific treaty regimes, many realized that broader structural factors—such as the overwhelming influence of the United States and the growing conflict between Northern and Southern governments—reduced the possibilities for UN negotiations to very limited agreements that did little to resolve the problems they addressed. Moreover, activists familiar with international legal developments could see quite clearly that the growing global trade regime meant that the goal of free trade took precedence over other international agreements, by, for instance characterizing social and environmental regulations as WTO -illegal “technical barriers to trade” (2001, 13).

Their disenchantment with the meager results of petitioning national governments and working for change through established international institutions led some global social movements and advocacy networks to embrace a “new left internationalism” expressed through “transnational communities of resistance” (Drainville 1995 and 2001). The political practice of these groups, expressed in the slogan “Wherever they meet, we’ll be

there” to mobilize opposition, converts the places where the summits are held and globalizing elites gather into “world-wide grids of strategic places” (Sassen 1998, quoted by Drainville 2001, 16). These oppositional groups,

[t]hough tied to particular issues, often dismissed for what Antonio Gramsci would have called their ‘economico-corporatist’ consciousness and for their inability to tell us ‘what we are fighting for’ and what ‘we care about’ [...], less about politics than strategy, and certainly lacking from the point of view of programmatic coherence, transnational campaigns may nonetheless be having a structuring impact on the world economy as a field of practice. Dragging context and politics with them, at once global and radically grounded, transnational communities of resistance may be transforming the world economy into a significant milieu, where ideas and modes of organization as well as ways of life and struggle acquire a life that is relatively autonomous from individual agency. Charged by contextualized struggles, the world economy may be becoming a conductor, or even catalysis, of politics (Drainville 2001: 13).

### *Research Questions*

These rival “optimistic” and “pessimistic” visions of transnational networks and global civil society cannot be resolved through conceptual analysis. Consequently, to further explore these issues raised by the literature, the project addresses the following “middle-range” empirical questions regarding the character of new networks.

- What are the most significant *transnational networks* operating in the region?
- How do transnational networks emerge? It is usually thought that there is a necessary organizational, temporal, or spatial *sequence* that progresses from the local/national to the transnational. But must local/national networks exist fully formed before they “go transnational”? Exploring a possible reverse trajectory, is it possible that the operation of agency by civil society actors at the transnational level to facilitate or trigger political practices within societies, thus leading to the emergence/strengthening of networks at the local/national levels?
- What are the *opportunities* and *constraints* faced by national networks in expanding their reach to the regional and global levels? What are the *incentives* that encourage civil society actors to “go transnational”? How are these incentives related to the projects of governmental elites and the policy and political preferences of multilateral organizations? Conversely, what *incentives* might encourage transnational actors “go national”? Similarly, what *opportunities* and *constraints* might be confronted by transnational networks seeking to embed themselves in local and national societies?
- To what extent have transnational networks developed effective *linkages* to civil society at the national level? What linkages have they established with national governments? With supranational organizations? How do they interact with other organizations and networks operating at both national and international levels?

- What is significance for local/national civil society networks of their participation in a transnational network? What the principal *costs* and *benefits* to these networks? Does their transnational insertion augment the political influence of transnational networks at the local/national level? Or, on the contrary, might transborder activities weaken network influence at the local and national levels? Or is there no relationship?
- What have been the principal *strategies* of transnational networks and organizations? How can one characterize the *strategic relationships* among the different networks?
- Are there any particular *thematic fields* —gender, human rights, environment, community development, etc.— in which the activities of these networks are more salient or effective? Do networks in some of these arenas operate on a significantly larger scale or according to different organizational dynamics than networks in other fields?
- Are there any identifiable trends toward *growing convergence or greater polarization* among transnational networks?
- How successful have regional civil society networks been in *achieving their own goals*? How successful have they been in *shaping the agenda* of national governments and international organizations?

## 2. Phases of the Research Project

Consonant with the original proposal, the project's execution has progressed in six overlapping phases: constitution of country research teams; preliminary survey of the scholarly literature; initial field research and preparation of a planning document; organization of a research workshop; implementation of an electronic questionnaire & collection of empirical data; second round of country visits; completion of a final report. A summary of these phases is provided below.

### *Research Teams*

Following the approval of funding by the Ford Foundation, in early 2000 the PIs began to contact colleagues in Latin America and the U.S. for the purpose of identifying potential members of our research teams. After considerable consultation and e-mail contact with potential recruits, we invited the following persons to join our project:

- Argentina — Mercedes Botto, Coordinator (FLACSO) and Gabriela Rodríguez López (FLACSO).
- Brazil — Leilah Landim, Coordinator (UFRJ/FASE), Atila Roque (IBASE) and Fátima Mello (FASE).

- Chile — Gonzalo de la Maza, Coordinator (Programa Ciudadanía y Gestión Local), and Carlos Ochsenius (Programa Ciudadanía y Gestión Local).
- Costa Rica — Paula Antezana, Coordinador (Fundación Arias), and Cecilia Dobles Trejos (Fundación Arias).
- Mexico — Laura Sarvide, Coordinator (Espiral, SA) and Gabriela Sánchez (Espiral, SA).

#### *Literature Review and Preliminary Survey Design*

The two principal investigators, with the assistance of the project's two research assistants, have reviewed the existing literature on the topic in the disciplines of sociology, political science, and international relations. As expected, this has been an on-going process, with constant discoveries of new books, articles, and unpublished manuscripts. A partial listing of the relevant bibliography is included in this report. An intensive session was held at the University of Miami with the participation of the PIs and the project's research assistants to design the electronic on-line questionnaire. The preliminary version was prepared in English, Spanish, and Portuguese and later distributed to the country teams for comments and suggestions. The team identified an initial universe of several hundred regional networks and collected considerable information on each network (e.g., brief history and statement of mission; membership characteristics; modes of internal governance and participation; specification of resources; key projects and activities; and linkages to other actors). The on-line questionnaire is available at [www.bsos.umd.edu/redes/redes](http://www.bsos.umd.edu/redes/redes). These questionnaires may be consulted in appendices.

#### *Initial Field Research & Preparation of Planning Document*

Following the recruitment of the five country teams, in early 2001 the PIs carried out initial visits to Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, and Mexico to forge a working relationship with the country teams and discuss a preliminary version of the survey instrument. These initial visits also allowed the PIs to interview a few key actors in national and regional networks, as well as to establish and/or strengthen ties with local academics and research institutions in order to gain access to hard-to-find materials and studies of limited distribution. On the basis of this exploratory work, the two principal investigators prepared a working document to provide an initial account of the networks selected for analysis. This document included preliminary observations on the organizational features and key linkages of the networks, as well as specification of the central issues and proposed methodological procedures for subsequent research.

#### *Workshop in Mexico*

The planning document prepared during the preceding phase was shared with representatives of the country teams in a two-day workshop held in Mexico City in 2001 (see the workshop agenda in the appendices). The workshop brought together: 1) the

principal investigators and their research assistants at their home institutions; 2) the leaders of five country research teams; 3) specialists on civil society participation and NGOs in Latin America; 4) scholars who, while not working directly on the topic, can provide useful observations on methodological procedures and/or analytical approach; and 5) a representative from the Foundation's Mexico regional office. The activities of the workshop included a discussion of preliminary survey results, an evaluation of the preliminary papers written by the country teams.

#### *Implementation of Electronic Questionnaire*

The questionnaire was submitted through various means to the identified networks between May 2001 and March 2002, in repeated rounds (so as to maximize the response rate). The country teams were asked to facilitate contacts with networks that failed to respond to the questionnaire. The data were analyzed between January and July 2002.

#### *Second Phase of Field Research*

In late 2001 and early 2002, the five country teams concluded the initial drafts of their reports. It proved possible to work via electronic mail with the teams in Mexico, Costa Rica, and Chile to assist them with preparation of their final reports. The PIs made brief trips to Argentina and Brazil to work intensively with those country teams in revising their reports.

#### *Final report & Related Work Products*

This final report is not the end of the project. Rather, following previous collaborative practice, the PIs are working on a co-authored, book-length research monograph examining transnational networks and social movements and the politics of globalization in Latin America. Initial responses from Mr. Henry Y.K. Tom at The Johns Hopkins University Press have been highly encouraging; we expect to sign a book contract with Hopkins in early 2003. The plan is to finish a draft of this book by late 2003. In anticipation of a book-length presentation of our research, the PIs have completed a series of interim products, including papers prepared for panels at professional meetings and research articles for academic journals and edited volumes. The list of presentations and co-authored papers and articles prepared during this project's execution are listed in Appendix 3.

### **3. Regional Networks in Latin America**

Given their prominence in newspaper headlines (e.g., Seattle, Davos, Quebec, Porto Alegre, etc.) as well as in much of the academic literature, there is surprisingly little empirical research on transnational civil society networks, particularly those active in the Americas. In place to address this lacuna, this research project provides a preliminary mapping of these regional networks, their governance mechanisms, objectives, activities

and programs, financial resources, geographical reach, linkages to other civil society organizations, to governments, and to multilateral financial institutions, and so on.

Although our data collection continues, some preliminary patterns can be identified. One of the most sobering of our preliminary conclusions concerns the general features of these networks, particularly their hierarchical nature, their financial dependence on external funding sources, their fragile administrative infrastructures, and their relatively weak ties with important national and regional actors and institutions. Here we outline the most salient of these patterns:

*Number*

The project managed to identify nearly 300 regional networks (165 based Spanish-speaking countries, 56 in Brazil, and 99 headquartered outside the region) to which we have sent electronic, web-based questionnaires.

The character of these networks differs in its composition (see Table 1 below). Of those networks providing an effective response to the relevant question, 85.7% of the networks identified their membership as consisting of other organizations. Only a few networks consist of individual members or are comprised of a mixed membership of both individuals and organizations.

Table 1  
Type of Membership

Network <i>primarily</i> composed of...	Number	Percentage
...Organizations	42	71.2%
...Individuals	7	11.9%
...No answer	10	16.9%

The universe of networks is characterized by considerable heterogeneity in size (see Table 2 below). Among networks composed of individual members, membership ranges from 5 to 10,000 individuals, with a median of 60, but most networks are either relatively small (0-25 members) or rather large (101-1,000 members). Among networks composed of organizations, membership ranges from 5 to 1,000 organizations, with a median of 50, and these networks are more evenly distributed among the different size categories used in the survey.

Table 2  
Network Size

Number (%) of individual members:		Number (%) of organizational members:	
0-25	6 (10.17)	0-20	10 (16.96)
26-100	2 (3.38)	21-50	11 (18.64)
101-1,000	6 (10.17)	51-100	9 (15.25)
1001-10,000	1 (1.70)	101-250	8 (13.56)
		251-1,000	6 (10.17)
No answer	44 (74.58)	No answer	15 (25.42)

An explosion of networks occurred in the 1980s, in the context of new transitions to democracy and market-oriented restructuring. An expansion of regional networks took place during a second wave in the 1990s (see Table 3 below), accompanied by a growing institutionalization of NGOs and national networks (we explore explanations for these two waves in our discussion of incentives and constraints below).

Table 3  
Date of Creation of Regional Networks in Survey

Years	Number of Regional Networks Created
Before 1969	4
1970-74	0
1975-79	4
1980-84	7
1985-90	6
1991-94	13
1995-99	23
2000-02	4

The heterogeneity of these networks can be illustrated also through two additional indicators. First, there are significant differences among networks in their access to human resources (see Table 4 below). While some networks function with very small staffs (sometimes a single person in charge of coordinating communications and activities), others resemble large and complex organizations.

Table 4  
Human Resources

Number of paid employees	In Central Office/Secretariat	Elsewhere in the network
Response rate	43 (72.88%)	26 (44.07%)
Mean	4.68	20.92
Median	3	1.5
Range	1 – 30	1 – 420

Illustrating these differences among networks even more starkly, close to 60% of the networks providing an effective response to the relevant question indicated that their organization did not have a separate physical site (generally operating in space borrowed from individuals or other organizations (see Table 5 below).

Table 5  
Physical Resources

Network has separate physical site:	Yes	No	No answer
Number (%) of networks:	21 (35.59%)	30 (50.85%)	8 (13.56%)

*Areas of concentration*

The majority of regional networks are multisectoral in nature. Among the priority issues they focus on are: development and the environment (each accounting for the largest shares of the issues targeted by networks); gender; education and communication; democracy and human rights; and various facets of transnational civil society. Less prevalent are networks active in the fields of public health, professional concerns, and indigenous communities.



Table 6  
Issues Targeted by Networks

Issue area	Current number of networks in database (multiple categories possible)	Percentage of networks in database
Communication	14	23.7
Indigenous communities	5	8.5
Democracy	18	30.5
Human rights	14	23.7
Development	35	59.3
Economics	12	20.3
Education	15	25.4
Environment	25	42.4
Gender	15	25.4
Professional	6	10.2
Public health	9	15.3
Religion and culture	4	6.8
Transnational civil society	18	30.5

In their report for the project, the Costa Rican team indicates that the mission of networks varies depending on whether they are constituted to (1) represent a specific population; (2) respond to particular circumstances; and (3) seek to promote new social arrangements. On the other hand, the same authors argue that networks differ depending on whether they were formed among organizations that share interests beyond an immediate issue; or are focused on a specific problem, without much in common among the organizations constituting these networks.

*Extent and type of linkages to other actors*

The project examined the linkages of networks with a range of other actors (such as global and national civil society networks, social movements, universities, multilateral institutions, government, and churches). The overall pattern found through our survey is of a lack of diversification of linkages and a rather surprisingly modest level of “connectedness” on the part of networks (see Appendix 2). In terms of ongoing collaboration with other organizations and institutions, the average number of linkages per network was 8.5 out of 25 possible connections. Similarly modest ties, an average of 6.4 ties (out of 25) characterized exchanges of leadership personnel between networks and other organizations. In terms of funding, networks reported receiving contributions from an average of 3.4 (out of 25 possible sources) sources, suggesting that funding sources are more concentrated than the more varied forms of programmatic collaboration with

other actors. This is undoubtedly responsible for part of the funding difficulties faced by most networks.

More specific characteristics of these linkages are as follows;

- CSOs linkages: Networks tend to be most intensively connected with other similar national civil society organizations and with regional networks and global networks. Barely a fifth of the networks receive funding from regional-global NGOs. Networks have a fairly high level of exchange of personnel in leadership positions with other organizations and networks, probably indicating the importance of personal ties.
- Social movement linkages: Only about one-third of the networks report having established close, permanent working relationships with social movements. Nevertheless, there is a significant exchange of personnel between movements and networks, with nearly 40 percent of network coordinators previously having worked with social movements.
- University linkages: Networks have fairly strong linkages with universities. Over 40 percent of the networks have collaborative arrangements with universities, and a similar percentage of network directors previously worked in universities. Few (less than 10 percent) networks receive funding from universities, however.
- Multilateral bank linkages: Somewhat surprisingly, given the prominence of this topic in the literature, networks report only modest levels of cooperation with the World Bank (20 percent) and Inter-American Development Bank (15 percent). Similarly, recruitment patterns were not strong, with very few network leaders having previously worked with one of the banks.
- UN, development agency, and foundation linkages: With about one-third reporting cooperative relationships, networks report stronger ties with United Nations agencies, other development agencies, and foundations than with the multilateral banks. More funding for networks comes more from U.S. and European development agencies than from the UN. Networks have low-moderately strong linkages through personnel exchanges with the UN system, foundations, and development agencies.
- Government linkages: Networks report stronger cooperative relationships with governmental agencies than with the multilateral banks, but weaker ties than with the UN, development agencies, and foundations.

Linkages with unions, parties, churches, and business: Networks have extremely weak collaborative relationship other sectors of civil and political society. For example, networks have extraordinarily weak ties with organized labor—less than 10 percent—and with political parties—only 2 percent. Only 6 percent of networks have linkages with churches, and approximately 10 percent have some business ties. Networks receive very little

funding any of these actors and only have modest levels of personnel exchange with any of them.

*Material resources*

Our research found that that funding varies enormously across networks, ranging from those with minuscule annual budgets of only a few thousand dollars to a handful of better-funded networks with annual budgets in from \$6-14 million range (see Table below). The median budget for all the networks in the sample was \$160,000, and one-third had budgets of less than \$100,000.

Table 7  
Budget Size

Annual Budget (\$US)	Year 2000	Year 1995	Year 1990
0-10,000	5 (8.48%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.70%)
10,001-100,000	11 (18.64%)	10 (16.94%)	7 (11.85%)
100,001-500,000	16 (27.12%)	6 (10.17%)	1 (1.70%)
500,001-1,000,000	4 (6.78%)	1 (1.70%)	1 (1.70%)
>1,000,000	3 (5.09%)	1 (1.70%)	1 (1.70%)
No answer	20 (33.89%)	41 (69.49%)	48 (81.35%)
Mean	\$US 772,924	\$US 280,289	\$US 275,727
Median	\$US 150,000	\$US 100,000	\$US 100,000
Range	\$US 2,000 – 14,000,000	\$US 25,000 – 2,000,000	\$US 10,000 – 1,300,000

As indicated in the previous section, funding sources are rather concentrated. Table 8 below provides some indications as to funding sources. International foundations and international multilateral agencies clearly account for a major share of the financing of regional networks.

Table 8  
Budget Sources

Funding Source (multiple categories possible)	Number (%) of networks indicating they receive funding from:	Percentage of annual budget received from:
National, Government	10 (16.95%)	1-20%: 3 21-50%: 0 51-100%: 7
National, Private	11 (18.64%)	1-20%: 8 21-50%: 0 51-100%: 3
National, Foundation	4 (6.78%)	1-20%: 3 21-50%: 0 51-100%: 1
National, Other	7 (11.85%)	1-20%: 5 21-50%: 2 51-100%: 0
International, Multilateral Agencies	16 (27.12%)	1-20%: 5 21-50%: 4 51-100%: 6 no answer: 1
International, Private	5 (8.48%)	1-20%: 2 21-50%: 2 51-100%: 1
International, Foundation	20 (33.89%)	1-20%: 5 21-50%: 4 51-100%: 10 no answer: 1
International, Other	14 (23.73%)	1-20%: 6 21-50%: 3 51-100%: 5

Differences among networks in access to funding are significant because the very success of networks increases financial needs for continued and effective operation. As the report by the Brazilian team (pp. 5-7) explains, the explosion of civil society actors in the 1980s was facilitated major funding from European and, to a lesser extent, US-based NGOs and agencies for development cooperation interested in promoting democracy

and “progressive” agenda for social change.<sup>9</sup> There has been a drastic decline in the amount of resources available to such civil society organizations and networks in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The end of the Cold War and the shift in the geopolitical interests of northern donors toward East Europe and northern Africa (see the Brazilian report, p. 12) signified a sharp reduction of international funding with severe negative impacts for Latin American NGOs and the incipient regional networks that had emerged in the previous decade.

In the case of Central America, the Costa Rican team (p. 27) points out that the lack of external funding may call into question the very existence of civil society organizations and networks:

Although the natural disasters, such as Hurricane Mitch, that strongly struck Nicaragua and Honduras, turned the eyes of northern donors to Central America, this has been a passing glance, one that resulted in short-term humanitarian aid channeled, principally, to governments. Other than this, Central America is not a priority and not only has the amount of international cooperation toward the region diminished, but that aid to the region that continues comes replete with conditionalities and ‘new modalities.’ As a result, the mortality rate of organizations in the region, particularly the NGOs, is high, a fact that without doubt has direct repercussions for regional networks, given that the financial support they enjoyed in the past has declined or disappeared.

The crisis in funding is affecting even some of the most established networks. Antezana and Dobles (p. 25), for example, indicate that “for example, CODEHUCA is experiencing a grave economic situation, it does not have funding for their operations, it is working with very limited programs, each activity requires fundraising efforts, and nothing guarantees its survival in the next two years. This significantly undermines its capacity to function, and it might face an actual disappearance, not because its work is not valuable, not due to a lack of capacity to rally joint efforts, but simply because there is no money.”

As indicated in the report by the Chilean team, the decline of international resources frequently has reinforced changes in state policies driven by market-oriented restructuring, driving resource-starved NGOs and networks to participate in the implementation and administration of “social investment funds,” thus making many civil society actors increasingly dependent on public funding for their operation and even survival. In this regard, Florini (2000) notes that even in the context of a flourishing transnational civil society, “[t]he troubling point remains the heavy dependence of many networks on Northern funding sources.”

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<sup>9</sup> In Brazil, for example, studies conducted in 1995 and 1996 found that 76% of NGO funding came from northern NGOs and development agencies based in Europe and the US. Particularly notable was the fact that 50% of these funds came from Catholic organizations, 20.6% from Protestant agencies, and 8.8% from ecumenical groups encompassing both Catholic and Protestant groups (dated cited in Brazil report, p. 6).

Although this generalization applies through the region, there may be a partial silver lining in the reduction of external funding. As noted by Jelin (1997: 93), some of these networks are moving toward “greater reciprocity and symmetry not only in terms of the flow of resources but also in terms of ideas and priorities,” but others remain “highly asymmetrical.” This was substantiated by the Brazilian team observation that underlying the rhetoric of cooperation there persist large asymmetries of power between international “donors” and “clients.” Paradoxically, however, the Brazilian team finds that these asymmetries may have been somewhat ameliorated by the reduction in external funding flows. For example, NOVIB, a leading Dutch agency active throughout the region, recognized that that external financing could not be sole basis of cooperation with national and regional networks. According to a 1998 NOVIB internal document,

[u]ntil the beginning of the 1980s, the relationship between NOVIB and its counterparts was characterized by the donor-recipient relation. NOVIB was the banker, while the overseas counterpart was the client, with a greater or lesser degree of dependency [...] On the other hand, the transformation experienced by NOVIB over the years, from banker to counterpart, constituted a reiterative process with repercussions for the relationships with its individual counterparts. When new contacts are established, it not unusual for them to occur initially at the donor/recipient level, but subsequently, with the passage of time, to eventually become transformed into a genuine relationship of equal partners. (cited in the Brazil report, p. 11).

#### *Human resources and leadership*

To some extent, the weaknesses in the area of human resources are implicit in the evaluation of Morales and Cranshaw in Central America, who found that “the regionalization of the civil sphere encounters its own upper limit in an organizational force that is weak nationally, that is concentrated in processes of sectoral organization, of peasants, women, and others, that demonstrates ups and downs in other groups, and in general results in ideological fragility when confronting processes of liberal economic reform and [the need] to raise its capacity to propose new initiatives at the political and technical levels, nationally and regionally” (cited by in the Costa Rican report, p. 19).

Another aspect of the human resources problem stems from the high rates of staff turnover frequently characterizing networks. Often, multilateral organizations and private international non-governmental organizations, as well as governmental agencies and political parties, recruit the most talented organizers and administrators within existing networks, therefore further draining human capacity from the latter. Additionally, during a period of neoliberal restructuring and expansion of markets, also competes for the most talented of these human resources.

Several of the country teams point out that charismatic leadership plays a crucial role in the emergence of networks. Also, other organizations might require individual leaders

be available for consultation and negotiation. For example, is deconstructing the “founding myth” of what would become the Brazilian NGO in the 1970s, the Brazilian team emphasized the role of “*gente conhecida*” and the importance of prior webs of friendship, loyalties based on political militancy and ideological affinities and other ascriptive traits in facilitating the constitution of networks (p. 9). On the other hand, the Costa Rican team (p. 25) found that conflicts around leadership constitute one of the crucial constraints faced by networks in Central America, as “with the erosion produced by the passage of time, the struggle for power, personalisms, competition, jealousies, and the confrontations between different factions (or example, between leaders with political standing and those linked to the grassroots), leadership becomes more a factor of resistance to change than a factor facilitating renovation. The same authors also hint that such conflicts around leadership also have an important generational dimension.

On a similar note, the Chilean team (p. 5) points out that many organizations (characterized by the authors as ‘light’) are unable to survive beyond “the continuity of their leaderships.”

#### **4. Why Regional Networks Emerge: Elite Projects & Collective Action From Below**

Why do regional networks emerge? This question is anything but simple, and is not well problematized in the literature. As with social movements in general, there is considerable theoretical debate as to the key forces shaping collective action. One important line of interpretation has explored the emergence and development of social movement as shaped by rational behavior, emphasizing the importance of resource mobilization and “free rider” problems.<sup>10</sup> Others criticize some of the basic assumptions of such approaches, and argue for a more comprehensive understanding of how social identities and emotions are integral to mobilization.<sup>11</sup> From such a perspective, “[p]articipation in social movements frequently involves an enlargement of personal identity for participants and offers fulfillment and realization of self” (Gamson 1992: 56). For Melucci (1989), beyond their more practical or immediate objectives, the construction of social identity is one of the key goals of social movements.

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<sup>10</sup>The “free rider” problem alludes to the difficulties of ensuring participation when collective behavior leads to the attainment of collective goods that accrue to individuals regardless of their personal level of mobilization. In a classical statement of the problem, “If the members of a large group rationally seek to maximize their personal welfare, they will not act to advance their common or group objectives unless there is coercion to force them to do so, or unless some separate incentive, distinct from the achievement of the common or group interest, is offered to the members of the group individually on the condition that they help bear the costs or burdens involved in the achievement of the group objectives” (Olson 1971: 3).

<sup>11</sup>Ferree (1992: 36), for example, indicates that “the economic definition of rationality defines people as essentially asocial; they are assumed to be, by ‘nature,’ independent individuals for whom community is problematic.”

These issues become even more complex when the scope of networks moves from more localized to broader geographical areas. A network among civil society organizations in a small city, for example, requires more modest investments of both material and human resources than participation in networks established at a national level, and the same differences apply as organizations move to operate from networks operating at a national level to those operating (for example) in Latin America as a whole. The communications expenses alone increase greatly when networks operate with geographically-distant participants, particularly if the purpose of such communication is not simply administrative, but aims at providing an effective sense of participation for the different members, including the coordination of joint campaigns and, possibly, mass mobilizations.

We will address the issue of collective action from below through regional networks by examining incentives, constraints, the competing logics of mobilization and bureaucratization, and “life cycle” issues confronted by movements and networks.

### *Incentives*

In several interpretations, networks emerging as part of a broader process of transformation that has shifted identities and attendant modes of collective built around social class and insertion in production to identities constructed around cultural attachments/allegiances (see Touraine 1997). This shift is part and parcel of the late twentieth century expansion of markets on a global scale. In the words of the Chilean team, “the second wave of *‘mundialización’* [...] makes it evident that civil society organizations, understood broadly and ‘non-governmental,’ as a type of social actor with a greater presence, visibility, and public involvement, although variable from one country to another, are homologous to the market and to the state as agents of reproduction and social transformation” (p. 2).

This approach, while useful and traditional in the literature, does not adequately consider how social movements and networks are constructed by the interaction of actors with markets and states. By reformulating the less around identity and more around issues of how actors overcome their collective action problems, we can more adequately examine process of “collective action from below” and probe the impetus that leads local and national actors to “go transnational.”

### *Institutional openings*

As useful place to begin is to consider how the official governmental discourse of many countries, particularly the United States, Chile, Canada, and Costa Rica, now regularly emphasizes the promotion of civil society participation in hemispheric negotiations, and why they expend considerable political clout and financial resources to achieve this goal. The same question could be asked of the World Bank, the Organization for American States (OAS), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), all of



which have created special bureaucracies to promote region-wide civil society participation. This explicit commitment confounds expectations based upon traditional arguments about state sovereignty, according to which diplomats and trade negotiators could be expected to resist public scrutiny and demands for transparency and participation.

What explains this apparent contradiction? Why have state elites in the Americas made a priority of the promotion of civil society participation in region-wide political initiatives such as the Summits of the Americas? In contrast, why have governments and multilateral agencies been much more resistant to civil society participation in debates on economic issues such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations?

Most analyses of globalisation and transnational actors downplay the role of states, domestic institutional arrangements, and international organizations in the formation of transnational actors. This is a mistake. States and domestic institutional arrangements, as well as international organizations, are crucial to understanding how social actors functioning across borders constitute themselves and sometimes achieve access to decision-making processes of governments and multilateral organizations.<sup>12</sup> Transborder movements find enhanced opportunities for participation when states have an incentive to *delegate* limited authority to societal groups and when states have an incentive to encourage national NGOs and advocacy groups to “go transnational” and to engage in *self-regulation* and *monitoring* with regard to innovation and implementation in specific policy domains.

Delegation, self-regulation, and monitoring are particularly relevant with regard to certain kinds of “global public goods” and to collective action by civil society actors generally supportive of regionalism and globalisation.<sup>13</sup> Many moderate movements possess specific professional expertise and specialized knowledge that facilitates the construction of focal points for resolving coordination problems across multiple issue domains arising from the involvement of a diverse array of governmental and social actors located in many countries. Rather than confronting the informational and transaction costs themselves, national leaders and international functionaries frequently find that cooperation with transnational social actors can provide more effective and efficient “private” solutions for implementing and monitoring the impacts of politically sensitive policies.

In addition to these logics of delegation, self-regulation and monitoring, states and technocrats at intergovernmental institutions such as the OAS and multilateral agencies like the World Bank and the IDB may also have specific *strategic political motivations* for

<sup>12</sup>See Tarrow (2001) for an excellent survey of the relevant literature on transnational politics. See Pratt (2001) for examples and testable hypotheses grounded in rationalist approaches to collective action. With regard, to the relations between civil society actors and multilateral organizations, see, the important studies by O'Brien, et al. (2000) and Tussie (2001).

<sup>13</sup>See Kaul (1999) for essays discussing global governance and the supply of global public goods, which are goods “with benefits that are strongly universal in terms of countries, peoples, and generations.”

promoting networks and certain modes of civil society participation. They frequently seek to neutralize or co-opt social potentially anti-systemic movements in order to forestall lobbying efforts or public mobilizations in opposition to important strategic initiatives or specific policy preferences (e.g., structural adjustment, trade liberalization, protection for intellectual property rights, environmentally sensitive projects, etc.) Moreover, concession of selective participation to some civil society actors may increase the leverage of powerful governments such as the United States over weaker governments. The opposite is also possible: weaker governments may be motivated to facilitate the formation and activities of transnational networks for the purpose of mobilizing public support in contentious negotiations with the United States or with multilateral financial institutions.

Thus, rather than assuming an inevitable conflict, state elites and multilateral institutions may have strategic reasons to help transnational advocacy networks and coalitions overcome their collective action problems. In the process, these favoured civil society activists can achieve limited participation in decision-making arenas. The dominant modality of collective action in these transnational networks is information exchange, with relatively limited capacity for the deployment of coordinated strategy and tactics (see Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink 2002). Examples of transborder networks and coalitions based on the exchange of information and the organization of international campaigns abound.

However, these forms of collective action generally deliver only modest success in terms of greater civil society participation and representation. Ultimately, as the Chilean team argues,

[t]he growing concern of the multilateral development agencies with regard to NGOs is linked to issues of efficiency, less corruption, lower costs, contribution to governability in the context of recessive adjustment policies, economic privatizations, and the shrinkage of the public sector. In other words, that agenda's concern is not with the objective of strengthening an autonomous civil society, but rather is a function of the economic and political goals that guide these institutions (p. ??).

#### *Institutional blockage*

This is in stark contrast to full-fledged transnational social movements, whose dominant form of collective action goes beyond information exchange to mount joint mobilization across national boundaries, attract activists committed to more comprehensive goals of challenging the prevailing social order (McAdam 1996; Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink 2002). Their deployment of strategies of disruption and sustained mobilization require higher levels of collective identity and solidarity, compared to

networks and coalitions, as well as more sophisticated forms of governance and organization.<sup>14</sup>

Some of the transnational activists Latin America, such as those who mobilized in Quebec against the Summit of the Americas or the participants in the 2001 and 2002 meetings of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre—like the activists targeting globalisation in Seattle, in Washington, D.C., and Genoa—represent the incipient formation of a transnational social movement. However, all these new transnational actors—networks, coalitions, and social movements—face significant obstacles to their participation and capacity to achieve their goals. On the other hand, the absence of opportunities for direct engagement between local civil society organizations and national states might also serve to promote the organization of networks. Here, as Keck and Sikkink (1998) have observed, where the channels of access to governmental decision makers are blocked, the organization of networks serves to generate alternative mechanisms such seeking out external allies and exercising international leverage via the previously mentioned “boomerang” effect for influencing otherwise impervious states.

*Institutional transition/ double insertion*

Opportunities for the organization of networks are likely to be most prevalent during periods of institutional transition, when one set of arrangements is being displaced by another. One such period was during the transitions to democracy and implementation of neoliberal restructuring in the 1980s. During this period there was a virtual explosion of social movements, NGOs, and civil society networks organized on a local and national basis. Many of these networks were of a contestatory orientation, and sought to shape the direction of the transition by advocating for change in both specific and broad policy areas; for the recognition of new identities constituencies, and concerns (women, indigenous peoples, the environment); and for the adoption of more transparent accountability practices (on this point see the report of the Chilean team. Networks were formed, at least in part, because for the first time the organizations in question were free from the type of repression that prevented effective interaction during authoritarian rule.

These experiences eventually promoted, in the late 1980s, efforts at establishing regional networks. As indicated by the Chilean team,

For most of these networks, the [most significant] actors were the ‘big’ development NGOs existing in various countries, equipped with an array programs in different areas, with a political vocation geared toward social transformation and well-supported by funds from European institutions motivated by a similar vocation. The objectives of the networks were oriented toward multiplying the impact [of national actions], circulating information, and generating common strategic perspectives” (p. 5).

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<sup>14</sup> See Tarrow (1998), Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink (2002), and the studies of the international women’s movement by Thompson (2002) and of early forms of international labor organizing by Nimtz (2002).

In the 1990s, regional networking was stimulated by the events in Chiapas, the anti-NAFTA mobilizations in the US, Canada, and Mexico, and, particularly, by the UN summit on the environment held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. The Brazilian team contends that at least in that country these events spurred an intensification of activities centered on an increasingly transnationalized agenda. Although this process may have been particularly intense in Brazil, these authors point to a phenomenon that affected most Latin American countries to a greater or lesser degree:

In this way, if the emergence, multiplication, and specialization of social movements in Brazil took place in the 1980s, from the end of that decade and the beginning of the 1990s a tendency can be identified for these movements to undergo a rearticulation in the form of collective actors, networks, and forums, for the purpose of having a more efficacious impact for their demands for public policies.

As processes of internationalization advanced, [...] this culture of acting in networks increasingly incorporated an agenda of international themes. There could be observed, therefore [...] an increasingly intense combination among local, national, and international actions. Fundamentally, this was due to the increasingly sensitive impact of processes and decisions taken at the global level, especially in the sphere of multilateral financial and commercial organisms, on local/national economic and social dynamics. The agenda of Brazilian networks active internationally reflected this double insertion, making it impossible, in most cases, to determine unilaterally if they originated at the local or international levels (p. 11-12)

The team's analysis of the Brazilian case undermines the conventional understanding of a linear organizational, temporal, spatial sequence progressing from the local/national to the regional, and challenges the standard notion of "going transnational." Just as so-called "national issues" may be couched in "international" language, the opposite is often true as well. This observation underscores the need to go beyond existing analytical categories to better apprehend these transformations, thus complicating the notion of "going transnational" by making it more time- and space-specific.

Finally, with regard to this "double insertion," the emergence of new regional arrangements and efforts to promote economic integration in the 1990s have promoted the emergence of transnational networks and, as the Brazil report notes, of the incorporation of international topics into the campaigns of networks that remain primarily national in scope. We noted in an earlier section that the uneasy coalitions between national rulers and supranational agencies of regulation are whipsawed between the growing hegemony of markets, as reinforced by the exigencies of the world-economy, and the intensification of pressures for redistribution and the alleviation of poverty. This dynamic generates not only new possibilities for popular participation but also the

expansion of citizenship rights in the context of competitive politics and the logic of procedural democracy.

In this context, the emergence of supranational levels of coordination and third party enforcement/regulation of contested markets is generally interpreted to imply less “public,” less transparent, and less legitimate institutional arrangements. Indeed, Sassen (1996: Chapter 2) argues that globalization erodes traditional definitions of citizenship (as a property of individuals), and gives rise to new, *sui generis* forms of “economic citizenship” as a property of firms and markets (especially global financial institutions and markets).

But while supranational agencies such as the World Bank have often been perceived as operating to impose the interests of capital accumulation, we note that such organizations are also searching for policy strategies that can ensure the success of economic restructuring by establishing minimum standards of social welfare. In this quest, supranational agencies have often developed a close relationship with non-governmental organizations in peripheral and semiperipheral countries (in fact, NGOs have often developed a closer working relationship with such supranational agencies than with national political authorities).

For example, the Costa Rica team found that the promotion of economic integration in Central America was accompanied by the creation of the Alianza Centroamericana para el Desarrollo Sostenible, which was intended to provide linkages between economic integration and cultural, social and political spheres. In turn, these new arrangements included the Comité Consultivo del Sistema de Integración Centroamericana (SICA), an advisory committee that is supposed to promote the participation of civil society networks (although the team has a rather pessimistic assessment about the real impact of these arrangements).

In this sense, to the extent that economic integration and the expansion of markets generate a need for the creation of new, regional institutional arrangements, these new arrangements offer an opportunity and an incentive for the creation of new civil society networks that can adequately influence policy. As indicated the Costa Rican team, “regionality” is hence a political, rather than merely geographic, process. Probably driven by similar regional dynamics, the Argentine team notes that Central American entrepreneurs played an early lead role in articulating the Red Empresaria para la Integración Hemisférica (REIH), which soon expanded to incorporate business interests throughout the hemisphere, including the US and Canada, as well as South America.<sup>15</sup>

From a different valence, economic integration in North America and the importance of regional contiguity was an important incentive for the constitution of transborder

<sup>15</sup>They also observe that the REIF, acting like other civil society networks, broke with a “long tradition of secrecy and informal contacts” with governmental officials in favor of a more open and transparent style of organization and operation.

networks and coalitions. The origins of one such contestatory network, the Alianza Social Continental, stem from the widespread popular opposition that emerged in the early 1990s in Mexico, Canada, and the United States to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Domestic opponents among organized labour, environmentalist, human rights activists, and other groups soon established linkages with like-minded groups in the other countries and began to build transnational coalitions in opposition to the integration of North America in a single economic zone (Cook 1997; Ayers 1998; Carr 1999). The three most active and well organized core members are: The US-based Alliance for Responsible Trade (ART), which operates with significant financial support from organized labour to advance a “progressive internationalist” position on trade, labour rights, and globalisation; The Red Mexicana de Acción Frente al Libre Comercio (Mexican Network for Free Trade Action, RMALC), which coordinated the efforts of Mexican unions and labour activists with their U.S. and Canadian counterparts and whose extensive transnational links now encompass Latin American, European, and Asian networks working on issues of trade liberalization and globalisation; and Common Frontiers, a multisectoral Canadian network that grew out of the popular opposition movement to the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and to NAFTA. From this regional base, the Alianza has rapidly expanded to incorporate national networks in most of Latin America within its structure.<sup>16</sup>

### *Constraints*

Obviously, constraints on network formation and collective action from below touch on the issue of administrative capacity and should include the extent to which existing institutional arrangements provide effective mechanisms for participation. In the case of the institutional arrangements accompanying economic integration in Central America, for example, Morales and Cranshaw (cited in the Costa Rican report,) observe that the “bureaucratic and diffuse, labyrinth-like nature of the legal and institutional order obstructs and makes difficult civil society’s participation and capacity to put forth its proposals. The decision-making process is not explicit, centralized and vertical styles prevail, and instances of consultation are not sufficiently consolidated and do not have much weight when decisions are made.”

Constraints might also entail discursive shifts and adaptation regarding the match between opportunities and the mode of operation of networks. The Costa Rican team (p. 16) mentions as a constraint the fact that “civil society organizations, both those that emerged during dictatorship as well as those emerged during governments that co-opted social organizations to develop hegemonic political projects, have little knowledge of how

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<sup>16</sup> Organizations affiliated with the Alianza Social Continental include: the Alianza Chilena por un Comercio Justo y Responsable (Chilean Alliance for Just and Responsible Trade); the Réseau Québécois sur l’Intégration Continentale (Québec Network on Continental Integration); the Rede Brasileira pela Integração dos Povos (Brazilian Network for a People’s Integration); the Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo (Latin American Coordinator for Rural Organizations, CLOC), an international peasant movement; and the Iniciativa Civil para la Integración Centroamericana (Civic Initiative for Central American Integration, ICIC). See Korzeniewicz and Smith (2001) and (2003) for additional information on these organizations.

to manage public space.” In this sense, old practices fail to keep up with broader transformations in the environment in which networks are operating, thus tending to contradict Keck and Sikkink, who indicate that effective use of symbolic politics is one of the strengths of transnational networks.

For a particular example of this kind of transformation, one of the informants interviewed by the Costa Rican team commented that ALOP Centroamerica “has been redefining itself in the new context, its tendency is to look for new capacities and expertise inside the organization while, on the other hand, the members have had to reengineer themselves and many of them have not been able to accompany the shifts in the world of the multilateral and bilateral” organizations. These difficulties prompted the Costa Rican team to a sober evaluation of the current status of regional networks in Central America:

Many of the networks born during the 1980s, protected by the generous support of international cooperation and stimulated by a group of idealistic leaders, have reached maturity and practically old age. Their agendas of yesteryear no longer work in the new context, their structures have frequently become slow and bogged down, victims of the bureaucratization and dispersion of their members, whose priorities often are not the same as those of the networks, which has led to a loss of their ‘social base.’ Factors similar to these have, to a greater or lesser degree, been the causes of the disappearance of some of the ‘historical’ networks. However, other networks still remain and confront the challenge of making the crisis into a fundamental element of their own renovation (p. ??).

Also, the Chilean team observes that frequently mismatches occur between the active participation of civil society organizations and leaders in international conferences and the actual extent of effective civil society participation in such efforts at a local or national level. This raises the issue of the disarticulation of civil societies at the national level. For example, regarding the 1995 Copenhagen conference on social development, “the counterpart of the national action of the Latin American countries was weak with regard to this important event. Various organized groups and specialists in the topic subsequently followed up on what occurred there, but there does not appear to have been a clear linkage between [decisions at the conference] and daily citizen action, exercised at the local and regional levels” (p. 3). More broadly, they note that in the 1990s in most of Latin America, the active participation of regional organizations in international networks “did not necessarily correspond to a consolidation of [this type of articulation] within the countries, to the extent that process necessary for this did not develop sufficiently at the national or local level” (p.7).

The particular explanation for the lack of strong civil society organizations differs among the cases in question. According to the Chilean team, in some (e.g., Central America, Bolivia), the extreme weakness of national governments enhanced the dependency of civil society organizations on external financing, so the ability of these organizations to function was severely restricted by the collapse of foreign support. At the

other extreme, a particularly strong system of political parties in Chile absorbed civil society organizations and co-opted their activists either into the parties themselves or the state. In many other cases (e.g., Colombia, Venezuela, Peru), crises of political arrangements “did not result in the strengthening of civil society” (p. 8).

The Chilean team argues (p. 7) indicate that two of the most salient exceptions to this general pattern of disarticulation can be found in Mexico and Brazil, where “civil society experienced important processes of rising mobilization and greater public presence.” In these two cases, major political transitions (as embodied in the electoral successes of the Partido dos Trabalhadores in Brazil and the Partido de Acción Nacional in Mexico) generated the type of institutional opportunities for civil society mobilization mentioned earlier in this section. Also, in contrast to many other countries in the region, both countries are characterized by relatively strong states with activist governments that continue to play a fairly important role in regulating economic activities. This underscores the fact that strong and vibrant civil societies usually coexist with strong state apparatuses. The Brazilian team concurs, placing particular emphasis on the impressive capacity of state institutions to exercise governability and to implement autonomously defined social, economic, and political objectives of a strategic character.

In this regard, it is interesting that the Chilean team argues that civil society organizations in both Brazil and Mexico, at least until very recently, have tended not to play particularly active roles in regional networks for reasons related as much to

their large size and dynamism, as to their singularities. The political particularity of Mexico (one-party system, democratic dictatorship) and its geographic particularity (closeness to the United States) and the linguistic and cultural particularity of Brazil in the continent, means that their national agendas are projected internationally without much capacity to articulate or attract other countries in their support. For these reasons one normally does not encounter regional initiatives led by either of these countries. Their national agendas appear sufficiently complex and significant, as does their international dimension, to capture the diversity and breadth of the continent.

Brazil is exemplary in this regard, and the analysis of our collaborators makes clear. The largest and most dynamic networks active in Brazil are primarily national in their practice and the orientation of their campaigns and mobilizations are primarily focused on the domestic agenda. Brazil’s continental size, large population, the fact that its people speak Portuguese, its relatively strong and interventionist state, the intense process of modernization and diversification of its society, and so on, mean that many of the incentives and constraints on network formation we have analyzed generate an intense domestic focus. Yet, as the Brazilian team insists, virtually all of the most significant networks were “born transnational,” so to speak, with the strategic cooperation of external actors at crucial moments, resulting in the forging of strong and ongoing linkages to European and US civil society organizations, and with a high and sustained level of



involvement in UN summitry and related aspects of incipient global civil society. As the Brazilian team emphasizes,

...the historical trajectory of important sectors of civil society, in particular the NGOs, already anticipated many of the discussions and problems that now appear amplified by means of the impact and public visibility acquired by the international action of the civil [society] networks [...] In this sense, the different experiences of articulation and dialogue involving Brazilian, Latin American, European and North American (US and Canada) entities was creating, especially in the decades of the 1980s, the transnational 'networks of trust' (*redes de confiança*) that would subsequently constitute one of the principal foundations on which the Brazilian networks would be constructed [...] [Brazilian networks] are part of the formation of 'transnational communities,' with established flows of communication and their own political dynamics [...] It is in this context that the bases were established for a new type of international solidarity, where what Walzer (1994) call the 'moral minimalista' can flourish, capable of producing identities based on universal values, such as justice and democracy, without losing the specificities of their own origin (p. 26).

*Alternative logics — mobilization versus bureaucratization*

Several of the papers included in this project indicate that there is a broad range of organizations, with some adopting very formal mechanisms of organization, while others are more informal (perceiving themselves). For example, in this regard, the Costa Rican team's analysis of the case of Central America refers to the operation of some of these networks as *espacios de coordinación*, in which informality prevails over formal organizational rules and procedures.

Indeed, organizations and networks differ in the extent to which they adopt a formalized system of internal administration. In part, the adoption of formal rules by an organization generally develops in response to the need for greater and/or more precise coordination of the tasks performed. For example, networks that originally are established informally among the organizations of different countries might eventually find a need to establish more clearly the rules and procedures through which decisions are made. Furthermore, these efforts often dovetail with efforts to acquire greater efficiency in pursuing objectives by developing a more detailed division of labor within the organization, frequently leading to the emergence of a more specialized administrative structure. All these internal dynamics are likely to promote greater bureaucratization within civil society networks and organizations.

From the point of view of the ability to attain goals, such an organizational development is not necessarily a negative development. To the contrary, as indicated by Weber (1978: 223), the adoption of bureaucratic procedures can allow for a high degree of efficiency, as such a mode of administrative organization

[i]s superior to any other form in precision, in stability, in the stringency of its discipline, and in its reliability. It thus makes possible a particularly high degree of

calculability of results for the heads of the organization and for those acting in relation to it. It is finally superior both in intensive efficiency and in the scope of its operations, and is formally capable of application to all kinds of administrative tasks.

Of course, despite this “intensive efficiency,” the adoption of such bureaucratic procedures by some networks and organization generally entails a tradeoff involving a perceived loss of many traits that accompany informality, such as closer, more direct and less hierarchical relations between the leadership and members, a more “mobilizational” quality to the orientation of the organization, and so forth.

But beyond the internal dynamics of these organizations, bureaucratization also becomes driven by efforts to influence and shape existing institutional arrangements. Of course, these institutional arrangements themselves are characterized by a high degree of bureaucratization that revolves around the constitution of very specialized and technical fields of knowledge. Civil society organizations and networks seeking to influence these institutional arrangements find themselves “forced” to adopt compatible forms of operation (for example, by becoming versed in the specialized knowledge that governs prevailing bureaucratic structures). In this sense, as indicated by Weber (1978: 224), “[w]hen those subject to bureaucratic control seek to escape the influence of the existing bureaucratic apparatus, this is normally possible only by creating an organization of their own which is equally subject to bureaucratization.” Bureaucratization, from this point of view, becomes very much implicit in the very effort to transform existing fields of power.

Bureaucratization is at the heart of a concern that many observers have raised about the transparency of civil society networks and organizations (and maybe that is problematic – see below). Given a relative absence of mechanisms of institutional and societal accountability, there is always the danger that such organizations and networks can become characterized by arbitrary actions, manipulation, and/or lack of transparency in their objectives and practices. As indicated by Jelin (1997: 94),

The fact is that NGOs and “private-yet-public” organizations do not have a built-in mechanism of accountability. They do not have a constituency or membership composed of “sovereign citizens.” They are financially accountable to those who provide funds, to their own ideology and consciousness, hopefully (but only hopefully) based on “good” values, solidarity, compassion, and commitment.

A somewhat different, but related, point is raised by Florini (2000: 231), who notes that “there is nothing inherent in the nature of civil society ‘local or transnational’ that ensures representation of a broad public interest. The neo-Nazi hate groups that exchange repugnant rhetoric over the internet are just as much transnational civil society networks as are the human rights coalitions.”

In this regard, we suggest that the problems of accountability and representation may be rooted in structural constraints. These constraints are of two forms. First, this is an outcome of the very character of transnational networks, in that such networks are usually built around single issues and concerns. From this perspective, “[b]eing relieved of the burden of accountability to diverse constituencies means that NGOs and their

networks often can avoid the messy trade-offs among issues that constitute the heart of governmental politics; rarely are they asked to amalgamate anywhere near as many interests as governments must. Instead, they can focus on a narrow mandate, which helps to focus passion and energy around either a moral issue or a clear goal” (Florini 2000: 232).<sup>17</sup>

Second, many of these organizations and networks claim legitimacy on the basis of their access to, or participation in the creation and/or operationalization of, specialized knowledge. For Florini (2000: 234) this provides a basis for optimism, because “[a]ll civil society advocacy stands or falls on the persuasiveness of the information it provides,” and this provides a self-enforcing accountability, particularly if accompanied by a systematic effort to promote greater transparency among the organizations in question. But given the characteristics of bureaucratic knowledge discussed earlier, the very nature of participation in such knowledge acts to exclude “non-specialized” individuals, organizations, and interests.

We have previously discussed (see Korzeniewicz and Smith 2001 and 2003) these tensions as constituting differences between “insiders” and “outsiders” in regional networks. Some of the most significant differences, between “insiders” and “outsiders” are summarized in Table 1 below.

<sup>17</sup> Even in regard to the particular interests these organizations and networks claim to represent, “defining who the constituents are can be difficult, and few processes exist for democratic selection of representatives” (Florini: 2000: 234).

Table 9  
Convergence/Divergence in Transnational Civil Society Networks

	Insider Networks	Outsider Networks
Institutional structures & Organizational Path Dependence	Privilege close links with governments and multilateral agencies. Domestic politics and institutional arrangements facilitate delegation and self-monitoring by networks regarding the provision of public goods.	Privilege ties to grass-roots social movements and organized labor. Deployment of oppositional identities and confrontational strategies vis-à-vis free trade and globalization. Blockage of access by domestic institutional arrangements and focus on issues with strong distributional externalities networks to seek allies in other countries.
Collective Action Repertoires	Strategies of cooperation & collaboration. Policy oriented research, policy papers addressed to influential political elites. Consultations and information exchanges focused on the official agenda usually do not lead beyond the formation of networks, with limited possibilities for coalition building. Priority on gradual reform of existing institutions.	Strategies of confrontation, contestation & mobilization. Action-oriented research, critical manifestoes addressed to key activists and broad mass publics. In addition to informational exchange, cooperation and coordination of issue campaigns with other civil society groups; teach-ins, street protests, etc. fosters coalitions and, in some cases, the emergence of genuine transnational social movements. Priority on accumulation of forces and systemic transformation.
Impacts on the Agenda of Regional Integration	Relative success in influencing the rhetoric of policy elites on hemispheric issues by the politics of information, with less emphasis on generating broad public support.	Relative success in generating popular support and the mobilization of grass roots sectors against free trade, but likely to exercise only indirect influence in shaping the agenda of hemispheric integration through the politics of leverage, symbolic framing, and demands for accountability.

Of course, whether a network adopts one posture or the other is not always easy to ascertain. What is perceived as participation by some may be construed as contestation by others. Some organizations and networks may initiate their activities at one equilibrium—situated between the two polar strategies—but later the dynamics of their

own practice might impel them toward a different equilibrium.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, many organizations and networks adopt practices that seek simultaneously to use and to transform existing arrangements, so they might perceive their own orientation as straddling both “insider” and “outsider” strategies.<sup>19</sup> For all these reasons, the organizations and networks in question (as well as observers) might reject the label of “insiders” and “outsiders” as being too schematic a characterization of their overall strategy.<sup>20</sup>

The distinction between “insiders” and “outsiders” is useful to capture some crucial features and contrasts in different patterns of collective action. Indeed, strategic choices by different types of networks and organizations combine over time to configure quite distinct patterns of institutional path dependence. “Insider” civil society actors and regional networks tend to develop “collaborative” collective action frames. Seeking to intervene on and/or reform very specialized and technical fields of knowledge, “insider” civil society organizations and networks generally find themselves “forced” to adopt appropriate forms of operation (for example, by becoming versed in the specialized knowledge that governs prevailing bureaucracies).<sup>21</sup> Bureaucratization, from this point of view, becomes very much implicit in the very effort of “insiders” to transform existing fields of power.<sup>22</sup> Hence, the action repertoires of “insiders” focuses almost exclusively on policy-oriented research, the preparation of policy papers, the organization of civil society consultations around official agendas, and networking with like-minded civil society organizations from other countries.

<sup>18</sup> Hence, “social movements and collective actors are not always neat, rational, and unitary: rather, they contain and express a multiplicity of meanings, varying according to context and historical conjuncture” (Jelin 1997, 80).

<sup>19</sup> For example, participants in an “insider” organization might perceive their group as maintaining an autonomous identity, distinct from official mainstream agencies and dedicated to contesting limits of participation by expanding the opportunities for more effective civil society participation. Conversely, participants in “outsider” organizations often portray their strategies not merely as efforts to block official initiatives but as designed to construct more meaningful channels of participation.

<sup>20</sup> The boundaries are also blurred depending on the particular universe of organizations and networks observed for comparison. For example, in the context of the process of hemispheric integration, some networks (such as the Alianza Social Continental) appear to be “outsiders” when compared with organizations that have chosen to participate more actively in the official opportunities provided for civil society participation. However, the same networks might be branded as “insiders” by groups (such as anarchist activists) advocating a more radical and open confrontation with the agencies and actors promoting hemispheric integration.

<sup>21</sup> In this sense, as observed by Weber, “When those subject to bureaucratic control seek to escape the influence of the existing bureaucratic apparatus, this is normally possible only by creating an organization of their own which is equally subject to bureaucratization” (1978, 224).

<sup>22</sup> Organizations and networks also differ in the extent to which they adopt a formalized system of internal administration. In part, the adoption of formal rules by an organization generally develops in response to the need for greater and/or more precise coordination of the tasks performed. For example, networks that originally are informally set up among the organizations of different countries might eventually find a need to establish more clearly the rules and procedures through which decisions are made. Furthermore, these efforts often dovetail with efforts to acquire greater efficiency in pursuing objectives by developing a more detailed division of labor within the organization, frequently leading to the emergence of a more specialized administrative structure. All these internal dynamics are likely to promote greater bureaucratization within civil society networks and organizations.

In contrast, the collective action frames of “outsider” civil society actors and networks privilege the politics of “oppositional” identities, and their action repertoires stress contestation—the mobilization of grass roots support, the issuance of critical manifestoes, public teach-ins, protests, and demonstrations. They also seek out network partners from other countries with similar institutional histories and worldviews. When successful, these networks may transform themselves into effective coalitions capable of coordinating sophisticated international campaigns. A few eventually may undergo a further metamorphosis and become transnational social movements capable of sustained political action.<sup>23</sup>

To the extent that “outsider” strategies often involve a “high-risk” type of activism, such movements are often characterized by the adoption of forms of organization providing “protected environments,” such as smaller and more direct “affinity groups,” and by “direct participation rather than representation, decentralization rather than centralization, and holistic personal relationships rather than bureaucratic and segmented role relationships” (Gamson 1992: 63). However, our evidence introduces serious doubts as to whether such patterns hold true across the board for the networks this project is analyzing. It might well be that many formally organized insider NGOs have more transparent accountability practices than many of the social movement organizations that are centrally involved in organizing protest actions. Furthermore, it may be that leadership in protest movements/ organizations is rather charismatic, working through friendship networks, etc., thus engendering rather autocratic decision-making practices without seeming to do so, based on their loose formal organizational structure. For these reasons, future work should probe the relationship between formalization/bureaucratization and transparency/ participation. In our initial estimation there is no direct relationship: non-bureaucratic forms of organizing are not *automatically* more participatory and vice versa.

Both the heterogeneity and pressures toward bureaucratization are familiar to any observer of labor movements in the twentieth century. We hence find suggestive parallels with the tensions between contestation and participation experienced by social movements in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.<sup>24</sup>

Then, while labor movements often found their identity in opposition to existing political arrangements, the practice of negotiation often led trade unions and their leaders to enter into close negotiations with national political authorities. Eventually, these

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<sup>23</sup>Similarly, Kriesberg (1997: 12) distinguishes between international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) that “reflect and reinforce the status quo” and transnational social movement organizations that “in contrast, are INGOs, such as Greenpeace or Amnesty International, that seek to bring about a change in the status quo.” In a different approach, Castells (1997: 70) points out that “social movements may be socially conservative, socially revolutionary, or both, or none.”

<sup>24</sup>In developing such a comparison, it is useful to note that “[r]eifying newness as a category of analysis also diverts attention from the collective identity processes involved in past movement and blurs what may be instructive continuities” (Gamson 1992: 59).

interactions resulted in political arrangements that reflected the influence of organized labor. More importantly, however, a considerable measure of the very political legitimacy of the national state developed precisely in relation to the existence of labor as a (actual or potential) political force.

Similar dynamics can be observed today. Social movements throughout the region are often organizing against the effects of globalized market forces, but at the same time they regularly use the legitimacy and support derived from supranational forms of organization to develop greater strength vis-à-vis national states. The relationship between localized social movements and such supranational organizations is in some cases very transparent (for example, the UN World Conferences on Social Development, Women, and the Environment serve as important political arenas stimulating the empowerment of local organizations focused on these issues), but is even of note in regard to organizations (such as the World Bank) that are often portrayed as more perverse agents of globalization.

From this point of view, as in the past, the contemporary rise of new local and transnational social movements and national, regional, and global networks has been accompanied by the development of new linkages to national and supranational agencies. The existence of these social movements has often been a key source of the legitimacy claimed for new patterns of regulation. At the turn of the last century, the existence of labor unrest served to justify the development of national state agencies specializing in studying and designing policies vis-à-vis organized labor. Today, the existence of women's movements, for example, serves to justify efforts by supranational organizations such as the World Bank to develop specialized knowledge and targeted policies vis-à-vis relations between men and women. In both cases, new forms of action, organization, and regulation develop "above" and "below" existing institutional arrangements (transforming local and provincial sovereignties in the nineteenth century, national sovereignties today). The development of these mechanisms of integration, while enhancing the ability of the new actors to influence and shape new patterns of institutional regulation, and sometimes leading these actors to challenge prevailing notions of citizenship, often entails the professionalization—and attendant demobilization—of the social movements in question.

There are other parallels as well. First, both the labor movement at the previous turn of the century, and social movements and civil society organizations and networks today, show a pattern of punctuated development. One plausible interpretation is that there is something distinct in the nature of recent transnational social movements and networks (for example, their focus on very specific issues disinterest in attaining a more permanent access to power) that leads them to appear on the scene only briefly and/or sporadically. But in fact, the labor movement at the turn of the previous century (particularly in the late nineteenth century) also frequently erupted on a sporadic basis, adopting ad-hoc forms of organization, only to regularly fade back into the background. Furthermore, different versions of labor organizations, and political tendencies within these organizations, prevailed at different points in time, with some becoming more prevalent for the rest of the century, others disappearing altogether, and yet others seeking to challenge what were perceived to be more "mainstream" organizations within the labor

movement. This same pattern of punctuated development in the visibility, organization, and direction of the movement might be characterizing the type of organization and networks analyzed in this paper.

Furthermore, the “double movement” that characterized the punctuated development of the labor movement at the turn of the previous century, together with the broad range of interests active seeking protection from market forces, and the variety of mechanisms developed in response to these demands, served to generate what Polanyi (1957: 141) characterized as the spontaneity of planning: “[w]hile *laissez-faire* economy was the product of deliberate state action, subsequent restrictions on *laissez-faire* started in a spontaneous way. *Laissez-faire* was planned; planning was not.”<sup>25</sup> This incipient and episodic character of planning and regulation by national states (together with the eventual growth of the inherent bureaucratic administrations) finds its parallels with the role social movements and transnational networks play in today’s sporadic instances of planning and regulation by supranational bodies as incipient, hybrid forms of complex multilateralism and global governance (see Cerny 1995 and O’Brien, et al. 2000).

In the late nineteenth century, new patterns of accumulation went hand-in-hand with the gradual emergence of labor movements that were to become (in the twentieth century) key national political actors. But the emergence of such a political actor was accompanied by the displacement of other political and social forces. For example, local manufacturers and craft workers experienced the intense competition of factory-made products (sometimes imported from industrial nations, but often produced in the growing urban areas of Latin America itself). Toward the end of the nineteenth century, while the urban labor movement faced the promise of future growth and considerable empowerment, workers and independent producers in much of the countryside faced the uncertainty that characterizes technological unemployment.

This interaction evokes the apparent displacement of labor movements in the contemporary post-Fordist epoch by the combined impact of changing patterns of accumulation and the emergence of “new” social movements and networks such as those analyzed in this paper. However, in both periods, “new” and “old” social movements interacted in complex ways, with “old” movement often finding new strength and legitimacy through the development of linkages to “new” networks and forms of organization. To some extent, this is what can be perceived today in the effort by labor to capture a more active role among the forces seeking to resist the pace of globalization and the expansion of markets.<sup>26</sup>

A final parallel offers important caveats to the assumption that new transnational networks are characterized by “non-hierarchical” linkages. After all, the same assumption was made by many observers of the new forms of organization adopted by labor at the

<sup>25</sup>For example, trade unions demanded greater regulation of the workplace and the labor market, agricultural producers called for price supports during periods of falling demand, and employers asked for greater state support in securing stable and ample supplies of labor. Specialized state agencies developed to gather and refine information on prices and commodity flows, to design and enforce repressive and non-repressive forms of regulation, and to provide mechanisms of mediation and negotiation with the actors in question.

<sup>26</sup>See Korzeniewicz and Smith (2000) and (2001b) for an effort to think about these issues..



turn of the previous century. But in fact, “non-hierarchical” linkages turned out to be, if that at all, a momentary feature in the punctuated development of the labor movement. Engagement with the power of states and capital over the twentieth century led much of the labor movement into the adoption of more formalized, bureaucratic, and eventually hierarchical arrangements within their organizations. In the twenty-first century, a similar process is likely to characterize more the more recent social movements and regional networks examined in this project

These conclusions suggest the importance of rethinking the perceived antinomy between formalization/bureaucratization and inclusion. What is necessary is a reevaluation of the definition of ‘representation’ and ‘accountability’ that neither presumes that power (or hierarchy) will disappear eventually nor assumes that lack of bureaucracy will produce greater accountability. As indicated by Tarrow (2001), we have to make an effort to discern practices of responsibility that may not fit preconceived notions of ‘representation’ and ‘accountability.’ Regional civil society networks in Latin America offer a unique site to examine these tensions.

#### *“Life Cycles” & organizational evolution*

The paper prepared by the Costa Rican team for this project highlights the importance of understanding the evolution of networks in terms of a “life cycle.” These colleagues also relate this notion of issues of internal organization and governance as well as to evolution of strategic postures over time. For example, they emphasize that networks constantly exist in an *equilibrio desequilibrante* in facing complex environments. They also warn that “the cycle cannot be thought of as something linear, but rather as part of a process that cannot be replicated in the same way in all organizations (p. 5). However, they also indicate (p. 14) that in the case of Central America, networks have generally “shifted from a confrontational and contestatory approach—proper to the 1980s—to another, more strategic approach that relies on dialogue, negotiation, and lobbying, and even the search for “non-traditional” alliances in order to carry out projects and actions geared to achieving specific outcomes.”

One of the crucial dimensions of the transition from one set of strategies to another has to do with the internal organization of these networks. For example, see the discussion below, drawn from interviews with Central American regional networks.

Initially, the structure of the networks was very simple. The organizations acted in a spontaneous manner motivated by the challenges imposed by the new [regional] space and by the benefits that could be achieved in that new space, for that reason in the beginning more emphasis was given to processes generated by common efforts. The goal in this first moment could vary from one network to another, but there was a constant, that in the last analysis the organizations came together to obtain an objective they could not reach separately.

Later, the networks looked for a way to “institutionalize” themselves by formalizing an internal structure based on representation and [deciding] what

would be instances of governance and which those in charge of the execution of policies. The first assemblies, congresses, and coordinating meetings took place that had the purpose of “formalizing” the operation of the network. Depending on the type of organization, it was decided what would be the network’s maximum authority, which was called a ‘Congress,’ ‘Assembly,’ for ‘Regional Coordinating Council’ (Costa Rican report, p. 14).

In short, networks constituted informally around strategies and collective action frames of mobilization and contestation often face the need to adopt more formal means of organization in order to ensure their survival. On the other hand, more bureaucratic organization may at times seek mobilization as a means of either enhancing their claims to represent significant sectors of a population, or refreshing the “meaning” of the organization/network. In the process, there arises the possibility of alienating the organization’s original core constituency. The team found that

This is the point where difficult to resolve tensions are found: the risk of distancing [the leadership] from its base membership (whether affiliated organizations or the target populations of the affiliates), of bureaucratizing, or of converting the organization into yet another NGO that executes projects just like any of its affiliates. It is undeniable that the conditionalities attached to increasingly scarce sources of external finance contribute to accentuating these tensions, as Morales and Cranshaw observe: ‘the donors have involved the networks in the logic of project administration, with the bureaucratic implications this implies for their functioning as social processes and for the commitment of the members to the sustainability of some activities’ (p.22).

These tensions are manifested in very specific areas. For example, with regard to communications, as channels become formalized, spontaneous participation is obviously reduced, but networks face the possibility that their leadership and administration may lose contact with constituent members: “upon breaking communication with their grassroots base, [networks] lose the social support that gives them life [and] they become converted into empty shells that live for themselves, justifying their own existence” (Costa Rica report, p. 23). Even preferred means of communication might contribute to this isolation, as “the role of electronic communication is much more adequate for markets and traditional hierarchies: [electronic communications] favor efficiency instead of creativity” (Hurst 1998, as cited in the Costa Rica report, p. 23).

The same argument could be made with equal validity with regard to leadership. The fact is that many of these dimensions are intertwined. Drawing from the experience of networks in Central America, it is evident that “there is a strong relationship between the flow of resources received by a networks (not its affiliates) and the increase in the bureaucratization of the processes that leads to distancing the network’s executive structures from the affiliated organizations” (Costa Rica report, p. 25).

Despite these caveats, the point is that compared with other types of linkages (e.g., such as those of power as embodied in governments, or of the production and distribution of wealth as embodied in markets) organizations and networks provide a

significantly different political opportunity structures for the constitution of communities, identities, and forms of collective action.

## 5. Achieving Network Objectives — A Different Kind of Power?

How successful have regional civil society networks been in achieving their own goals? How effective have regional civil society networks really been in influencing—and perhaps even transforming—the national and regional agendas of governments and international organizations? As with other forms of organizations, networks perceive incidence as a crucial measure of their impact. Of course, incidence depends on the specific goals and targets of particular networks, as well as on the relevant time-frame employed to gauge impacts.

Evaluation of the influence and impacts of social movements is a notoriously complex task for which there are few theoretical and methodological guidelines.<sup>27</sup> To a very great extent, the answers given hinge on how the question asked. Let's begin with a speculative counterfactual. Looking at the last 15-20 years in Latin America, what if regional networks of civil society activists had never existed? In their absence, what would national and regional agendas look like today?

Merely posing the question in this fashion underscores the obvious inference that without endless "networking" and the intense deployment of thousands of people over many years, the status of issues such as democracy, human rights, labor rights, the rights of indigenous peoples, the environment, presidential summitry, and hemispheric integration almost certainly would have played out in an entirely different fashion. For example, if we take an issue such as the negotiations for a Free-Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), which encompasses all or most of the central issues crucial to civil society in the Americas, and assume that networks had never existed, then it is possible to imagine that a free-trade zone in the Americas might already have become a reality. But what would it look like? What about labor standards and environmental protection? What about the commitments, even if largely rhetorical, that presidents and heads of state have made on issues such as education, gender equity, transparency and corruption, the rule of law, and so many other issues? In the absence of civil society activists and the transnational networks, coalitions, and social movements they have formed with organized labor and other groups, who doubts that government officials and corporate leaders, if left to their own devices behind closed doors, would have largely ignored these "non-trade" issues?

Consider the following quote from an article entitled "Hemispheric Free Trade Is Still a World Away" published immediately following the 2001 Québec summit of 34 hemispheric presidents and heads of government by the influential magazine Business Week:

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<sup>27</sup> See Giugni, McAdam, and Tilly (1999) for a sophisticated survey of the literature on the evaluation of the impacts of social movements.

So who gets to write the rules for globalization—if anyone? How will those rules be enforced? And who loses, and who wins? That was the real debate on the barricades and in the meeting rooms in Quebec. Will the winners be the subsistence farmers of Guatemala and the *maquiladora* factory workers in Mexico, or the multinational corporations of the U.S. and Canada? Or will the process of globalization just play itself out without rules? (Business Week 2001).

The civil society activists organized in regional networks would certainly agree that these are the key questions. And, although frequently derided and ridiculed, it is the “globophobes,” in all the colors and hues as represented by many (but not all) the “outsiders” and a few (but not most) “insiders,” but also the more radical anti-globalization protesters, who can rightly claim considerable credit for helping place these questions on the hemispheric agenda: Who governs? Who has the power to make and enforce the rules? Who benefits? And how can regional integration be implemented so that it can be made to work on behalf of the majority of the population of the Americas?

There is no shortage of proposals to address these issues. The problem is that many of the proposals designed to make globalization and integration compatible with greater democracy and social justice are not even considered or never fully enacted. At least in the short-run, it seems that rules written to promote trade and to protect property rights trump need a greater emphasis on investment in basic education and the extension of urgently needed social services. Similarly, the exigencies of flexible labor markets win out over upgrading the skills and providing unemployment insurance to those displaced by privatization, deregulation, and technological modernization. And guarantees for the free flow of capital are essential, while the right of labor to migrate across national boundaries is not even raised. The problem is that global markets and free trade really are not “free.” Politically powerful interests—investors, framers, even organized labor in some instances—manage to build all sorts of state protection into free-trade agreements. So are these priorities written in stone or inscribed in an inexorable logic of globalization? Or are they about power and the biases of specific institutional arrangements that favor some groups while depriving others of the effective exercise of voice?<sup>28</sup>

Power—and the institutional arrangements in which it is inscribed and reproduced—operates in a sphere in which *both* “insider” and “outsider” networks appear to be at a significant disadvantage in dealing with governments, the multilateral agencies, and the transnational corporate actors that dominant hemispheric politics. Networks do not wield much power, at least not as conventionally defined. They are not political parties, nor do they exercise mandates legitimated in democratic elections, and they certainly do not command impressive material resources. But networks are not without power of a different sort, the power that stems from their specialized knowledge, their values, their ideas, and their moral and ethical convictions. Particularly given the skill they have

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<sup>28</sup>The “hidden face” of power and the “mobilization of bias” encoded in institutions and practices are extremely relevant to understanding the influence of networks and social movements. On these issues, see Bachrach and Baratz (1985). Wright (1997) and (2001) puts this discussion in the context of the Marxist and Weberian traditions of class analysis, with an emphasis on institutions.

acquired in recent years in playing the politics of information, symbols, leverage, and accountability, their ability to exercise this second form of power has grown significantly (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse-Kappen, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999).

In the case of the “insiders,” their power and ability to influence national and regional agendas stems primarily from the politics of knowledge that comes with specialized expertise. This knowledge has won them limited access to the decision-making arena where some important aspects of the “global public goods” agenda (see Kaul 1999) are debated and action agendas are hammered out and resources mobilized by governments and multilateral agencies for their implementation. In this process, as our previous discussion of elite projects and the logics of delegation, self-regulation, and monitoring sought to demonstrate, the influence of “insider” networks may be considerable and, to some extent, rests on the considerable mutuality of beliefs and interests they share with many political elites in positions of governmental power. The “insiders” want to make progress more rapidly, and they are frequently frustrated with the resistance they face. But, fundamentally, they want to improve and reform the institutions of hemispheric governance, not overturn them.

The capacity of the “outsiders” to achieve their own objectives and to shape national and regional agendas is more nebulous and difficult to pin down. They do not use the term, but many authors such as O’Brien et al. (2000:12) stress what we label as “outsider” networks are “[s]ocial movements, by definition, are not members of the elite in their societies. They are anti-systemic. That is, they are working to forward priorities at odds with the existing organization of the system. They rely on mass mobilization because they do not directly control the levers of formal power such as the state.”

The “outsider” networks frequently excel at critique, and pointing out the cynicism, contradictions, and short sightedness of governmental and corporate elites, and even of timidity of the more ameliorative proposals advocated by their “insider” counterparts. The knock on the “outsiders” (and more generally on all those who resist the apparent inexorability of globalization) is that they are alleged to have no “workable alternative.” The frequently heard refrain is that if civil society activists—particularly the more militant “outsiders”—should either come up with fully fleshed-out alternative blueprints, or cease their political agitation and allow integration to proceed. Seen from the perspective of the *longue durée*, however, this view misunderstands the historical role that anti-systemic or counter-hegemonic groups have always played. Their task is to critique what exists; raise doubts about elite proposals for reform; and to push for visions and scenarios that are more democratic, inclusive and, most likely, utopian.

These reflections raise the issue of the relations between different types of regional networks. Some observers have defended the view that, although they may not be aware of it, the activities of the “insiders” and “outsiders” networks complement one another and, therefore, “it is essential for [networks] to maintain open lines of communication and for us to act in a coordinated manner” (Pagés 2000: 9). Is convergence or polarization between networks likely under these conditions? We argue that significant

divides have emerged between the two types of organizations and polarization in terms of strategies and collective action repertoires, rather than convergence and collaboration, may be the more likely scenario in future practices of regional civil society actors.

Polarization may be less evident concerning networks working on the “global goods agenda,” but on issues involving strong externalities and redistributive outcomes, such as trade, investment, and hemispheric integration, polarization is likely to prevail. A corollary is that the risks entailed in polarization and the divergence of trajectories between the different networks may mean that their contrasting strategies may foreclose many more opportunities for influence than they ever open. Instead of fluid lines of communications and potential complementarities implied by an implicit division of labor defined by their divergent strategies for collective action, “insiders” and “outsiders” may inadvertently be placing their goals at risk because of growing conflicts and animosity. Were this to occur, it is likely that the “insiders” will opt for effectiveness and influence vis-à-vis policy elites, while perhaps sacrificing popular support and broad public participation. In contrast, the “outsiders” may prove capable of establishing social movements mobilizing considerable popular support (although these mobilizations and their consequences may be quite episodic and evanescent), but, in the short run, this probably will come at a high price in terms of lost opportunities to shape the political agenda. Most importantly, this polarization might continue to reproduce, within the field of civil society organizations and networks, a broader divide that has characterized Latin American politics.

Nevertheless, there may be countervailing tendencies. Polarization and rupture may not be inevitable, or at least may be attenuated under certain circumstances that are probably highly dependent on the national context. For example, in Brazil growing fragmentation and thematic specialization among networks took place in the 1990s. According to our collaborators, in Brazil

...the networks that began to influence the [country's] international agenda are characterized by great heterogeneity and fragmentation [...] not only in relation to distinct thematic agendas and strategies, but also with regard to their composition. Here it is important to underscore that, while in the decade of the 1990s the phenomena of fragmentation and of a certain thematic specialization were a common characteristic of international networks, toward the end of that decade and at the beginning of the twenty-first century a tendency toward greater integration among agendas and actors can be observed. That is, without abandoning specialization, there is a tendency, frequently informal, for the constitution of networks of networks and initiatives for the creation of interfaces [among networks] (p. 17).

The Brazil team is here observing that notwithstanding heterogeneity, fragmentation, thematic specialization, and strategic differences, there appears to be a surprising amount of convergence. They ask “What is it that makes the present articulation among sectoral networks possible” (p. 17).

Everything leads us to believe that the neoliberal anti-globalization agenda acts as a kind of umbrella (*guarda-chuva*) that protests and shapes the approaches and

demands of the specific actors. As the networks unite around this agenda they have been challenged to find innovative organizational forms that make it possible the living together of NGO networks and social movements that have a horizontal organizational dynamic, networks and labor organizations that acting according to pyramidal logics; between organizations that act through mediation and other of a representative character. These differences having to do with organizational dynamics have important impacts on the dialing life of the multisectoral international networks and on their decision-making processes... (p. 17).<sup>29</sup>

This cooperative strategy between networks following a complex combination of “insider” and “outsider” strategies has permitted some Brazilian civil society groups with strong transnational ties to politicize topics normally monopolized by the presidency and the executive branch and to insert foreign and international economic policy issues on the domestic agenda of the parties and the parliament. Their success in accomplishing this difficult task stems from the strong grassroots ties with local and national NGOs and social movements they established during more “contestatory” moments. In this regard, our collaborators note that “Brazilian networks are increasingly developing and disseminating the notion that the country’s external options have direct consequences for the allocation of resources at the domestic level and, therefore, impact development policies and the possibility of attacking social inequalities” (p. 25). In this regard, they observe that efficacy in shaping the public agenda is “frequently proportional to the density of insertion and penetration in national political structures” achieved by national and regional networks (p. 25).

These considerations pose an important challenge to much of the conventional literature on transnational networks and social movements, namely the efficacy of the “boomerang” effect and the use of external leverage wielded by the powerful international members of advocacy networks on behalf of the policy agendas pursued by local and national civil society organizations, who are presumed to be weaker and largely marginalized from the structures of power by elitist and exclusionary politico-institutional arrangements in their own countries. There is no doubt that, beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, many networks working on human rights, indigenous rights, and environmental issues made excellent use of the “boomerang” strategy of dealing with adverse domestic political opportunity structures by bypassing local/national authorities to mobilize their

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<sup>29</sup>The Brazilian report specifically mentions the implicit division of labor that emerged between the Rede Brasil, which has followed an “insider” strategy focusing on elite opinion, the political parties, and the parliament, and the Rede Brasileira pela Integração dos povos (REBRIP), which belongs to the Alianza Social Continental and which deploys “outsider” strategies of mobilization and work with grassroots movements. Interestingly, both the Rede Brasil and REBRIP have strong ties to the Central Única dos Trabalhadores, the leading national labor organization. In addition to the text of the Brazil country report, see the vignettes on the Rede Brasil and REBRIP in the appendices to this paper.

external allies in the North to lobby foreign governments or multilateral agencies, and in this way effect policy changes in their countries.<sup>30</sup>

The problem is that this strategy does not involve domestic political actors, public opinion, or political institutions. This has been recognized as a more general phenomena confronted by networks by Edwards (2000, 24), who notes that

There is always a temptation to ‘leap-frog’ over the national arena and go direct to Washington or Brussels, where it is easier to gain access to senior officials, and achieve a response. This is understandable, but in the long term it is a serious mistake. It increases the influence of multilateral institutions over national development and erodes the process of domestic coalition building that is essential to the development of pro-poor policy reform.

It also may not contribute to strengthening civil society and democratizing political institutions. Moreover, examining the successful cases researched by Sikkink (1996), Keck and Sikkink (1998), and Lutz and Sikkink (2001), an argument could be advanced that the strategy of “leap-frogging” may prove most effective in influencing domestic policies in countries under authoritarian rule or countries whose democratic institutions are weak and possibly corrupt and whose civil societies are notoriously weak and marginalized. If this is true, then “boomeranging” may not be desirable for many Latin American countries in the process of democratization or that have fairly well-organized and vibrant civil societies. For example, discussing the role of networks focusing on the role of the World Bank and other multilateral financial institutions, the Brazil team observes that in the boomerang model “except for the directly affected communities, Brazilian civil society ended up not even becoming aware of the problems, thus rendering nonviable the construction of a public sphere of debates in the country about the role of the multilateral banks in the definition of the goals of development” (Vianna e Mello, 1998, cited on p. 24).<sup>31</sup>

## **Conclusion: Overall Evaluation of the Status of Regional Networks**

Summarizing our findings, we conclude that regional networks of civil society in Latin America constitute a very heterogeneous actor. For example, from the point of view of the human and material resources available to these organizations, some networks function on a very informal basis, with few full-time workers and a minimal physical infrastructure, while others resemble other complex bureaucratic organizations, deploying considerable material resources and operating through hired, professionalized staff.

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<sup>30</sup> As the Brazilian team notes, “This was a model of international alliances in which, beginning with denunciation from the South, organizations in the North entered with support and pressure, coming from Washington, for the purpose of making the Brazilian government change aspects of its policies” (p.12).

<sup>31</sup> The Brazil team’s vignettes of Rede Brasil and REBRIP (see the appendices of their paper) present interesting indications of the “signs of the exhaustion of a tradition of dealing with international economic questions that, very frequently, resulted not only in the insulation of governmental agencies, but also of civil society networks themselves, with respect to the processes [of transformation] underway in Brazilian society” p. 22).



These differences among networks are likely to become more pronounced as an outcome of the overall economic vulnerability of these organizations. As our survey indicated, most regional networks depend heavily upon the funding of international foundations and multilateral agencies. In the face of changing international funding priorities, and given the broader economic constraints affecting the region, many of the networks that developed in the 1980s and 1990s are likely to face extinction.

In this sense, the early 2000's might represent a significant shift in regional civil society networks. In the 1980s and 1990s, many of the transformations we have discussed converged to generate strong incentives for the emergence of alternative civil society organizations: international funding agencies had considerable resources available and were targeting Latin America for a significant share of their institutional commitments; other international multilateral agencies were eager to identify and engage alternative actors in the region; the return of democracy to the region in the 1980s and the so-called "Washington Consensus" in the 1990s served to delineate social and political agendas that provided important roles to alternative civil society organizations of both the "insider" and "outsider" varieties.

The early years of the new century may represent a reversal of many of these trends. International funding agencies currently face growing fiscal constraints due to stock market losses and the broader economic slowdown experienced in many of the wealthier countries, and their priorities have shifted elsewhere in the world as a result of the end of the Cold War and the new national security concerns following September 11 2001.<sup>32</sup> Concomitantly, the economic crisis in Latin America has undermined the "Washington Consensus" and altered the political agendas of multilateral agencies and national governments. Furthermore, new forms of social and political mobilization in the region might challenge the ability of alternative civil society organizations to provide effective channels of mediation in the region. In sum, although it is too early for a definitive judgment, these recent trends represent a significant challenge to regional networks in Latin America.

Also, our research suggests differences in the collective action repertoires deployed by different networks. Here, while "insiders" favor strategies of cooperation and collaboration, "outsiders" were found to rely to a greater extent on strategies of confrontation, contestation and mobilization. Our research suggests that significant cleavages have emerged between the two types of organizations, and that polarization in terms of political strategies, framing techniques, and collective action repertoires, rather than convergence and collaboration, may be the more likely scenario in future practices of regional civil society actors. This polarization might be accentuated by the trends highlighted above.

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<sup>32</sup> See Ayres and Tarrow (2001) for reflections on the impact of September 11 for transnational activism.

In short, our research suggests that transnational civil society actors, whether networks, coalitions, or social movements, face severe constraints sharply limiting their capacity to wield significant influence, much less transform, the pace and direction of national and regional politics. Moreover, rather than a single modal pattern of transnational society participation, we believe that the last decade has been characterized by the emergence of heterogeneous and often divergent institutional trajectories across the field of NGOs and civil society networks in the region, and that no easy correlations can be established between different forms of action and either the effectiveness or extent of transnational identity across these trajectories.

A strong and well-articulated actor, the constitution of “global civil society” in the Americas is very much a work in-progress, a project for the future only in the early stages of development. In the current context of a growing scarcity of financial resources (as the economic crisis affects international agencies, national governments and private institutions), it will be difficult for civil society networks and allied social movements in the region to confront the monumental task of struggling for what we have termed a “high road” to globalization grounded in more inclusive and equitable strategies of development.

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