NGOS AND ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

BEBBINGTON, A.J.; Hickley, S.; Mitlin, D. C. (ed.)(2008) in: **Can NGOs Make a Difference? The Challenge of Development Alternative,** London: Zed Books.

DECENTRALIZATION

- 80s and 90s – market le- economies – tendency to move away from central government activities and decision-making to a more decentralized approach (Willis, 2005:96).

- Decentralizing government – greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness

- - neo-liberal agenda transferring decision-making to the more local level – people would have a greater say in the decisions made about their services

NGOS AS THE DEVELOPMENT SOLUTION

- Move away form the central state as the key player in the ´development´
- NGOs – panacea for ´development problems´ range of organizations -
- Overview – one.world.net – links to a range of development organization (Willis, 2005:98)

DIMENSIONS OF NGO DIVERSITY (WILLIS, 2005)

- Location (North, N and S, S)
- Level of operation (international, regional national, community)
- Orientation (welfare activities and service provision, emergency relief, development education, participation and empowerment, self-sufficiency, advocacy, networking)
- Ownership – non-memebership support organization
- Membership organizations

ADVANGATES OF NGOS

- Answer to perceived limitations of the state or market in facilitation development because
- 1) can provide services that are more appropriate to local communities
- (work wt population at grassroot level)
- Able to provide services more efficiently and effectively through drawing on local people´s knowledge
- Able to react more quickly to local demands
- Non-material aspects of development – empowerment, participation and democratization

MAGIC BULLET?

Large part of multilateral and bilateral aid channelled through NGOs

Part of New Policy Agenda (NPA) – neo-liberal approach within the international institutions (cf WB).

Up to 10% of ODA

Assesing the number of NGOs difficult –

Definitional difficulties, differing registration practicess accross the globe

UNDP 2000 – 145,405 NGOs in the world

NGOS

- When population numbers are taken into account, the UNPD figures suggest that the vast majority of the world´s population has no opportunity to interact with an NGO in any meaningful way.
- India – 2 million associations, however 1718 NGOs (Willis, 2005:100)
- Ecuador Viviendas del Hogar de Cristo Project, Guayaquil (1,6 population million)
- 60% build their own dwelling
- Poor quality and lack of access to basic services (water, sanitation)

VIVIENDAS DEL HOGAR DE CRISTO PROJECT, 1971

- Set up by a Catholic priest to help to address housing need in the city
- Wood frame with bamboo panels – can be constructe in a day
- Participant have access to credit throuth NGO
- Official housing for over 138dollar / month
- Informal sector – less than 100
- NGO – fund from donations alloving them to provide housing for free 1/3

EMPOWERMENT

- NGO ability to ´empower individuals´ (Willis, 2005102) – important part of the NGOs enthusiasm

- Idea of having greater power and therefore more control over your life

- Does not recognize the different ways in which ´power´ can be defined

- Power over - is associated with the process of marginalization and exclusion thought which groups are portrayed as pwoerless

DIMENSIONS OF POWER (ROWLANDS, IN WILLIS, 2005:102)

- **Power over** – the ability to dominate
- This form of power is finite, so that if someone obtains more power then it automatically leas to someone else having less power.
- **Power to** – the ability to see possibilities for change
- **Power with** – the power that comes form individuals working together collectively to achieve common goals
- **Power within** – feeling of self-worth and self-esteem that come form within individuals.

EMPOWERMENT

- A key element of empowerment as development outcome – interventions leading to empowerment.

- Often claimed – NGOs empower communities – in reality not the case

- Empowerment is something that comes from within

- NGOs can provide context within which a process of empowerment is possible, only individuals can choose to take opportunities and use them

PARTICIPATION

- One of the key routes though which empowerment is meant to be achieved – through participation

- Grassroots development - is often termed participatory

- Participation - umbrella term to refer to the involvement of local people in development activities

- Participation can take place in different stages in the setting up of development projects.

DIMENSION OF PARTICIPATION

- **Appraisal –** way of understanding the local community and their understandings of wider processes PRA, PUA

- **Agenda setting –** involvement of local community in decisions about development policies, consulted and listened to from the start, not brought in once policy haws been decided upon

- **Efficiency –** involvement of local community in projets – building schools

- **Empowerment –** participation leads to greater self-awareness and confidence; contributions to development of democracy

COOKE AND KOTHARI (2001)

- **Participation** – new tyranny in development work
- The notion of participation is included in every dimension of development policy, but no recognition of:
- The time and energy requirement of local people to participate
- The heterogeneity of local populations meaning that community participation does not always involve all sectors of population

NEW TYRANNY?

- Just being involved does not necessarily lead to empowerment
- Focusing at a micro level can often lead to a faliure to recognize much wider structures of disadvantage and oppression

CAN NGOS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

- Bebbington et al.
- Cowen and Shenton (1996) *Doctrines of Development*
- Distinction between **development as an immanent and unintentional process** (development of capitalism)
- And intentional policies
- Difference – small and big D - Development

SMALL 'D' DEVELOPMENT

- Hart(2001:650) geographically uneven, profoundly contradicotry set of processes undarlying capitalist development

- What is the impact of globalization on on inequality and social stratification?

DEVELOPMENT (BIG D)

- ´project of intervention in the third world – that emerged in the context of decolonization and the cold was
- Mutual relationships but non-deterministic

BIG D AND SMAL D DEVELOPMENT

- Offers a means of clarifying the relationship between development policy and development practice
- Diverse impact for different social groups (cf Bauman, Globalization)
- And underlying process of uneven development that create exlusions and inequality for many and enhanced opportunities for others.

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT – ALTERNATIVES TO BIG D DEVELOPMENT

- Alternatives – cf alternative ways of arranging microfinance, project planning, serives delivery
- Eg **alternative ways of intervening**
- Alternatives can be conceived in relation to the underlying process of capitalit development (little development)
- emphasis is on alternative ways of organizing the economy, politics and social relationships in a society

REFORMIST VS RADICAL CHANGES

- **Remormist** – partial, intervention-specific,
- **Radical** – systemic alternatives
- Warning of too sharp distinction – NGOs can forge between apparently technocratic interventions (service delivery) and broader transformations
- Dissapointments Bebbington et al. – tendency to **indentify more readily with alternative forms of intervetions than with more systemic changes**
- Strong grounds for reversing this trend.

TRIPARTITE DIVISION

- State, market and civil society
- Tripartite division – is often used to understand and locate NGOs as civil society actors
- Problems:
- A) excessively normative rahter than analytical – sources of ´good´ as opposed to ´bad´ - imputed to the state adn market

TRIPARTITE DIVISION - FLAWS

- Understate the potential role of the state in fostering progressive chance

- Downplaying the extent to thich civil society – also a real of activity for racist organizations, business-sponsoer research NGOs and other organization that Bebbingtal and al. do not consider benign

FLAWS OF TRIPARTITE DIVISION

- The **relative fluidity of boundaries** + politics of **revolving door** –
- growing tendency for people to move back and forth between NGOs, government and occasionally business
- underestimated in academic writing

FLAWS OF TRIPARTITE DIVISIONS

- NGOs – relatively recent organizational forms compared to religious institutions, political movements, government and transnational networks

- Existence of NGOs – understood in terms of relationship to more cosntitutive actors in society

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AND NGOS

- 1) **level of ideology and theory** – notion of civil society – flourishes most fruitfully withint either the neoliberal school of thoughts that is reduced role for the state

- Or **neomarxist and post/structural approach** emphasizing the transformative potential of social movemtns within civil society.

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AND NGOS

- 2) **Conceptual level**
- **Civil society – civil society treated in terms of <u>associations or as an arena of contesting ideas about ordering of social life</u>**
- Proponents of both approches – civil society offering a critical path towards Aristotles´ s the good society´.

BEBBINGTON ET AL.´PERSPECTIVE

- Gramscian understanding of civil society

- as constituting an arena in which hegemonic ideas concerning the organization of economic and social life are **both established and contested**

GRAMSCI (1971)

- **Gramsci (1971) perceived state and civils society to be mutually constitutive rather than separate autonomus entities**

- With both formed in relation to historical and structural forces

GLOCAL NGOS

- Globalization – as the most potent force within late moderntiy

- **NGOs have increasingly become a transnational community, itself overlapping the other transnational networks and institutions**

- Linkages and networks disperse new forms of development discourse and modes of governance

GLOCAL NGOS

- Some southern NGOs – began to gain their own footholds in the North with their outposts in Brussels, Washington etc

(Grameen Foundation, BRAC, breadline Africa)

- Drawback - transnationalizing tendencies – exclusion of certain marginalized people and groups

GLOCAL NGOS

- Trasnationalizing tendencies – excluded certain actors for whom engagement in such process is harder

- Emergence of **international civil society elites**

who **dominante the discourses and flows channelled** through the transnational community

- **<u>Question – as to whose alternatives gain greater visibilitiy in these processes !!!!!!</u>**

TRANS-NATIONALIZING DEVELOPMENT

- Transnationalizing *Development* (big D) – SAPs, proverty-reduction strategy papers)
- Growing importance **of any alternative project**
- **Increasing channelling of state-controlled resources through NGOs**
- Resources become bundled with particular rules and ideas
- NGOs – increasingly faced with opportunities related to the dominant ideas and rules

NGOS – FAILED ALTERNATIVES?

- NGOs – vehicle of neoliberal governmentality?
- Disciplining local organizations and populations in much the same way as the Development has done it
- Underestimate the extent to which such pressure are resisted by some NGOs

POTENTIAL OF NGOS

- **NGOs – sustain broader funding base –** tool to negotiate and rework some of the pressures

- Potential ability of NGOs **to mobilize the broader networks and institutions** within which they are embedded

- Potential for muting such **disciplining effects**

POTENTIAL OF NGOS

- Cf International Campaign to Ban Landmines; Jubilee 2000

- can provide other resources and relationships of power – cf Jesuit community, bud also transnational corporate actors (sit on a number of NGOs boards)

POTENTIAL OF NGOS

- NGOs – not necessarily characterized by uneven North-South relations
- More horizontal experience (Slum Dwellers International) **Spatial reworking of development**
- increased opprotunities for socially excluded groups
- Reconstruction of ActionAid – HQ in Johannesburg

NGOS AS ALTERNATIVES – A BRIEF HISTORY

- 1980s NGOs decade
- These new actors - lauded as the **institutional alternative to existing develpment approaches** (Hirschman, Korten)

CRITICAL VOICES

- largely muted, confined to expressing concerns – that NGOs - externally imposed phenomenon
- Far from being alternative; they heralded a new wave of imperialism

1990s

- NGOs under closer and more critical scrutiny
- Internal debate how **to scale up NGO activitie**s
- more **effectiveness** of NGOs and to ensuring their **sustainability**

STANDARDIZATION OF PRACTICES

- Closeness to the mainstream u**ndermined their comparative advantage as agents of alternative development**

- With particular attenton falling on problems **of standardization and <u>upwards accountability (discuss)</u>**

NGOS AND INDIGENOUS CS

- Apparently limited success of NGOs as agents of democratization came under critique

- Threatened the development of **indigenous civil society** and distracted attention from more political organization (Bebbington et al., 2008:10)

-

ABRIDGED HISTORY OF NGOS A/ALTERNATIVES

- **First period** - long history of limited number of small agencies

- responding to the needs of groups of people perceived as poor who received little external professional support

- (Bebbington et al., 2008:11)

FIRST PERIOD - UNTIL MID/LATE 60S

- **Largely issue-based organizations combined both philanthopic action and advocacy**
- Northern based - against generaly embedded both in broader movements and in networks that mobilized voluntary contributions

FIRST PERIOD - UNTIL MID/LATE 60S

- Often linked to other organizations providing them with an institutional bnase and funding,, frequently linked to **wider religious institutions and philantropists**

- Also clear interactions **with state around legal reform as well as with market** - generated most recourses then transferred through foundations

- (model that continues throuhg today on a far massive scale)

FIRST PERIOD - UNTIL MID/LATE 60S

- From the North - some interventions emereged from the **legacy of colonialism**
- Such as volunteer programmes sending expeerts of ´undercapacited´ counrries or organization that derived from missionary interventions (Bebbington et al., 2008:11)
- **Minor or no structural reforms**

FIRST PERIOD - UNTIL MID/LATE 60S

- some interventions were of organization whose mission adn/or staff recognized the need for structural reforms, only rarely was such work altenrative in any systemic sense,

- Or in the sense that it sought to change the balance of hegemonic ideas, be these about the organization of society or the provision of services.

- (Bebbington et al., 2008:11)

SECOND PHASE - LATE 60S TO EARLY1980S

- consolidation of NGOs **co-financing programmes**,
- willingness of Northern states and societies **to institutionalize NGOs projects within their national aid portforlios** (direct financing)
- Geopolitical moment - sector became increasingly cirital
- NGOs imperative - to elaborate and contribute to alternative arrangements among state, market and civil society

SECOND PHASE - LATE 60S TO EARLY1980S

- Development (as a project) closely scrutinized, reflecting the intersection between NGOs and political struggles around national independence and various socialisms
- Struggles between **political projects and intellectual debates on dependency, stucturalist and Marxian intepretation of the development process**
- Alternative development – become a strong terms, intellectual backing – cf (Schumacher)
-

SECOND PHASE - LATE 60S TO EARLY1980S

- Numerous influences - awareness of the need for local institutional development,

- reduction in the formal colonial presence and **contradictions inherent in the Norhtern NGOs model –**

- steady shift from **operational to funding roles for Northern NGOs and the growht of a Southern NGOs sector**

THIRD PHASE 1980S

- Growth and recognition for NGOs
- 80s - period of NGOS boom
- contradiction of NGO alternatives

increase of NGO activity during the 80s was **driven to a significant extent by unfolding neoliberal agenda -** the very agenda that development alternatives have sought to critically engage

DAGNILO EVELINA – CASE STUDY – BRAZIL AND LA

- Challenges to Participation, Citizenship and Democracy: Perverse Confluence and Displacement of Meaning
- Brazil – participation of civil society in the building of democracy and social justice
- Existence of perverse **confluence between participatory and neoliberal** political projects

PERVERSE CONFLUENCE

- The confluence charaterizes the contemporary scenario of this struggle for defending democracy in Brazil and LA

- Dispute over different meanings of citizenship, civil society and participation

- - core referents for the understanding of that confluence and the form that i takes in the the Brazilian conflict

PERVERSE CONFLUENCE

- The process of democratic construction in Brazil – faces important dilemma because of this confluence
- Two different processes
- 1) process of enlargement of democracy – creation of public spaces and increasing participation of civil society in discussion and decision making processes
- Formal landmark – Constitution 1988
- Consecrated the principle of the participation of civil society

PARTICIPATION PROJECT

- Grew out of a partticipation project constructed since 1980s around extension of citizenship and deepening democracy

- - project emerged from the struggle against the military regime

- Led by sector of civil society among which social movements played and important role

PARTICIPATION PROJECT – REVOLVING DOOR

- Two elements important:
- 1) **re-establishment of formal democracy**
- Democracy taken into the realm of state power
- Municipal as well as state executives
- 1990s actors making hte transition from civil society to the state
- Led by belief in the possibility of joint action between the civil society and the state

NEOLIBERAL PROJECT

- ⊙ - reduced minimal state
- ⊙ Progressively exempts itself form its role as a guarantor of rights by shrinking its social responsibility
- ⊙ Transferring the responsibility to the civil society
- ⊙ The pervesity – these projects points in opposite even antagonistic directions
- ⊙ Each of them requires as a proactive civil society

CONFLUENCE OF THE PROJECTS

- Notion of citizenship, participation and civil society are central elements
- This coincidence at the discursive level hides fundamental distinctions and divergence of the two projects
- Obscuring them through the use of common vocabulary

DISCURSIVE SHIFT

- Obscuring them through the use of a common vocabulary as well as of institutional mechanism that at first seemed quite similar
- Discursive shift – common vocabulary obscures divergences and contradictions
- - a displacement of meaning becomes effective
- In this process the perverse confluence creates image of apparent homogoneity among different interests and discourses
- Concealing conflict and diluting the dispute between these tho projects.

STATE ACTORS

- In practice unwilling to shapre their decision making with respect to the formation of public politices

- Basic intention – have the organization of civil society assument the fucntiosn and responsibilities resptricted to the implementation and the realization of these policies

- Providing services formely consideret to be duties of the state

CIVIL SOCIETY

- Some CS organizations accept this circumscription of their roles and the meaning of participation
- CS accept the circumscritpion of their roles and the meaning of participation
- In doing so they contribute to its legitimization
- Others react to these pervese confluence – regarding their political role

REDEFINITION OF MEANING

- The implementation of the neiliberal project – requires shrinking of hte social responsibilities of the state
- And their transference to civil society
- Significant inflection of political culture
- Brazilian case – implementation of neoliberal project - had to confront a concolidated participatory project maturing for more than 20 years

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- - neo-liberal agenda transferring decision-making to the more local level – peole woudl have a greate say in the decisions made about their services