

PN ABR-553

26 August 1993

88020

DOING DEMOCRACY IN THE THIRD WORLD: DEVELOPING AN APPLIED THEORY OF CIVIL SOCIETY

A paper for the annual meeting of
the American Political Science Association,
Washington, DC,
2-5 September 1993

Harry Blair

Political Science Department, Bucknell University,
Lewisburg, PA
&
Center for Development Information & Evaluation,
U.S. Agency for International Development, Washington, DC

Comments and criticism on this paper are most welcome. Please address them to the author at U.S. Agency for International Development, POL/CDIE/E/POA, Room 215, SA-18, Washington, DC 20523-1802. Phone 703-875-4997; FAX 703-875-5269. Views expressed in the paper are those of the author; they should not be attributed to USAID.

1

DOING DEMOCRACY IN THE THIRD WORLD:
DEVELOPING AN APPLIED THEORY OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody
does anything about it.

- attributed to Mark Twain

This observation, repeated so often in journalistic accounts during the recent floods that ravaged Mark Twain's home town of Hannibal, Missouri, and the Missouri-Mississippi basin in which it is located, could almost equally be about democracy - especially if the "everybody" is taken to mean those practicing the discipline of political science. The academy has devoted much energy and considerable insight to analyzing how and why democracy works, or fails to work, or could work better in various contexts, but it has spent very little effort on how it could be instituted or implemented as a way of doing political business. This is particularly the case with respect to Third World development. Political science as a field has very little to offer in the way of operationalizable advice and counsel to countries wishing to become more democratic or international donor agencies wanting to assist them in doing so. In short, we have no tradition in the discipline that might be called "applied democracy." This paper seeks to fill a small portion of that gap by offering a start to developing an applied theory of civil society as an avenue to strengthening Third World democracy.¹

Background

In lacking an applied theory of democratic development, political science stands in marked distinction from our sister field of economics, where practitioners have long been interested in how to promote economic growth in the less developed countries (LDCs). At least since Rosenstein-Rodan's famous article in 1943, economists have been proffering advice to Third World countries wishing to improve their economic growth rate and to international donors willing to support such efforts. Indeed, for a time in the 1960s and 1970s, economic development was arguably the most exciting and innovative field in the discipline. Today that glamour has worn off a bit, but even so virtu-

¹ The paper stems in large measure from work done for the United States Agency for International Development, as part of an effort undertaken by the Center for Development Information and Evaluation to evaluate the Agency's experience in democratization. I wish to thank the members of the Center's team working on civil society for their ideas and comments in developing the model discussed in the paper: Gerardo Berthin, Gary Hansen, Joel Jutkowitz, Heather McHugh and Malcolm Young. Neither they nor USAID bear any responsibility for the thoughts expressed in the paper, however; accountability (to employ a good democracy-related term) is mine alone.

ally every economics department offers a course or more on developmental economics, and applied development economics continues to thrive. It is not hard to discern why applied developmental economics has itself developed so fully in the last four or five decades in comparison to what might be called applied political development: the international donor community has funded research and provided careers to economists working on development issues, a practice that has continued down to the present. There has been much less interest in political science.

Certainly, there have been theoreticians engaging themselves in applying their developmental ideas on the ground. Plato spent a good deal of time encouraging the tyrant of Syracuse to put the theories of his Republic into practice, and Rousseau took up what would today be called consultancies to write constitutions for Poland and Corsica, but their counsel suffered the same fate as that of so many foreign advisers in that their recommendations were never put into effect.

More recently, there have been sporadic efforts from academia to promote political development in other countries, most notably in the 1960s with the ill-fated American efforts to "democratize" South Vietnam, particularly through sponsoring national elections with the hope that they would legitimate the U.S.-backed South Vietnamese government. There were other enterprises as well, as with USAID's Title IX program of the late 1960s mandating popular participation in implementing American foreign aid programs, and the "New Directions" mandate of the mid-1970s, which levied similar requirements on our foreign aid activities, even though "participation" in these foreign aid initiatives was defined more to mean citizen inputs in decision-making and implementation rather than popular choice in selecting rulers and public accountability for the state's decisions.²

All these activities attracted some academic interest, mostly in the form of government-sponsored research,³ but in the end the advice given from university circles had little more practical effect than the earlier efforts of Plato and Rousseau. South Vietnamese elections did nothing to bring democracy to that unhappy country, nor did Title IX and New Directions produce any notable lasting effects.

² Joan Nelson (1980:104) makes a useful distinction between these two types of participation.

³ For example, USAID's Bureau for Science and Technology sponsored research projects at Cornell University (in participatory rural development) and at the University of California, Berkeley (in decentralization) in the late 1970s and early 1980s. There were also other academic efforts at theory building in political development in the 1960s, of which perhaps the most influential at the time was the Social Science Research Council's Committee on Comparative Politics effort that led to the series of volumes on "Studies in Political Development," published by Princeton University Press (e.g., Pye and Verba 1965).

Today, in the surge toward democratization throughout the world that Samuel Huntington (1991; see also his 1991-92) has labeled "The Third Wave," once again there is much academic interest in political development and democracy. Most of that interest, however, has been largely comparatively analytical (e.g., Diamond et al. 1990; Inkeles 1990; Sorensen 1993), abstractly theoretical (e.g., Cohen and Rogers et al. 1992), or exhortatory (e.g., many of the articles in Roberts 1990). Even the literature that is strategic tends to focus at a very high level (e.g., Diamond 1992; DiPalma 1990; Gastil 1990; Nelson 1992), while much of the writing that claims to be prescriptive in laying down policy guidelines inclines to lists of do's and don'ts (e.g., Allison and Beschel 1992, or for that matter USAID 1991). A new academic periodical began operation in 1990 - *The Journal of Democracy* - but thus far (it is now on its fourth volume) its articles have focused exclusively on analytical matters and high level policy concerns.

As with the earlier interest in participation, USAID has again sponsored academic research on participation and democracy. but that too has tended to be much more theoretical than practical (e.g., CBSSE 1991; Hopple and Husbands 1991; Diamond 1992b; NAS 1992 and 1993⁴). Some literature has appeared with a more applied bent, but even this inclines toward sectoral strategies rather than applied practical guidance (e.g., the essays in Goldman and Douglas 1988).⁵

Such theoretical background and grand strategy are surely necessary in order to develop good practice, but they are not of much direct help in formulating country-level approaches to support democratization. In the meantime, first the Bush administration - and now much more so the Clinton administration - have been pushing democratic development as a centerpiece of its foreign aid strategy. In the Bush era, the "democratic pluralism initiative" was one of its four main policy agendas (see USAID 1990; 1991a; 1991b), while for the Clinton White House "sustainable

⁴ Sabri Sayari's paper for this APSA meeting will focus on the NAS efforts to bring together academicians and foreign aid practitioners in the democratization field (Sayari 1993).

⁵ Interestingly, the World Bank, which over the years has sponsored vastly more research, both theoretical and applied, on economic development, has proceeded very cautiously into political development. In its only publicly released policy paper so far (World Bank 1992), the Bank appears to view democratization largely in terms of its relation to economic development, holding (p. 5) that its own charter steers it toward "sustainable economic and social development" and precludes it from political matters, although "governance" may be addressed if it is interpreted to mean "order and discipline in the management of a country's resources" (loc. cit.). There is a window, then, for supporting democracy, but thus far a narrow one. Still, the Bank has supported some research on issues of democracy (e.g., Brautigam 1991).

democracy" has become one of its four principle themes for a foreign aid program.⁶

In response, the various regional bureaus have put together democratization strategies for their areas, and these make some progress in bridging the theory-practice gap as well as providing somewhat more concrete guidelines for implementing democratization strategies.⁷ But these are still quite abstract, and there is much that remains to be done in linking theory to practice.

Specifically, what is lacking is very much at all in the way of "applied democracy theory" aiming to offer general practical guidance on how to go about promoting democratic development as part of a foreign aid program. There are many sectors in which such guidance can be offered: justice systems, political parties, decentralization, elections and the media are but a few. Some efforts have been begun here (e.g., Hirschmann and Mendelson 1993), but in an overall sense the cumulative effort to date is only a start.

This paper

The present paper aims at developing the beginnings of an applied theory of one of these democratic components: civil society. Before proceeding, however, the paper's origins deserve some mention. USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE, where I am currently working while on leave from my university) is presently conducting a series of sectoral evaluations in which the Agency's experience over the last decade and more is assessed to ascertain what of value has been learned and how such lessons might inform present and future foreign assistance initiatives.

In some of these sectors, such as child survival or capital project investment, our theoretical understanding of core problems and developmental strategies is quite well advanced. In other areas, though, there is very little theoretical picture of

⁶ Thus far the Clinton administration's USAID policy thinking has been moving through successive draft stages; it is not clear at this point (August 1993), for instance, even what the term will be to denote its major strategies; "pillars" were used in the Reagan era and "initiatives" in the Bush years, but a new term has yet to emerge. The major program priorities themselves, however, have come into focus; they are democracy, economic growth, population and health, and environment, with the overall objective being "sustainable development." Congress also has gotten involved in democratization, by creating the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in the mid-1980s and subsequently granting it direct appropriations independent from USAID; among other activities, NED has sponsored the *Journal of Democracy*.

⁷ Some of these regional approaches are quite general (e.g., USAID/Asia 1993; Charlick 1992), while others are more specific in terms of project-level plans (e.g., USAID/LAC 1991; USAID/NE n.d.). There are also some country-level papers that bring the thinking down to more concrete dimensions (e.g., for the Asia region, Cole and Suksamran 1990; or Blair et al. 1991).

how a system works, what functional role it has, or how it might do better. Democracy is unquestionably one of these latter areas. Thus far, under the democracy rubric, CDIE has undertaken an evaluation of legal systems development,⁸ and now it is on the point of launching a similar enterprise focusing on civil society. The current paper is largely based on work done in connection with that effort (esp. Blair 1993).

The analysis begins by defining civil society, then showing how it can support (as well as possibly constrain) democracy. Thirdly, a model depicting the linkages between civil society is presented, and finally a number of strategies employing civil society organizations in support of democratic development are discussed.

Defining civil society

Civil society⁹ inhabits the area between individuals (or families) and the state,¹⁰ and is made up of associational groupings of all sorts. In its widest sense, civil society would range from political parties on the more public side of this terrain over to business corporations on the more private side, and it would include groups aiming to influence the formation and implementation of public policy as well as groups that have no concern for the public domain at all.

In constructing an operationalizable approach to civil society, however, it makes sense to narrow the definition so that it embraces primarily non-governmental organizations (NGOs) emphasizing public rather than private goals, i.e., voluntary groups concerned *inter alia* with influencing state policy. A concentra-

⁸ CDIE's legal systems development will be explored in Gary Hansen's paper for this APSA panel (Hansen 1993).

⁹ The term "civil society" itself has come into the political science literature only quite recently; earlier terms with a similar meaning were "interest groups" or "pressure groups," but these were applied largely to the political systems of the advanced industrial countries. Today "civil society" is the term most widely used to describe this sector in the development field.

There is considerable debate on just what should be included under the rubric of "civil society," and a consensus understanding on this issue is yet to emerge. For instance, some (e.g., Diamond 1992c) would include the media as a part of civil society, while others (e.g., Bratton 1986) would exclude it, essentially restricting the definition to voluntary organizations. For an interesting discussion of these matters, see Diamond (1992d).

¹⁰ The "state" as used in this paper has been in widespread usage at least since the mid-1980s -- longer than "civil society" but still relatively new in its meaning here as the whole set of governmental organizations, ranging from local to national, that make and enforce rules for the society. The state is thus not only the political leadership or the bureaucracy, and it does not exist only at the national or (as in the United States) intermediate level, but rather it is the collectivity of office-holding political leaders and bureaucracy at all levels.

tion on influencing the state need not be an NGO's principal concern for it to be of interest here, but such a focus must be at least potentially a significant part of the group's activities. Thus we would exclude such essentially single-purpose organizations as a business enterprise or a political party; the former's main goal is to make a profit, while the latter's is to take over state power (as opposed to influencing it, as with the institutions of civil society).¹¹

The characteristic institution of civil society is what we may call a "civil society organization" (CSO), which can be defined as an NGO that has as one of its primary purposes influencing public policy. Thus while all CSOs are NGOs, by no means are all NGOs also CSOs. In most Third World systems, only a portion of the total society is included within the total universe of NGOs, and only a portion of all NGOs are also CSOs, as indicated in Figure 1.

One useful way to think of civil society is to characterize it as having a kind of "in-between-ness." In its usual definition, civil society lies between the state on one side and the individual or family on the other. But civil society also sits between what is usually thought of as the public and private sectors (some writers see it as a "third sector" in addition to these two). And there is an additional dimension as well, in that CSOs are usually not (although some may be) profit-seeking, but neither are they generally what we think of as non-profit, service providing organizations (though at times they might be).

To sum up, civil society comprises the collectivity of those social organizations that enjoy autonomy from the state (are not a part of the state or creatures of it) and have as one important goal among others to influence the state on behalf of their members.

How does civil society support democracy?

Ideally, civil society promotes at least three kinds of demand-related activity that are central to the long-term maintenance of a democratic polity, as indicated in Figure 2.¹² But there are also risks to democracy that can stem from civil society. Both benefits and risks are discussed in this section.

¹¹ Some political parties might get included in civil society by this definition, if their primary goal is to act as a pressure group rather than take power, the Green Party in Germany would be an example here. The number of such parties in the Third World is probably small, however, especially in the absence of the proportional representation electoral systems that tend to encourage their continuance in the Western European political scene.

¹² The Figure as a whole offers a model of civil society's contribution to democratic development, which will be discussed in the next section of the paper.

Widening participation. A strong civil society directly supports democratic participation in several ways:

- educating and mobilizing citizens generally to exercise their right to participate (e.g., through civic education programs);
- enhancing participation by women and minority groups by inviting them into the political arena;
- facilitating representation of poor and marginalized groups by encouraging them to participate;
- building a complex net of groups having members with overlapping multiple affiliations in many organizations, thereby serving to moderate the potentially destabilizing effects of single memberships in exclusive groups (especially those based on ethnic, religious, territorial or economic cleavages).

Assuring rights and probity. A strong civil society can protect the citizenry against excesses from the state by:

- acting in its intermediary role as a buffer against possible predatory behavior of the state;
- functioning as a watchdog to monitor the state's behavior in the human rights area;
- reducing corruption by demanding honesty and integrity of the state at all levels.

Deepening policy accountability. Accountability of the state to its citizens – the distinctive hallmark of democracy – has two dimensions. In a negative sense the state must be kept from abuse and venality, which is the theme of the preceding paragraph. But accountability also has a positive aspect, in that the state must be responsive to the needs and wants of its people. The citizenry, in other words, must be able to exercise a role in telling the state what policies to pursue. Both aspects embody a deepening involvement of the people in the affairs of the state, in contrast to the participatory dimension discussed above, which concerned primarily a widening involvement, as more and more citizens are brought into political life.

A strong civil society promotes this positive accountability in either a pluralist or a corporatist fashion.¹³ In the **pluralist** variant, which is more familiar in the United States, the political universe is one of rough-and-tumble competition between all comers. Here civil society enhances accountability by:

- facilitating a constant flow of citizen inputs to the state, which, being continually reminded of what its

¹³ The two aspects of civil society discussed just above in the text – widening participation and assuring rights and probity – apply similarly in both pluralist and corporatist democracy. It is only this third aspect of policy accountability that operates differently in the two variant types of democracy.

citizens want, finds it difficult to wander too far from those wishes;

- fostering pluralist competition by encouraging all groups to press their agendas on the state, which accordingly discovers itself having to accommodate conflicting voices in such ways that it cannot surrender to any one voice or small coterie of voices.

In the **corporatist** version of accountability, which is more common in the continental European democracies, citizen interests are generally aggregated into apex organizations representing farmers, women, health sector workers, etc. Here the behavioral mode is one of bargaining and negotiation between representative organization and the state rather than the conflict and competition that characterizes pluralist systems. In this milieu civil society promotes accountability through:

- representing citizen interests to the state; and
- negotiating on behalf of those interests.

Limitations of civil society. In addition to these constructive effects on democracy, there are also indications that civil society can have more dampening repercussions, in both its pluralist and corporatist versions. In the advanced pluralist democracies in particular, concern has grown that too much interest group influence on the state over too long a period may well lead to immobilism and a hardening of the democratic arteries or "gridlock" rather than to a rich and vibrant democratic polity.¹⁴ A debilitated state continuously pummeled by conflicting special interest groups may well then become too feeble to act in the interest of the citizenry as a whole.

In corporatist democracy, on the other hand, the representational monopoly accorded to apex groups and the relatively small number of such groups can lead to a parasitic mutual dependency between civil society and the state, in which rigid allocation of public benefits inhibits innovation and growth. An associated danger here is Michels' (1915) famous "iron law of oligarchy," according to which organizational leadership (in this case unconstrained by rival groups threatening to steal its membership base) comes to substitute its own interests for those of its members.

There is also the danger that with both types of civil society, any real sense of the larger public good may be effectively suffocated in the rush of interest groups to appropriate societal goods for themselves. If the polity becomes consumed either with smaller, competing groups (the pluralist system) or with larger,

¹⁴ It is also possible that, even if they do compete vigorously with each other, CSOs may simply become so numerous that they clog up and overwhelm the state's capacity for responding, as Huntington feared some 25 years ago (1968). For a broader critique against pluralist strategies in the LDCs, see MacDonald (1992).

negotiating groups (the corporatist system), the overarching national good may get lost in the shuffle.

Civil society, then, is not an unmitigated blessing, and it may have deleterious as well as beneficial effects on democracy.¹⁵

A model for civil society and democratic development

The three dimensions of civil society supporting democratic development that were discussed in the previous section – widening participation; assuring rights and probity; and deepening pluralist accountability – are portrayed in Figure 2, which offers a model of how the civil society appears to work in strengthening democracy. As indicated in the Figure, USAID and other donors support civil society institutions (the box labeled I), which in turn engage in activities (the arrows shown as II) along the three dimensions. These activities then (the arrows depicted by the III numerals) affect state policy, with the ultimate result (the IV arrow) of furthering sustainable democracy within the host country's polity.¹⁶

There is both an individual and a collective dynamic at work in the model, which can be illustrated with several examples. At the individual CSO level, different organizations pursue different paths among the three activity dimensions of Figure 2, as these examples will illustrate. First, a middle peasant producers association may invest its efforts in mobilizing its potential constituency (box A in figure 2) and then supporting electoral candidates favoring its cause. The association may also lobby the state (box C) to set higher floor prices for staple foodgrains.

Secondly, a chamber of commerce may focus its energies on pressing the state to further deregulate its control of the economy

¹⁵ For an extensive discussion of the negative sides of civil society, see the special issue of *Politics and Society* devoted to "Secondary Associations and Democracy" (1992), in particular the long essay by Cohen and Rogers (1992).

¹⁶ The phrase "ultimate result" is used here advisedly, for democracy is often seen as having two objectives:

- democracy serves as an end in itself (as indicated in the current presentation), on the thought that it is a good and worthy thing for a people to manage their own public affairs; and
- it also helps attain the further objective of long-term socio-economic development (called "sustainable development" in the Clinton administration), in that a state accountable to its citizenry is more likely to realize development, over the long haul than one not accountable.

It may be noticed that I have finessed the issue of democracy's contribution to economic growth, a topic on which there has been much discussion and debate (see e.g., Haggard 1990; Diamond 1992e). To make the case for developing an applied theory of democracy, however, it is surely enough to build the argument around the two goals stated in the text.

(box B). And thirdly, a women's advocacy group may work on energizing a wider constituency to participate in politics (box A), follow and publicize what the state is doing (and failing to do) to benefit women (box B) and put pressure on the state to promulgate affirmative action regulations (box C).

Collectively, these activities could create some conflict in the system, as for instance with the examples just cited, farmers demanding higher foodgrain prices (i.e., more regulation) could be opposed by businessmen in the chamber of commerce wanting lower foodgrain prices (i.e., less regulation) so as to minimize upward pressure on urban wages. At the same time, both groups might well be against the women's agenda; the farmers could fear that a move sponsored by the women's CSO toward equal property shares between sons and daughters as inheritance would disrupt family integrity through time (as daughters marrying out of the family would take their shares with them), and the businessmen could be concerned that they would feel considerable heat over the low wages and unsafe working conditions prevalent at their "export platform" garment factories. This kind of conflict, of course, is what feeds democratic development, either in its pluralist variant (as the various agendas become partly realized through the give and take of the political process) or its corporatist version (in which apex organizations representing agriculture, industry and women negotiate their positions with the state).

The donor role in supporting civil society. As indicated in Figure 2, donors directly contribute resources (largely financial support and technical assistance) to strengthen civil society, generally in the form of foreign assistance projects.¹⁷ This phase of effort is primarily an institution-building one, with donor support providing core overhead costs for CSOs, basic equipment, training for personnel, and the like. In the next phase (II in Figure 2) of CSO activity, there is often still some direct donor support as technical assistance and tactical guidance, but the recipient organization is largely on its own here. Then in the third and fourth phases, things are largely beyond any direct donor influence. Donor work, in sum, is largely restricted to building and strengthening CSOs and then, with a little guidance, setting them on their own course. After their initial launching, the CSOs become, as it were, largely internally guided missiles.

Causality issues. Needless to say, donor support is scarcely the only factor affecting state policy and democratic development. The wider society, economy and polity (conveniently labeled

¹⁷ Within USAID, one common form of such assistance has been the "PVO Co-financing project," in which the Agency has supported NGOs (here called PVOs or private voluntary organizations) in development work. Some of those NGOs have taken on a civil society role, though often this was not the original intent of the project itself, which typically was framed solely in the context of economic or human resource development.

"other factors" in Figure 2) all impact on state policy and on democratic development as well, collectively much more strongly than donor support working through CSOs. And even within the range of what donors do, there are many influences at work beside support for CSOs. Other foreign assistance efforts have their effects; a "structural readjustment" program that cuts state support to education, for instance, may have a long-term negative impact on democratic development that far outweighs whatever good foreign-assisted CSOs might do. Or the "policy dialogue" carried on between the American embassy and the "host country government" (reflected in the dotted line in Figure 2) may have a much bigger influence on improving the human rights climate than CSO agitation against a repressive regime. Establishing causality, in a word, may be difficult.

Civil society development strategies

One good way to gauge what civil society can do in an activity- or project-related sense to support democracy is to ask, "What problems can civil society-based efforts address?" Table 1 poses nine such problems, which are first categorized in row 1 according to the three basic activities depicted in Figure 2: (A) participation; (B) rights and probity; and (C) policy accountability.¹⁸ Each of the nine strategies (row 2 of the Table) is cast first in terms of the "development problem" to be dealt with (row 3), then the program purpose and longer term goal (rows 4 and 5). In the sixth row are shown the major project elements likely to be chosen. Row 7 lists some examples of the kinds of NGOs that might be enlisted to implement these project elements, while row 8 gives the most likely motivations for these groups to become involved.

The ninth row indicates expected "end-of-project" outputs for the different strategies, and the next row lists some initial ideas for measuring project success in realizing those outputs. Rows 11 and 12 present first issues and problems that might create difficulties for the various strategies and then some tentative responses to such challenges. Finally, in the thirteenth row are listed several host country settings where they might fruitfully be employed.

An example will illustrate. "Democratic culture" strategies (depicted in column 5 of Table 1) are aimed at institutionalizing democratic political participation and so fit into the first of the three categories of activity discussed earlier in connection with Figure 2, i.e., participation. Thus "democratic culture" is found in the "A" section of row 1. Such a strategy would be especially appropriate in some of the more advanced developing countries of Latin America, where the polity has only recently

¹⁸ The intent in Table 1 is to be inclusive, but significant categories of civil society activity may have been omitted. Also, it may prove possible to combine some strategies, for example, those in columns 3 and 4 of Table 1.

emerged from a period of sustained authoritarian rule. The social infrastructure in terms of education, media, associational life, etc., is there to support democracy, but the democratic environment or culture is still somewhat feeble and artificial; it has not yet taken firm root and thus far is still in danger of a relapse into authoritarian rule (as happened in Peru in 1992 or was threatened more recently in Guatemala). The development problem, then, as indicated in row 3, is a democratic system that is in place but may well prove unsustainable over time.

Accordingly, a democracy project addressing this challenge would have as its purpose (row 4) contributing toward a stable democratic polity; such a polity can best be sustained over the longer term (row 5) if it is supported by an enduring democratic culture, i.e., a commonly held set of social values within the citizenry holding democracy to be the only acceptable way to manage the country's affairs.

A USAID project in this context (row 6) would likely be one in the civic education area, which would support efforts to inculcate and strengthen democratic values in the population. Appropriate NGOs to undertake such work (row 7) might be in-country groups similar in their functions to what the League of Women Voters does in the United States, local election monitoring groups and the like. Such associations could be expected to be motivated (row 8) largely by middle-class impulses toward good government and public rectitude of the sort that stimulate similar groups in the United States. The most important tangible result of a project in this area (row 9) would be continued adherence to democratic practices (which over time would contribute to the purposes and goals shown in rows 4 and 5). One way to measure success (row 10) in strengthening democratic culture would be to use opinion surveys to assess how people feel about democratic values. A major problem to be expected over time (row 11) is that of keeping up the momentum of such a project; people can become fatigued at hoeing the same row again and again, e.g., in promoting civic studies efforts with successive cohorts of schoolchildren or monitoring successive elections. To counter such flagging enthusiasm, somehow the motivation for such efforts has to be continually reinvigorated and reinforced (row 12).

Examples (row 13) of countries where such a democratic culture strategy could usefully be taken up are Chile, the Czech Republic and Uruguay - all of which are not only recent recruits to democratic ranks, countries where most of the institutional infrastructure is already in place to support democracy, but also are countries where the possibility of a relapse to authoritarianism can by no means be ruled out.

Civic-minded CSOs are scarcely the only kind of organizations to be supported through civil society strategies, however, as a second example will illustrate. Self-promoting NGOs, concerned primarily with the welfare of their members, can also become CSOs contributing to sustainable democratic development. The "demo-

cratic capitalism" strategy depicted in column 2 of Table 1 is such an approach. Here, for example, agricultural water user associations might be encouraged to form an alliance to lobby the state at both local (the district water engineer) and national (the water development ministry) levels. Their agendas could be more farmer control over water allocation, more equity for "tail-enders" in surface water irrigation systems, more systematic canal rehabilitation, etc. In the process, the water user associations would be ameliorating state control of the economy by contributing to decision-making and pressing the state to be more responsive to public demands.

There are dangers in such strategies, to be sure. Too many self-seeking groups making demands on the state and realizing those demands can lead to an interest-group gridlock that effectively immobilizes the polity, a condition that has been called "demo-sclerosis" in the American domestic context (Rauch 1992; see also Olson 1992). One answer to gridlock would be more autonomy for the executive branch to act in a national interest, as opposed to the parochial interests of the CSOs.

In any given country, several of the nine strategies depicted in Table 1 will be in place, but most likely not all of them. In the Dominican Republic, for example, an initial analysis of material available on the USAID database¹⁹ indicates that strategies corresponding to columns 1,2,3,4,6 and 7 of Table 1 are or have been directly or indirectly pursued in the past couple of decades.

Assessing civil society strategies. How can we tell if foreign aid-assisted civil society strategies have had any impact (positive or negative) on democratic development in a given country? It is actually this question that forms the core inquiry of the CDIE work in which I am presently engaged; the theory building that has constituted the major theme of this particular paper is essentially ancillary to that inquiry — what had to be done in order to launch CDIE's evaluation task. The model presented here facilitates that effort by pointing out successive phases for

¹⁹ This database, maintained by the CDIE's Development Information Office, has available all USAID reports, studies, evaluations and other papers relating to the Agency's business that it has been able to collect over the last decade or so. Thus while its archive is considerably less than complete for the three decades of USAID's history (and even in recent years not all USAID units have dutifully sent in each and every document), the database does give a good picture of the range of things the Agency has done. The Dominican Republic was selected for a first in-depth inquiry using the database because a more superficial preliminary combing showed a good deal of CSO-type activity there. Other USAID-assisted countries are likely to show less. For more on CDIE's assessment of civil society in the Dominican Republic, see Young et al. (1993).

Obviously, in some cases a particular CSO will be engaged in more than one strategy. For example, the water users associations mentioned above in the text might well be involved in what are labeled "democratic capitalism" and "democratic pluralism" strategies in Table 1.

assessment, which can be framed here as consecutive questions (which correspond to the roman numerals in Figure 2):

- (I) what institutional strengths were CSOs able to build? how well equipped were they to engage in civil society activity?
- (II) what did the CSOs do (both individually and collectively)?
- (III) did these activities have any effect in changing state policy?
- (IV) did changes in state policy have any effect on democratic development?

A fifth topic for assessment (which would be too complex to show in Figure 2, since it would cover most of the chart) is the impact of USAID and other donors on this whole series of processes, viz.

- (V) how can we tell if what USAID did actually contributed to what happened?²⁰

Some further questions

The theory constructed thus far raises a number of further questions, some of which are briefly sketched out in this section. At this point, it is only possible to raise them, but it is intended in the course of CDIE evaluation work on civil society to address them as well as the more immediate evaluational issues discussed just above. The most pressing questions come under two headings: sustainability and success.

Sustainability, pluralist competition and corporatism. How can a civil society best sustain itself and in the process sustain democratic development? Under what circumstances has civil society failed to sustain (or contributed to a failure in sustaining) democracy? The answers would appear to differ according to whether the polity is more pluralist or corporatist in orientation.

- Pluralist sustainability. Here the key factor is **ensuring competition.** Unless groups energetically compete with each other, the polity faces serious dangers, either (1) that a few CSOs will dominate the policy terrain and skew things in their own interest, or (2) that a larger number of CSOs will simply collude to divide benefits (especially subsidies) among themselves at public expense, resulting in a kind of "interest group gridlock" that hobbles the political system. The crux of the problem is that excessive accountability to individual groups (or coalitions of groups) can mean a lack of accountability to the polity as a whole. Only a healthy

²⁰ These evaluation questions, along with a methodology for addressing them, are discussed at some length in Blair (1993).

competition can prevent such untoward outcomes. How can this competition best be achieved and maintained?

- Corporatist sustainability. With its emphasis on "consociational" behavior (wherein leaders of potentially hostile or competing constituencies negotiate coexistence arrangements), corporatist democracy also runs a double risk. The first danger is that group leaders will cut deals that immobilize the polity and economy by dividing up all available resources into rigidly fixed shares and thus locking public policy into place indefinitely, while the second is that a self-serving cabal of leaders will themselves benefit inordinately while depriving associational members (who have no recourse in the corporatist setup that provides only one hierarchical structure for each societal grouping). Yet another danger is that in a society organized along corporatist lines (as with many Latin American countries) civil society as a mechanism for ensuring accountability may never really get launched, for the state will prove too strong in its desire to control social life through corporatist organizations. In the corporatist case, accountability has to come from competing political parties and an energetic media that will ferret out and publicize corrupt behavior. How can such accountability best be maintained?

Problems with success. Just as an anemic or undernourished civil society is dysfunctional to democracy, so too an overactive civil society may well bring problems of its own. Two in particular deserve mention in this context.

- Policy insulation. Policy makers are generally thought to need some insulation against populist pressures if they are to undertake serious efforts at structural reform, especially in the economic sphere. In some cases, strengthening civil society may make policy reform more difficult (e.g., stronger labor unions better opposed to dismantling wasteful parastatals, or an energized "comprador" business community against trade deregulation). What are the trade-offs here? Is there a case to be made for supporting NGOs selectively rather than across the board?
- Antidemocratic civil society. Under certain circumstances, civil society could become antithetical to democracy itself; it could in a sense lose its civility. The institutions of civil society can after all promote destructive ethnic conflict and religious intolerance just as they can foster constructive pluralism. There may also be other ways in which competition can go too far beyond pluralism in destructive directions. Are there ways to help channel civil society into more constructive paths? Could this be done without manipulation and co-optation?

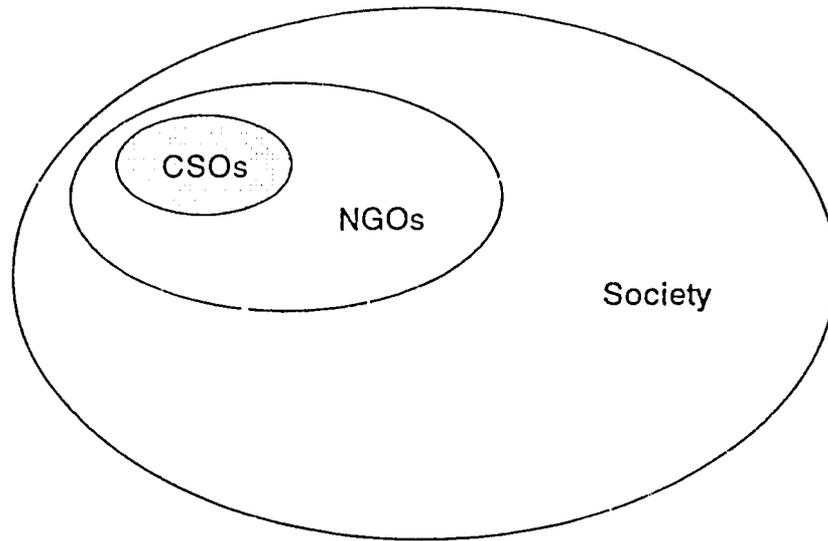
Building an applied theory

What has been offered here is essentially a starter on what I hope will become an "applied theory of civil society in Third World democratic development." In the present paper, I have put together some outlines of such a theory, but much lies ahead. Hopefully, the CDIE evaluation work described here will flesh out this theory in more detail.

This is an exciting time to be working in comparative politics, as political scientists have the opportunity to construct practical theories for promoting democracy in the Third World. The risk of doing damage is certainly there, as some of the less happy experiences of the 1960s demonstrated all too vividly, but the hope of offering something helpful is also very much alive. The social science side of the development business should not be left to economists and the demographers.

Figure 1

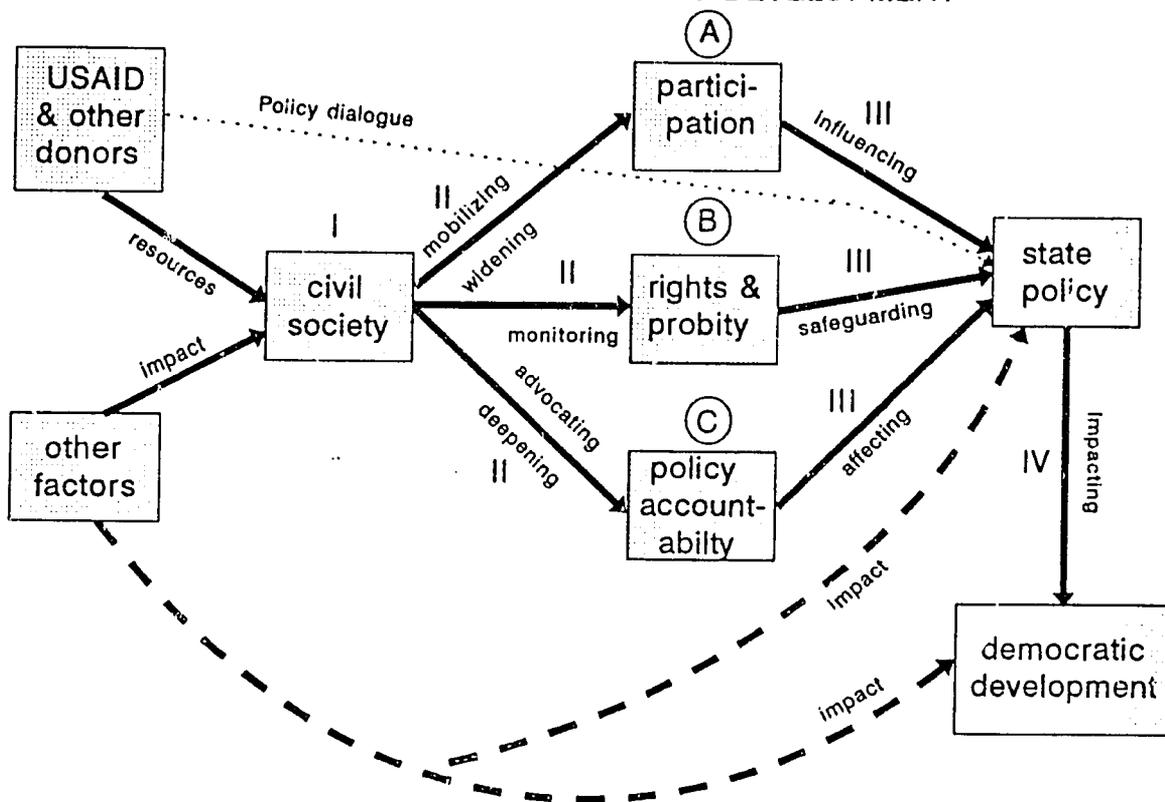
RELATIONSHIP OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS
TO NGOs AND SOCIETY



c:\civsoc\csongo1, 2 Aug 1993

Figure 2

CIVIL SOCIETY & DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT



(A) (B) (C) = Category of civil society activity (cf. Table 1)

c:\civsoc\cschartj, 25 Aug 1993

Table 1

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES INCORPORATING CIVIL SOCIETY

1	Category (cf. Figure 2)	A: Participation					B: Rights & probity		C: Policy accountability	
2	TYPE OF STRATEGY	1 DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION	2 DEMOCRATIC CAPITALISM	3 DEMOCRATIC PLURALISM	4 SOCIAL MO- BILIZATION*	5 DEMOCRATIC CULTURE	6 HUMAN RIGHTS	7 DEMOCRATIC INTEGRITY	8 HUMAN RESOURCES	9 SUSTAIN- ABLE ENVI- RONMENT
3	The development problem	Autocratic state with minimal participation	State control of economy, "dirigiste" rigidity	Unrepresentative government	Marginalized groups	Unsustainable democratic system	Human rights abuses	Unaccountable & corrupt government	Counterproductive state policy on PQLI NGOs	Natural resource mismanagement
4	Program purpose	Widening political voice	More inclusive market economy	Expanded body politic	Group empowerment	Stable democratic polity	Decline in abuses	Corruption decline	PQLI improvements	Nat resource decline reversed
5	Longer term goal	Transition to democracy	Sustainable economic growth	Pluralist polity	Equal opportunity society	Sustainable democratic culture	Secure human rights	Integrity, predictability in government	Healthy & productive society	Sustainable natural resource regime
6	Project elements	Support all NGOs (some will become CSOs)	Market-oriented & producer organizations	Organization building	Adult literacy & conscientization	Civic education	HR monitoring HR reporting HR advocacy	Investigative journalism, political reporting	Umbrella NGOs	NR monitoring NR reporting NR advocacy
7	NGO examples	All NGOs	Chambers of commerce, water user associations	Professional associations, peasant groups	Women's rights, minority rights groups	LWV-groups, election watch groups	In-country HR advocacy groups	Investigative journalism NGOs	Health sector umbrella NGOs	Environmental advocacy CSOs
8	Motivation for groups	All motivations	Self-seeking	Representing membership	Self-assertion	Democratic norms	Human rights	Journalistic professionalism, whistle-blowing	Service delivery	Public goods
9	EOP outputs	Some CSO influence on the state	Interest group lobbying	New groups pressuring state	Micro- & macro-level advocacy	Adherence to democratic practices	Effective HR CSOs operating	Active media	CSOs influencing state policy	User group & environmental group advocacy
10	Performance measures	Movement away from autocracy	More players in system, more state responsiveness	Increased representation at all levels	Increased minority representation	Acceptance of democratic values (surveys)	HR improvement	Corruption exposed	Spatial & class equity in PQLI	Decreasing environmental degradation
11	Issues & problems	Government hostility	Gridlock, "demosclerosis"	Continued elite domination of polity	Ethnic tension, majority backlash	Sustaining momentum	State opposition	Rent seekers' opposition	Urban bias	Collective action issue
12	Possible responses to problems	Lower CSO advocacy profile	Executive autonomy	Stronger non-elite advocacy CSOs	Consociational polity	Continual reinforcement	International publicity	Public pressure	Rural focus	User groups
13	Country examples	Indonesia Rwanda Zaire	Côte d'Ivoire Egypt Jamaica	Bangladesh Eastern Europe NIS	Kenya Peru South Africa	Chile Czech Republic Uruguay	Guatemala Mauritania Sri Lanka	Argentina Philippines Uruguay	Bolivia Ethiopia Tanzania	Nepal Pakistan Sahel Countries

Acronyms: CSO = civil society organization EOP = End of project HR = Human rights LWV = League of Women Voters
 NGO = Non-governmental organization NIS = Newly Independent States NR = Natural resources PQLI = Physical quality of life index

* This strategy should also be included under "C: Policy accountability"

REFERENCES
for APSA Paper

- Alexander, K. C. (1980), *Rural Organizations in South India: The Dynamics of Laborer and Tenant Unions and Farmer Associations in Kerala and Tamil Nadu* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, Rural Development Committee).
- Allison, Graham T., Jr., and Robert P. Beschel, Jr. (1992), "Can the United States Promote Democracy?" *Political Science Quarterly* 107, 1 (Spring), 81-98
- Blair, Harry (1992), "Defining, Promoting and Sustaining Democracy: Formulating an A.I.D. Strategy for Development Assistance and Evaluation," (Washington: USAID, POL/CDIE/E/POA, 23 September).
- Blair, Harry (1993), "Civil Society and Democratic Development: A CDIE Evaluation Paper," revised draft (Washington: USAID, POL/CDIE/E/POA, 23 August).
- Blair, Harry, Raymond Gastil, Michael Gill, Purma Man Shakya, Kapil Shrestha and Richard Whitaker (1991), "The Nepal Democracy Strategy," final report (Washington: USAID, Bureau for Asia and Private Enterprise, Office of Development Resources, Division of Technical Resources, June).
- Bratton, Michael (1986), "Beyond the State: Civil Society and Associational Life in Africa," *World Politics* 41, 3 (April), 407-430.
- Brautigam, Deborah (1991), "Governance and Economy: A Review," WPS 815 (Washington: World Bank, Policy and Review Department, December).
- CBSSE (Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Research Council) (1991), *The Transition to Democracy: Proceedings of a Workshop* (Washington: National Academy Press).
- Charlick, Robert (1992), "The Concept of Governance and Its Implications for A.I.D.'s Development Assistance Program in Africa" (Washington: Associates in Rural Development, June).
- Cohen, Joshua, and Joel Rogers (1992), "Secondary Associations and Democratic Governance," *Politics and Society* 20, 4 (December), 393-472. Also the responses in this special issue of the journal.
- Cole, William S., and Somboon Suksamran (1990), "Strengthening Participatory Institutions and Resources in Thailand: A Proposed Strategy for Future Programming" (Bangkok: USAID/Thailand, March).
- Diamond, Larry, Juan J. Linz and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds. (1990), *Democracy in Developing Societies*, 4 vols. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner).
- Diamond, Larry (1992a), "Promoting Democracy," *Foreign Policy* 87 (Summer), 25-46.
- Diamond, Larry (1992b), "Economy, Society and Democracy in Developing Countries, A Hoover Institution Research Project," workshop held in Washington, 7-9 May 1992.
- Diamond, Larry (1992c), "Introduction: Civil Society and the Struggle for Democracy," in Larry Diamond, ed., *The Democratic Revolution: Struggles for Freedom and Democracy in the Developing World* (New York: Freedom House), 1-27.

- Diamond, Larry (1992d), "Summary Report Draft: AID Conference on 'Economy, Society and Democracy,' May 9-11, 1992, Washington, D.C.," mimeo. (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 22 July).
- Diamond, Larry (1992e), "Economic Development and Democracy Reconsidered," *American Behavioral Scientist* 35, 4/5 (March/June), 450-499.
- Gastil, Raymond D. (1990), "Appropriate Strategies for Promoting Democracy," mimeo. (n.p., June).
- Goldman, Ralph M., and William A. Douglas, eds. (1988), *Promoting Democracy: Opportunities and Issues* (Westport, CT: Praeger).
- Haggard, Stephan (1990), "Democracy and Economic Growth," paper prepared for USAID, Democratic Pluralism Initiative (15 June).
- Hansen, Gary (1993), "Promoting Legal System Reform: Sectoral Experience in Democratization," paper for the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association (Washington, DC, 2-5 September).
- Hirschmann, David, with Johanna Mendelson (1993), "Managing Democratic Electoral Assistance: A Practical Guide for USAID," draft (Washington: USAID/POL).
- Hopple, Gerald W., and Jo L. Husbands, eds. (1991), *Assessing Progress Toward Democracy: Summary Report of a Workshop* (Washington: National Academy Press).
- Huntington, Samuel P. (1968), *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
- Huntington, Samuel P. (1991), *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press).
- Huntington, Samuel P. (1991-92), "How Countries Democratize," *Political Science Quarterly* 106, 4 (Winter), 579-616.
- Inkeles, Alex, ed. (1990), "On Measuring Democracy," a special issue of *Studies in Comparative Development* 25, 1 (Spring).
- Journal of Democracy*, begun in 1990, published for the National Endowment for Democracy by Johns Hopkins University Press.
- MacDonald, Laura (1992), "Turning to the NGOs: Competing Conceptions of Civil Society in Latin America," paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Latin American Studies Association, Los Angeles, 24-27 September.
- Michels, Robert (1915), *Political Parties* (reprint New York: Dover, 1959).
- NAS-NRS (National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council) (1992), Workshop on "Structural Adjustment Policies and Democratization," Washington, 13 November.
- NAS-NRS (1993), "Theoretical Frameworks for Democratic Political Development Assessments," Washington, 8 January.
- Nelson, Joan (1980), "Political Participation" in Myron Weiner and Samuel P. Huntington, eds., *Understanding Political Development* (Boston: Little Brown), 103-159.
- Nelson, Joan, with Stephanie J. Eglinton (1992), Encouraging Democracy: What Role for Conditioned Aid? Policy Essay No. 4 (Washington: Overseas Development Council).
- Olson, Mancur (1992), "The Interest-Free Solution," *Washington Post*, 13 December.

- Politics and Society* (1992), "Special Issue: Secondary Associations and Democracy" (20, 4, December).
- Pye, Lucien W., and Sidney Verba, eds. (1965), *Political Culture and Political Development*, Studies in Political Development 5 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
- Rauch, Jonathan (1992), "Demosclerosis," *National Journal* 24, 36 (5 September), 1998-2003.
- Roberts, Brad, ed. (1990), *The New Democracies: Global Change and U.S. Policy*, a Washington Quarterly Reader (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press).
- Rosenstein-Rodan, Paul (1943), "Problems of Industrialization in Eastern and Southeastern Europe," *Economic Journal* 53 (June-September), 202-211.
- Sayari, Sabri (1993), "Between Political Scientists and Policy Makers: Democracy Research and USAID," paper for the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association (Washington, DC, 2-5 September).
- Sorensen, Georg (1993), *Democracy and Democratization: Processes and Prospects in a Changing World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press).
- USAID (United States Agency for International Development) (1990), "The Democracy Initiative" (Washington: USAID, December).
- USAID (1991a), "The Democracy Initiative Progress Update" (Washington: USAID, April).
- USAID (1991b), Directorate for Policy, "Democracy and Governance: USAID Policy" (Washington: USAID, November).
- USAID, Asia (1993), *Asia Democracy Program Strategy* (Washington: USAID, Bureau for Asia, January [orig. March 1991]).
- USAID, LAC (1991), "Democratic Development Regional Strategy Framework for Latin America," draft (Washington: USAID, Bureau for Latin American and the Caribbean, May).
- USAID/NE (n.d.), "Democratic Institutions Support Project" (Washington: USAID, Near East Bureau, Governance and Democracy Program).
- World Bank (1992), *Governance and Development* (Washington: World Bank, April).
- Young, Malcolm, Gerardo Berthin and Joel Jutkowitz (1993), "A Plan for the Assessment of A.I.D.'s Civil Society Support in the Dominican Republic: 1965-Present," (Arlington: Development Associates, August).