

World Governance Survey Discussion Paper 4**July 2003****CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNANCE IN 16 DEVELOPING COUNTRIES****Goran Hyden, Julius Court and Ken Mease¹****Introduction**Assessing Governance

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has stated that ‘good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development.’² If governance matters, so does the need for more reliable and valid data on key governance processes. Many analysts believe, however, that current indicators provide inadequate measures of key governance processes. Based on the perceptions of experts within each country, governance assessments were undertaken in 16 developing and transitional societies, representing 51 per cent of the world’s population. The aim of the World Governance Survey (WGS) was to generate new, systematic data on governance processes.

To facilitate cohesive data collection and analysis, the governance realm was disaggregated into six arenas:

- (i) Civil Society, or the way citizens become aware of and raise political issues;
- (ii) Political Society, or the way societal interests are aggregated in politics;
- (iii) Executive, or the rules for stewardship of the system as a whole;
- (iv) Bureaucracy, or the rules guiding how policies are implemented;
- (v) Economic Society, or how state-market relations are structured; and,
- (vi) Judiciary, or the rules for how disputes are settled.

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² Kofi Annan, *Partnerships for Global Community: Annual Report on the Work of the Organisation* (UN, 1998).

The project identified 30 indicators based on widely held ‘principles’ of good governance – participation, fairness, decency, accountability, transparency and efficiency – with five indicators in each arena.

In each country, a national coordinator selected a small panel of experts – c35-40 well-informed-persons (WIPs) to complete the assessment. The panel included, amongst others, government officials, parliamentarians, entrepreneurs, researchers, NGO representatives, lawyers and civil servants. Respondents were asked to rank each answer on a scale from 1 to 5; the higher the score, the better. In addition, respondents were invited to provide qualitative comments. The total governance scores have a very robust correlation (0.77) with the country scores in Kaufmann et al.’s aggregate governance indicators, indicating the validity of the results.³ Previous discussion papers looked at the issues of *Governance and Development*⁴ and *Assessing Governance: Methodological Challenges*.⁵ This paper, which focuses on civil society, is one of six that presents the findings for each of the other governance arenas.

The Civil Society Arena

Civil society has emerged in recent years as one of the key concepts in the study of comparative politics. Its rise to prominence marks a big shift in both academic and political discourse on development. For most of the latter part of the 20th century, the development debate focused on the state or on the economic forces underlying a country’s aspiration to make progress. This is as true for the modernization theorists of the 1960s as it is for subsequent generations of neo-Marxist and neo-liberal students of political economy in the 1970s and 1980s. With a growing interest since those days in participatory forms of development and the idea that institutions outside the state are also important contributors to social and economic advancement, civil society has acquired its new significance.

As we will show below, there is no consensus as to what constitutes civil society. For the purpose of this study, we want to make the following introductory observations. Civil

³ Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay and Pablo Zoido-Lobaton, ‘Governance Matters II: Updated Indicators for 2000/01’, *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 2772*, 2002.

⁴ Goran Hyden and Julius Court, 2002, *Governance and Development, World Governance Survey Discussion Paper 1*, Tokyo: UNU.

⁵ Julius Court, Goran Hyden and Kenneth Mease, 2002, *Assessing Governance: Methodological Challenges, World Governance Survey Discussion Paper 2*, Tokyo: UNU.

society sits between the family and the state. It is made up of associational life that reflects the extent to which citizens share their personal grievances and demands with others. It is the arena where the private becomes public; the social becomes political. In the political process perspective adopted in this study, it is where values are formed and expressed. It is also where interests are articulated in public. It is the first ‘station’ in a political input-output scenario. We accept the argument that not everything that happens in civil society creates responses by state institutions. Nor do we rule out the possibility that policies may be initiated within the latter rather than in civil society. The extent to which civil society is an integral part of policy-making, however, is an important factor in national development. How it relates to state institutions matters.

This paper is being organized as follows. The first section will provide a review of the literature that is relevant to this paper. The second will provide an analysis of the aggregate findings of the World Governance Survey as they pertain to civil society. It is divided into two parts, the first providing an analysis by country category – high, medium, and low scorers – the second discussing major changes over time. The third section is a more detailed analysis of the country scores for each individual indicator in this arena. The fourth, and final, section focuses on the implications for research and practice in the governance field.

Governance Issues in Civil Society

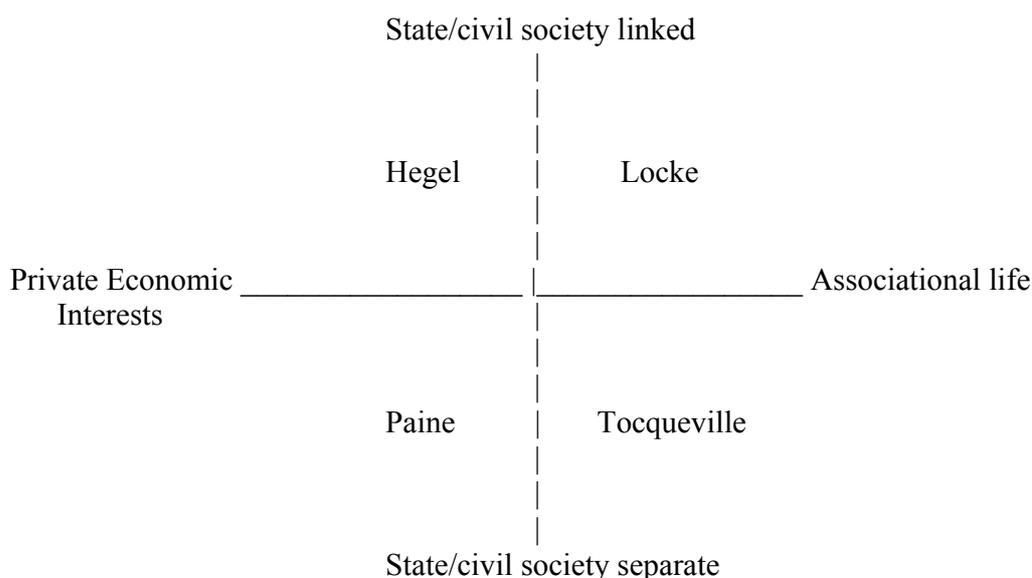
The range of issues that is of potential interest to us is quite broad. It is impossible to do justice to all facets of the literature on civil society. We have decided that the most appropriate way of dealing with it here is to divide it into three sub-sections. The first deals with the origins of the concept, the second with its meaning, and the third with its functions.

Origins

Civil society can be traced back to the period when modern ideas of democracy were beginning to take root. Historically, it is also connected with the rise of capitalism and the evolution of a modern state in the Weberian sense of rational-legal structures of

governance. Civil society is as much an integral part of the development of the West as is either market or state. But looking at the literature in political theory, it is clear that the source of its conceptual evolution is more than one. As Hyden has suggested elsewhere⁶, the early contributions varied along two principal parameters. The first concerns whether civil society is primarily defined by economic or sociological factors: is the focus on the extent to which economic activity is privately controlled or the role that associations play as intermediaries between family and state? The second concerns the relation between state and civil society: are they seen as autonomous of each other or as organically linked? The following matrix identifies what we consider to be the position taken by the ‘founding fathers’ of civil society:

Figure 1. Different historical perspectives on civil society.



Beginning with Locke, he argues, very much like Hobbes did, that the state arises from society and is needed to restrain conflict between individuals. The state cannot be given unlimited sovereignty because that would pose a threat to individual freedoms derived from natural law. Thus, there must be a social contract between rulers and ruled that guarantees these rights but also gives the state the authority to protect civil society from destructive

⁶ Goran Hyden, “Civil Society, Social Capital, and Development: Dissection of a Complex Discourse”, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, vol. 32, no 1 (Spring 1997), pp 3-30.

conflict. A constitutional arrangement, that both state and civil society respect, is, according to Locke, the cornerstone of liberal democracy.

Paine's view is quite different. Drawing on the traditions of the Scottish Enlightenment – David Hume and Adam Smith – his position was considerably more anti-statist. Any expansion of state power poses a threat to the liberties that keep civil society alive. In his libertarian view, it is the market rather than the state that allows civil society to grow. The latter happens whenever individuals are free to exercise their natural rights. State and civil society, therefore, cannot be viewed as reinforcing each other. Their relation is reflective of a zero-sum game.

Tocqueville was alarmed not only by the prospect of a powerful state but also by the tyranny of the majority. Associations, in his view, constituted the strongest bulwark against an unmediated popular will. Self-governing associations educate citizens and scrutinize state actions. They encourage distribution of power and provide opportunities for direct citizen participation in public affairs. Without taking such a strong pro-market view as Paine, Tocqueville still adopts a voluntarist view of civil society. It is capable of protecting and promoting the interest of individuals regardless of their socio-economic position.

Hegel breaks with the tradition of civil society as a natural phenomenon and instead regards it as a product of specific historical processes. Division of labor creates stratification within society and increases conflict between strata. Civil society, in his account, is made up of the various associations, corporations, and estates that exist among the strata. The form and nature of the state is a result of the way civil society is represented and organized. In Hegel's 'organic' perspective, the state exists to protect common interests as it defines them by intervening in the activities of civil society. Marx picks up on this notion and argues that the economic dominance of the bourgeoisie gives it control of civil society via the state. Antonio Gramsci, the foremost Marxist analyst of civil society, bypasses the economic determinism of Marx by arguing that associations are the mechanisms for exercising control in society. By transferring the focus from the state to civil society as the key arena of conflict, Gramsci concludes that civil society harbors the resources needed to develop counter-hegemonic norms to those prevailing at the state level.

We are including this brief review of the origins of the concept of civil society to emphasize its connection to the modernization of Western societies. As market and state emerged in Western Europe and North America, so did civil society. It is worth pointing out, however, that in their approach to civil society over the years, the Europeans have followed in the footsteps of Locke and Hegel, while the U.S. has followed a path closer to Paine and Tocqueville. This is reflected in the way they approach support for democratization in other parts of the world. USAID focuses on privatization and economic liberalization to a greater extent than its European counterparts. Similarly, when it comes to support of civil society, the former tends to act on the premise that associational life is independent of the state. The Europeans, in contrast, stress the interconnectedness between state, market and civil society, e.g. in the way that they see the role of governance in development.

Meanings

How well the concept of civil society – with its Western ‘baggage’ – ‘travels’ across cultural and national boundaries, depends very much on the way it is being used and operationalized in research and practice. It is quite common, especially among practitioners, e.g. analysts in international development agencies and activists in the non-governmental community, to ignore the issue of what civil society really is. They do not problematize it but instead assume that it is foremost just an arena in which all non-governmental organizations operate. There are at least two issues that we wish to address here that are important for understanding governance as it relates to civil society. The first is whether the emphasis is on ‘civil’ or on ‘society’; the second, what goes into the notion of ‘civil’.

It makes quite a difference if the emphasis is laid on civil as opposed to society. The former has a definite normative connotation that is associated with its Western origin. Civil refers to a citizen who respects his rights and obligations as a member of society and thus is ready to ‘play by the rules’. The long historical evolution of this notion in Western societies means that it is well embedded there (even if some, like Putnam⁷, might argue that it is on

⁷ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Decline of Social Capital in America*. New York: W.W. Norton 2001.

decline). The combination of both rights and obligations is the essence of ‘civil’, although the connotation in Western societies is often more on rights than on obligations⁸. Especially in the United States, civil is associated with the ‘negative’ freedoms, i.e. freedom from oppression or interference by the state. Obligations typically feature more prominently in European societies – e.g. compare American and European attitudes toward paying taxes – but the package is even more loaded toward obligations in many other societies. In Asia, it is the long history of strong and centralized government that best explains the prevalence of obligations over rights⁹. In African societies, it is the prevalence of communal obligations at the level of community rather than the state that is cited as the big difference¹⁰. Authors vary in terms of explaining this orientation. Peter Ekeh sees the origin of loyalty to a ‘primordial’ public realm – as compared to a ‘civic’ public realm – as stemming from the pre-colonial days of the slave trade. Africans turned to their own communities for protection and help¹¹. Mahmood Mamdani, on the other hand, blames the weakness of civil rights in African countries on the legacy of late colonialism, i.e. the period when the colonial powers were involved in giving power to African nationalists¹². In the countries of the former Soviet Union, or in those that were its satellites in Eastern Europe, the issue has largely been that the post-Communist period is characterized by privatization without liberalization¹³. In Latin America, the issue of civicism has been very much determined in the past twenty or so years by two factors: the legacy of military rule and the economic liberalization that has been widely carried by governments in the region¹⁴. Given the

⁸ For a discussion of how human rights relate to the issues discussed in this paper, see e.g. David Beetham, *Democracy and Human Rights*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press 1999.

⁹ Joanne R. Bauer and Daniel A. Bell (eds.), *The East Asian Challenge for Human Rights*. Cambridge U.K.: Cambridge University Press 1999.

¹⁰ For a discussion of human rights issues in African societies, see e.g. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim and Francis M. Deng (eds.), *Human Rights in Africa: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press 1990; Ronald Cohen, Goran Hyden, and Winston Nagan (eds.), *Human Rights and Governance in Africa*. Gainesville FL.: University Press of Florida 1993; John W. Harbeson, Donald Rothchild, and Naomi Chazan (eds.), *Civil Society and the State in Africa*. Boulder CO.: Lynne Rienner Publishers 1994; and, Goran Hyden, Dele Olowu, and H.W.O. Okoth Ogendo (eds.), *African Perspectives on Governance*. Trenton NJ.: Africa World Press 2000.

¹¹ Peter Ekeh, “Colonialism and the Two Publics: A Theoretical Statement”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol 17, no 1 (1975), pp 91-117.

¹² Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1996.

¹³ See e.g. Richard Rose, “Postcommunism and the Problem of Trust”, *Journal of Democracy*, vol 5, no 3 (July 1994), pp 18-30.

¹⁴ See e.g. Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transition from Authoritarian Rule: Some Tentative Conclusions*, vol 4. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1986; also, M.A. Garreton, “Human Rights in the Processes of Democratization”, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol 26 (1994), pp 221-34.

differences in historical legacy from one region to another, one must expect variation in interpretation.

If there is scope for different interpretation of what constitutes ‘civil’, the problem with ‘society’ is that it is usually ignored. It is taken for granted, although we know that societies differ in terms of how they are constituted and structured in socio-economic terms as well as in terms of race, ethnicity, and religion. For instance, poverty is widespread in many countries. Even where individuals have formal rights, they find it difficult to exercise them because of their vulnerable status in society. In order to fully understand how civil society operates or is governed, therefore, one needs to look at the extent to which social and economic rights are protected. Amartya Sen has argued that famines do not occur wherever the media are free to express critical opinions of government policy¹⁵, and Zehra Arat found that the distributive impact of economic policies is important for the fate of democracy¹⁶. If elected governments cannot reinforce socio-economic rights at levels comparable to those of civil-political rights, democracy is in danger. While this is an issue that we return to in Working Paper Eight, which focuses on economic society, it is important to flag it already here.

Discussion about the meaning of civil society above suggests that the historical context cannot be ignored. While many of the civil and political rights are widely embraced across cultures, the extent to which they are practiced, and how they relate to duties vis-à-vis the state or community (or both) will vary from region to region. For this reason, we have developed a set of indicators that reflects a basic minimum of rules that typically apply to this arena. In short, we are sensitive to both the existence of universal values for a civil society as well as their embeddedness in specific historical and social contexts.

¹⁵ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*. New York: Anchor Books 1999.

¹⁶ Zehra F. Arat, *Democracy and Human Rights in Developing Countries*. Boulder CO.: Lynne Rienner Publishers 1991.

Functions

The political process approach adopted in this study assumes the importance of function. Each arena fulfills a particular function in politics. Governance determines the way that each function is performed. This implies human agency. Civil society is not a given, but rather a product of desires and demands that people have. Seen through the lenses of individual citizens, civil society has at least three main functions: (a) promoting voluntarism, (b) building social capital, and (c) creating an enabling environment for policy input.

Voluntarism is a key aspect of civil society. The notion that individuals make a choice of their own to associate with others or engage in pursuit of a particular goal in collaboration with others is at the root of development. In this respect, civil society has an important socializing effect. Some people associate with others for altruistic reasons, but it is important to accept that voluntarism is as often the result of utilitarian calculation. As Mancur Olson argued long time ago, collective action comes about as a product of individuals combining their private interests in pursuit of a common good¹⁷. Regardless of motive, however, it is important that there is choice. Every human being is born into a family and a lineage to which he or she has an ascriptive relation. The extent to which lineage relations bear on a person's choice varies from one society to another. The stronger this pressure is on the individual, the more confined his choices are likely to be. Even so, it would be wrong to assume that choice is absent in societies with strong communitarian values. For instance, there is often much more flexibility and choice in the way social relations are organized in African societies than is evident from those studies that assume these relations to be predominantly ascriptive or traditional¹⁸.

Voluntary associations rely on trust and reciprocity. Civil society is there to produce these measures of social capital. Much discussion of social capital in recent years has concentrated on the contribution made by Robert Putnam, especially his study of the role

¹⁷ Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press 1965.

¹⁸ See, e.g. Igor Kopytoff, *The African Frontier*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1987.

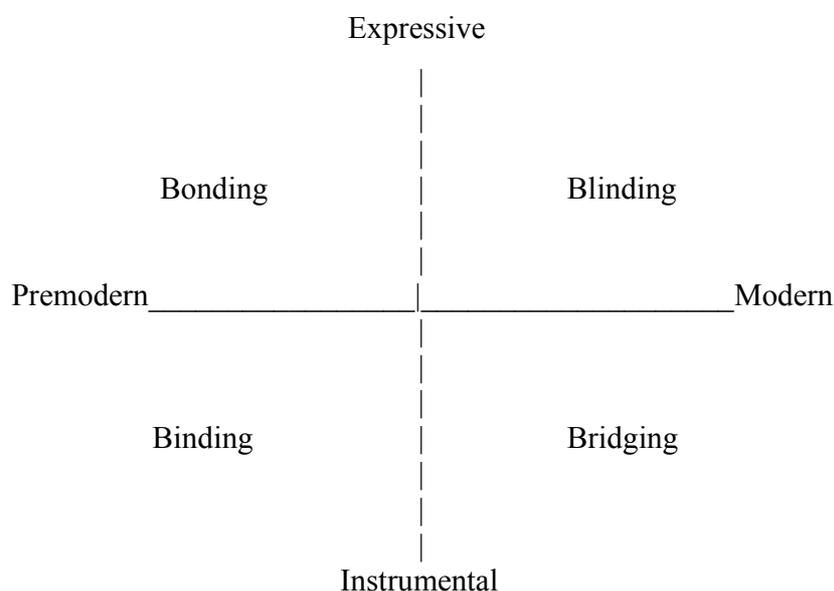
that such capital played in the democratization of Italy¹⁹. In his more recent work, in which he addresses some of the criticism directed against his study of Italy, he acknowledges that the nature of social capital may differ. He makes a basic distinction between bridging and bonding types. The former is inclusive and cuts across such social boundaries as those constituted by language, race, ethnicity or religion. It is associated with crosscutting cleavages. The latter is exclusive and primarily associated with strong enforceable rules within a group where individuals know each other, but allow for a different standard when dealing with outsiders²⁰. We find this distinction a step forward but not far enough.

Social capital can be further differentiated in order to understand its role in development. We propose a fourfold differentiation based on two criteria: the nature of the context, and the purpose of its use. Context matters in that it conditions the formation of social capital. If society is pre-modern, certain types of social capital are more likely than others. Similarly in modern society, other types tend to be the most common. By including purpose, we can move beyond the notion that the bonding type is the only one in pre-modern societies, bridging by far the dominant type in modern society. We refer to a third type – binding – which we see as bringing people together, for example, into inter-ethnic or trans-religious organizations without becoming bridging in the civic sense. Binding social capital is our fourth type. It arises in modern societies where exclusivist groups emerge, not as a result of race or ethnicity, but belief in a cause, i.e. something that serves to mobilize individuals into an organization where membership is determined by ideological commitment and members see themselves in conflict with others. Militia groups, terrorist networks, and protest organizations, such as pro-life action groups, rely on nurturing this form of social capital. Our classification of social capital is summarized in Figure 2 below.

¹⁹ Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1993.

²⁰ Ramon E. Daubon and Harold H. Saunders, “Operationalizing Social Capital: A Strategy to Enhance Communities’ ‘Capacity for Concert’”, *International Studies Perspectives*, No 3 (2002), pp 176-191.

Figure 2. Different types of social capital



This differentiation of social capital is necessary in order to better understand the full scope and variation that exists in the associational sphere from one country to another. While the bridging type may be most closely related with democracy, it is important to acknowledge that the civil society arena is made up of a much greater variety. Because social capital varies among societies, associational life is also different. Furthermore, because social structures are more likely to generate some types rather than others, associations also vary in strength and orientation.

These differences explain why the third function of civil society – creating an enabling environment – is important. Even if civil freedoms and political rights are guaranteed in constitutional provisions, the extent to which organized activities lead to tolerance and activism focused on influencing government policy, varies. Trust and reciprocity – the main ingredients of any form of social capital – may be deep within an organization or group, but very thin in relation to others. For example, with globalization has come increasing mobility. People living in poorer or war-torn societies have left and established residence in more developed countries. The increased presence of people of different religious persuasion and other cultural peculiarities has made the original residents or citizens of these developed countries feel challenged and less secure. Rules guaranteeing freedom of

expression and association – previously regarded as sacrosanct – have been called into question. Civil society, instead of becoming more enabling, has turned disabling in the sense of causing a sense of discrimination among the newcomers. Failure to make civil society more enabling may also happen in societies with a legacy of discrimination against certain groups. Indigenous populations in Central and South America are one case in point; the unscheduled castes and ‘tribal’ groups in India another.

Civil society is the place where interests and demands are initially articulated, but its ability to effectively serve this purpose also varies²¹. Civil society does not necessarily engage the state or vice versa. For instance, in many countries, the state sees itself as primarily, if not exclusively, responsible for national development. The legacy of the ‘development state’ has lingered on in many countries around the world despite liberalization²². In some countries, frustration with government has led to civil society being perceived as an alternative to the state²³. For these reasons, the extent to which civil society focuses on development issues is likely to vary from country to country.

Civil Society: Aggregate WGS Findings

Much of what we have discussed above has guided us in choosing indicators for the civil society arena. They focus on the extent to which state actors allow an open civil society, how far groups themselves are tolerant of each other, and they are ready to accept the rules that guide their involvement in the political process. All of them are also aspects of political socialization. Our five specific indicators are:

1. Freedom of Expression. This indicator is meant to capture how rules affect people’s opportunities to seek, receive, and impart information in public. It is reflective of the content of Article 19 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which emphasizes the importance of decency in the way citizens are treated by the

²¹ For a discussion of this set of issues, see e.g. John Dryzek, “Political Inclusion and the Dynamics of Democratization”, *American Political Science Review*, vol 90 (1996), pp 475-87.

²² For a discussion of this perspective, see the seminal work by Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*. New York: Pantheon Books 1968.

²³ See Herman DeSoto, *The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World*. New York: Harper & Row 1989.

state. The specific question in the WGS reads: “To what extent do citizens have the freedom of expression?”

2.Freedom of Assembly. This indicator is meant to show the extent to which citizens can form and belong to associations of their choice, reflecting in this case the content of Article 20 of the UDHR, which highlights the importance of citizen participation in public life. The WGS question reads: “To what degree do citizens have the freedom of peaceful assembly and association?”

3.Freedom from Discrimination. This indicator is meant to assess the level of tolerance between individuals and groups in society. It reflects most closely Article 2 of the UDHR, which emphasizes fairness in the way state and society interact as well as how citizens treat each other. The specific question in our survey reads: “To what extent is there discrimination in politics?”

4.Input into Policy-making. This indicator is meant to assess the extent to which government engages in consultation with citizens on public issues. The ability to influence policy is a key measure of success for organized activities in this arena and it relates to how efficient it is in performing its role of articulating interests and demands. The specific question in the survey reads: “To what extent does government facilitate public discussion on shifts in policy?”

5.Respect for Rules. This indicator is meant to capture the extent to which citizens respect the rules that are necessary for the achievement of public order and stable government. It relates to the sense of obligation to the public realm that citizens have and, therefore, their accountability to the state. The specific WGS question reads: “To what extent do citizens respect the system of rules affecting their participation in public life?”

We believe that these five indicators capture the crucial dimensions of civil society that relate to quality of governance. By disaggregating civil society this way, we expect to get a better sense of what the more critical or controversial dimensions of civil society are overall and in each country. However, before we proceed to a discussion of each indicator, we examine the aggregate score for each country. For consistency, we divide the countries into the same groups -- high, medium, and low -- based on their overall 2000 WGS scores:

Table 1. Aggregate Civil Society Scores by Country.

Country	Expression	Assembly	Discrimination	Policy Input	Respect for Rules	Country Average
High scoring countries						
Chile	3.70	4.27	3.43	2.87	3.60	3.57
India	4.11	4.39	3.06	2.61	2.50	3.33
Jordan	3.33	3.45	3.05	2.90	3.30	3.21
Mongolia	3.33	3.85	2.95	2.38	2.97	3.10
Tanzania	3.45	2.97	2.58	2.73	3.03	2.95
Thailand	4.22	4.32	3.41	3.59	3.00	3.71
Medium scoring countries						
Argentina	3.97	4.49	2.77	1.86	2.43	3.10
Bulgaria	3.37	3.76	2.66	2.37	2.56	2.94
China	2.76	1.82	2.76	2.45	2.45	2.45
Indonesia	4.26	4.29	2.94	3.23	2.31	3.41
Peru	3.43	4.05	3.19	2.81	1.97	3.09
Low scoring countries						
Kyrgyzstan	3.00	3.15	3.12	2.74	2.36	2.87
Pakistan	2.94	2.03	2.45	1.91	1.97	2.26
Philippines	4.00	4.00	2.60	2.49	2.46	3.11
Russia	2.84	3.76	3.26	2.34	2.42	2.93
Togo	2.55	3.02	2.86	1.79	2.43	2.53
Arena Avg.	3.45	3.60	2.94	2.57	2.61	3.04

The first thing is to remind the reader that the figures for the civil society arena are higher than for any of the other five arenas. The second is that there is a marked disparity in ratings among indicators within the arena. The most interesting is between the scores for political rights – freedom of expression and association – on the one hand, and those for the relations among groups – discrimination and respect for rules – as well as policy input, on the other. This suggests that the rights that help constitute civil society are quite well established, but that the issues relating to how it works are not yet resolved in many

countries. We shall discuss these issues in greater detail below, but first we shall look at differences among countries.

Differences Among Countries

Because we are looking at civil society not only in terms of how the arena is constituted but also how it operates, the aggregate score for each country includes more than what is typically part of an assessment of the role that it plays in development. We provide a more 'holistic' view of civil society that is at the same time sufficiently differentiated to register the qualitative differences both between countries and among variables specific to the arena. Ours is a tougher test for each country than those assessments like the Freedom House Index that only measure civil liberties and/or political rights.

There are no real surprises in our country findings. There are some 'outliers' that we will discuss below, but by and large the high scorers come out on top on most indicators, the low scorers at the bottom right across the board. We discern that countries with a tradition of democratic governance, e.g. Chile, India, Argentina, and the Philippines, have a relatively well-functioning civil society. Associations know their role and are less tentative or timid, as comments by our respondents also indicate. There is also evidence to suggest that countries that are socially homogeneous, e.g. Thailand, Jordan and Mongolia, tend to score higher than countries that have no democratic tradition and are more socially divided either by ethnicity or religion. Even Indonesia could be considered in this group, but to be sure, the case of Indonesia is a little more complicated. Comments by our WIPs confirm that the important role that voluntary associations played in the transition from President Suharto is also part of the explanation of this score. It is definitely one reason why Indonesia scored higher than other countries in the category of medium scorers.

China is another case that deserves comments here. Its average score for civil society is the second lowest of all. Even with economic liberalization and cautious political reforms, such as the introduction of election of government leaders at the village and parish levels, China still has a long way to go when it comes to developing civil society. Its score on freedom of assembly is particularly low, considerably below other countries with an autocratic regime such as Pakistan and Togo. At the same time, there is evidence that the voice of the public

is not completely silenced. The score for policy input is somewhat higher indicating that there is scope for consultation between government and citizens.

The case of Jordan is also interesting. It is not known for being democratic, but it confirms our view that governance may be legitimate even in circumstances that do not resemble those in Western democracies. In Islamic societies where religion is a dominant factor in all walks of life, groups and organization are more closely tied to the rulers. The issue that arises here is the extent to which they are voluntary. Muslims have definite obligations to the welfare of others. The line between duty and right, therefore, is more difficult to establish. The quite high score on compliance with rules confirms this. This is one place where the differentiation of the concept of social capital beyond Putnam's typology makes sense.

Philippines has quite a high average score for the civil society arena compared both to scores for the other arenas and countries in the same low-scoring category. This reflects a legacy of strong public participation in both politics and development. But it is also indicative of the experience that the country had in conjunction with President Estrada's demise and impeachment. The opposition to his way of ruling the country was very much driven by popular organizations. Demands were articulated as much in the streets as in the legislature. Thus, it is not surprising that the Philippine score for this arena is relatively high.

The mean scores for each category of countries, finally, confirm what we have stated about the overall picture for this arena. In spite of some exceptions, the mean for each category differs significantly, as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean scores on civil society indicators by groups of countries.

Category of countries	Mean score
High scoring	3.31
Medium scoring	3.00
Low scoring	2.74

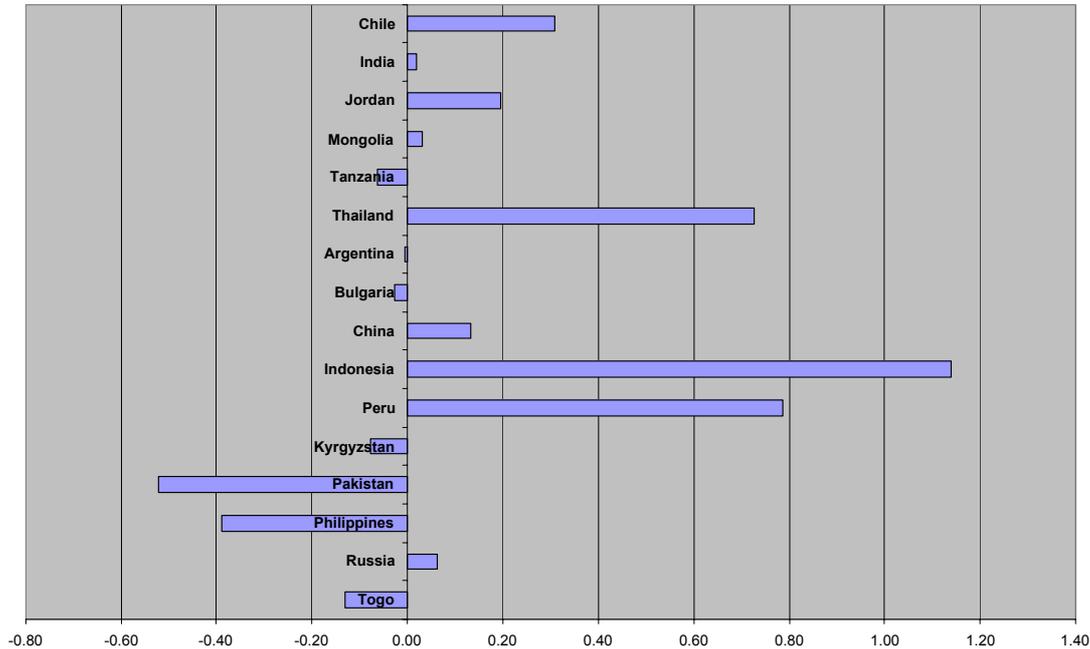
There is an almost equal amount of difference between the high, medium, and low scoring groups: approximately .30. To fully appreciate the governance situation in 2000, however, it is also important to examine what changes have taken place over time and where.

Changes Over Time

There was a slight improvement in the civil society arena between 1996 and 2000, as reflected in the average scores for the two points of measurement: 2.98 for the former and 3.04 for the latter. This average, however, hides some quite dramatic changes both upwards and downwards in individual countries. Figure 3 illustrates the changes over time by country for the civil society arena.

The overall pattern suggests that high- and medium-scoring countries have registered improvement, while low-scoring countries have declined. The medium category contains some of the greatest improvements of all. The significant shifts in Indonesia and Peru are all indicative of the regime change that has taken place and in which civil society played an important role. Greater freedom and a stronger role for voluntary associations were not given to the people of these countries on a golden plate. They were the outcome of struggles in which groups of citizens risked their lives. The impact the events had in these countries as they emancipated themselves from military or civilian autocracy was quite high.

Figure 3. Changes over time in Civil Society by country*



*The chart shows average change in aggregate arena score for 1996 and 2000.

The decline was particularly noticeable in Pakistan as well as the Philippines and, to a lesser extent, in Kyrgyzstan. In each case, there is a clear explanation of this. In Pakistan, it has to do with the military take-over of power and the limitations in freedom of association that it brought about. In the Philippines, the main drop was in regard to citizen compliance with rules. Respondents identified a breakdown in order and increased challenge of the regime by Muslim separatists as evidence that things had gone worse. In Kyrgyzstan, finally, the decline is with regard to the rights of expression and association. Deterioration took place after 1999 when extremist Islamic groups engaged in aggressive acts within the country that led the government to become more oppressive.

In sum, the improvements exceed the decline, an indication that civil society is an arena where progress has been made. In order to understand what is going on, however, it is necessary to examine the performance with regard to each individual indicator.

Analysis of Each Individual Indicator

Since the mid-1980s, there has been a wave of democratization around the world. In addition, over 170 countries have ratified international human rights treaties, and many countries have re-written their constitutions. Many of these revised constitutions now contain guarantees protecting freedom of expression and assembly. Moreover, donors have made the development of civil society in many countries a major priority and some made aid conditional on improvements in this arena. Therefore, we should expect to see a general improvement in at least the conditions that exist for group formation – freedom of expression and the right to assemble peacefully. In addition, the WGS is interested in trying to judge the success of these organizations, i.e. how well they operate with regard to policy-making input, preventing discrimination, and fostering respect for rules of governance. Our focus on each indicator provides some insights into these propositions.

Freedom of Expression

Freedom of speech is fundamental to a viable civil society. Article 19 of the UDHR states that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” During the past two decades, there has been an explosion of newspapers and other forms of media around the world, especially in developing societies. The increase in the number and amount of information resulted from changes in constitutions, as well as pressure from donors.

With the increase in sources of information, civil society groups found expanded opportunities to take a more visible role in many countries. Many of these groups, which include women, labor unions, trade organizations, ethnic and religious minorities and indigenous people have voice and influence for the first time in this new environment.

In addition to the explosion of media, there has been a dramatic increase in the formation of political parties in many countries. Taken together, the opportunities for groups to publicize their concerns and policy needs increased dramatically. Of course, change takes time, and levels of free expression varied considerably across our sample of countries. It was

particularly high in India, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand. At the lower end, not surprisingly, were China, Pakistan, Russia, and Togo.

Increased freedom of expression leads to a greater sense of decency, a key element of governance. People become more aware of the value of tolerating the view of others and, by extension, treating them like they want others to treat themselves. By guaranteeing people a protected forum in which to voice concerns, the potential for good governance increases. Without this key ingredient, civil society lacks voice and without voice, peaceful change becomes more difficult.

Freedom of Association

The cornerstone of a strong civil society is the freedom of association. This indicator is a measure of the enabling environment required for associational life. The WGS indicator reflects UDHR Article 20, which states that, “everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. No one may be compelled to belong to an association, (and) as such it also includes the right that no one is compelled to belong to an association.” Being able to organize into groups is a natural complement to having the right to freely express grievances, policy alternatives, draw attention to discrimination or pursue other policy objectives.

During the past two decades, there has been a dynamic growth in the number of civil society groups in almost all countries around the world²⁴. This is especially true in many of the developing societies that have been caught up in the wave of democratization. One of the characteristics of modern democracies is the presence of groups seeking change.

Backed by development projects designed to fund and promote group formation, the number of groups formed in many of the WGS countries grew geometrically. In addition, many donors made financial aid conditional on states making room for civil society groups.

²⁴ See Civicus, *Citizens Strengthening Global Civil Society*. Washington D.C.: Civicus – World Alliance for Citizen Participation 1994.

Scoring on this indicator is among the highest of all in the survey. The notable exceptions are China and Pakistan. Freedom of association remains very limited in China in spite of liberalization of the economy. In Pakistan, control of associations grew after the military took power and extremist religious groups began to cause violence. The most important thing to register about this and the former indicator is that they confirm the extent to which this arena is now being recognized as important. Citizens have more scope for engaging in public life than before. The improvement that has taken place, just between 1996 and 2000, is significant.

Freedom from Discrimination

This indicator is aimed at measuring the extent of tolerance between individuals and groups in politics, a quality that is especially indicative of how ‘civil’ society is. As a governance issue, this is an important indicator of the potential for different groups to enter and compete in the political process. It reflects UDHR Article 2, which states that “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.” However, the interpretation of this variable requires a more in-depth look into each country. It is possible that discrimination can stimulate the growth of civil society, as those facing discrimination organize to fight it. On the other hand, a country with low discrimination may score low on other indicators in the civil society arena for other reasons.

Tanzania, which generally did not record significant changes on most indicators between 1996 and 2000 suffered a 1.2 point loss here. This decrease reflects an increased tension between the Muslim and Christian communities in recent years and the decline in tolerance that our respondents see following in the wake of this conflict. Other countries that noted a decline in tolerance included Bulgaria, China, Pakistan, and Togo. There are two factors that seem to have caused this decline. One is the growing importance of religious

identification in society, a factor that respondents refer to in Pakistan. Another is the increased tension that follows from a more competitive form of life as a result of economic liberalization, a factor in China, and political democratization, cited as reason in Bulgaria and Togo.

Policy Input

For governments to effectively formulate policy there needs to be mechanisms for consultation with different groups in society. The extent and nature of these interactions are likely to have implications for the nature of policy and the legitimacy of the system. While the first three indicators in the civil society arena gauge the conditions for formation, this indicator attempts to gauge its effects. Because of the wave of democratization and the conditionality of foreign aid, we are not too surprised to see relatively high scores on the first two indicators – freedom of expression and assembly. However, the low scores on influencing policy, the lowest of the five WGS civil society indicators, suggest that with regard to influence on policy, many countries come up short. There are a variety of possible reasons for this shortcoming that include some states wanting to look democratic and free to meet donor conditions for aid, but still managing to mute the voice of civil society in the policy making process. Another explanation is that it takes time for groups to learn the skills to successfully lobby and influence policy change. Thailand seems to be the only exception. Respondents there see civil society playing an important role in policy-making. Associations are relatively strong and experienced especially in the social sector and interaction with government is smooth. At the other extreme is Argentina, a country with a democratic tradition, but where policy input is seen as very low. This reflects a widespread feeling, prior to the country's economic meltdown at the end of 2001 that policy was made more in response narrow interests and to demands by the international finance institutions than by organized groups in society. Our respondents in Indonesia perceive civil society to have considerably more influence over policy in 2000 than in 1996 reflecting the opportunities for influence that arose in the transition from the Suharto regime.

Respect for Rules

Our last indicator, which garnered the second lowest score, is another way to better understand the levels of satisfaction citizens have in the civil society arena. Like the amount of influence groups or citizens has in the policy process, adhering to rules tells us if people are vested or have a sense of ownership in the system. Rights always imply correlative duties and responsibilities, and rights make no sense if seen in isolation from the responsibilities or duties that citizens have toward each other and the common good.

The theory is that once civil society is functioning well, respect for rules should increase, as citizens and civil society groups influence policy and therefore the rules. Increased voice and policy influence should encourage respect for the system. The extent to which citizens respect rules governing the public realm is an important governance issue. To explore this variable further, it could be compared to such different objective indicators on responsibilities to society as payment of taxes, turning out to vote, and not committing crime.

Following rules is about accountability. To make a claim of good governance, accountability must be present, and it is not just for government officials. Citizens must be accountable to the state and its rules. Clearly in many countries, there is a long way to go before accountability reaches the system of rules governing the citizenry. The problem of citizen accountability is especially evident in Peru and Pakistan, both countries with a history of upheavals and shift to military rule as a result, at least in part, of lack of rule compliance among groups of citizens. No country scores particularly high and there have been only incremental shifts between 1996 and 2000. Chile and Jordan, for very different reasons, are the only countries where our respondents believe that respect for rules is reasonably high. In the former case, it reflects satisfaction with the way citizens have settled in to the new democratic regime that came about in the late 1980s. In Jordan, judging from comments we received, the key factor is the deference that citizens show in response to the benevolence of the monarchy. They do not want to cause upheavals that would be interpreted as a protest against the King.

Implications for Research and Practice

There are several implications that we would like to discuss in the concluding section of this paper. The first concerns what our survey has to say about civil society. The second relates to how it helps us better understand specific governance challenges inherent in the civil society arena. The third point builds on these other two concerns in order to discuss what the WGS means for practitioners working on improving civil society governance around the world.

Observations

There are four general observations that we see in our findings. The first is that civil society is generally considered to be quite open in the WGS countries. Respondents acknowledge that it is difficult for governments to sustain control over its citizens as was attempted before the recent efforts to introduce more democratic forms of governance. In this respect, democracy has scored a victory. One might also note that the investments made by donors in the civil society arena appear to be paying off. Not everything, however, is fine. Comments by respondents indicate that in many countries there is still a tendency for governments to arrest or intimidate citizens who propagate views different from those in power. It is also clear that in many countries there is discrimination in the public arena. For instance, respondents in the Philippines reported discrimination as a problem. China had one of the lowest civil society scores, as is evident from our table. WIPs in China recognized that civil society in their country is not as strong or vital as it may be in other places. This is particularly the case regarding the freedom of association, where the very low rating for China makes an interesting contrast with the high rating for India, the other giant in terms of population in our survey.

Second, not only does the civil society arena get the highest governance score, but it also records a solid improvement of 8 per cent between 1996 and 2000. A closer look indicates that the improvements with regard to freedom of expression and association are relatively constant across countries and among the highest scores obtained in the whole survey. This evidence reflects the situation on the ground in many countries: for example, the number of

NGOs in Mongolia increased from 30 in 1989 to 1700 in mid-2000 – particularly in the area of service delivery.

Third, while civil society may be vital, there is a general impression that public input into policy is still quite limited. Many governments simply do not provide an environment in which such input is facilitated. This suggests that civil society and state live a rather separate life with governments continuing to set the policy agenda much on their own. This is the case not only in countries such as Togo, but also in Argentina where respondents rate government attitude to facilitating public input as very low. This indicator received the lowest average rating for the civil society arena in the pilot countries and perhaps deserves further consideration.

Fourth, high scores on governance of civil society do not have to come from democratic countries only. We differ from studies of democratic consolidation in that we include other types of countries as well. We also differ from the international discourse on “good governance” which has a very distinct bias in favor of liberal democracy. Our study confirms that high civil society governance scores are also obtainable in countries with other than a liberal political dispensation. Jordan is the most obvious case in point. Its civil society may not be as pluralist or open as in other countries, but it functions satisfactorily in terms of producing results. It confirms to us that good governance may be associated with more than one type of social capital.

Research

If citizens can speak out and form groups, one expects to see increased policy influence. The assumption is that with more participation – and thus a stronger civil society – pressures on public officials would increase and efficiency, measured by the amount of influence people feel they have in policymaking, would increase. Our study does not show an automatic relation between civil liberties and political rights, on the one hand, and policy influence, on the other. One interpretation could be that while civil society may have grown in strength, it has done so largely because of the inadequate performance of the state.²⁵ This

²⁵ Since two of the indicators associated with this principle are more about freedom rather than directly about participation, it may also be possible that civil society is stronger, but remains somewhat separate from the

finding is in line with earlier arguments, e.g. by Dryzek,²⁶ that civil society is a sphere that evolves largely in response to the inability or failure of the state to meet needs or demands of its citizens. The results of the WGS support the increasing literature that people engage in collective action on their own – whether to strengthen political and civil liberties, promote economic prosperity or provide social services – because public institutions do not.²⁷ Another explanation is that some states provide a safe environment for voicing opinions and forming groups, but find a way to keep members of civil society from exercising influence in policymaking.

A close examination of these relationships suggests that in some cases high levels of rights to free expression and assembly are associated with higher levels of policy influence. For instance, Indonesia and Thailand had two of the highest combined scores for expression and assembly and also had high scores for influencing policymaking. Jordan, Chile, and Peru also had relatively high scores on influencing policy, along with high combined expression and assembly scores.

An interesting case is Argentina, which had the second lowest policy score, but recorded the fourth highest combined score for expression and assembly. These different ratings seem to strongly express the lack of connection between rights and influencing policy. Our WIPs in Argentina told us that the government was not interested in public debates over policy choices. Similarly, India and the Philippines scored near the top of the combined expression and assembly scores, but scored 8th and 9th respectively on influencing policy. Our respondents in India echoed the comments we heard in Argentina, which claimed that the government was not interested in any public debate over policy.

Togo, which had the lowest score for policy influence, also had one of the lowest combined scores for expression and assembly. Others at the low end of the policy influence distribution included Pakistan, which had the second lowest combined expression and

state. It is also possible that this finding might in fact be a reflection of the time lag between identifying a problem (or the public institutions experiencing pressure from the civil society) and finding a solution to it (or the public institutions responding to the pressure from civil society).

²⁶ Dryzek, “Political Inclusion...” *op.cit.*

²⁷ See among others. Ernest Gellner, *Conditions of Freedom: Civil Society and Its Rivals*. London: Penguin Press, 1994 and Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Towards Consolidation*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

assembly score, as well Russia and Bulgaria. Not surprisingly, China had the lowest combined expression and assembly score, but fell in the middle of the distribution for influencing policy. Therefore, while we do see high levels of expression and assembly leading to high level of influencing policy in some cases, there are exceptions. We find that contextual conditions in each country and their diverse histories help us better understand these rankings.

We also expected that as the level of influencing policy increased we would see increased support for the rule-making system. Once again to some degree, we found this relationship. Three of the four countries with highest scores on policy influence, also have three of the four highest scores for support for the rule-making system: Thailand, Jordan, and Chile.

Indonesia, the second highest on policy influence, had one of the lowest scores on the support for rule-making indicator. With the end of the Suharto regime and the well-publicized corruption associated with it, a low score on this indicator is not surprising. In Indonesia, between 1996 and 2000 the support for rule-making fell .29; however the influence over policy went up 1.6 points, which is a lot on a five point scale. The fall of Suharto led to an immediate increase in policy input, but not in accountability, or support for rule making. Our WIPs in Indonesia reported that with the new constitution came increased freedom of expression, rights to join groups, and a new approach by the government to actively seek public input into the policymaking process. However they also reported that with the change in regime came decreased respect for the law and a lack of enforcement.

Likewise in Argentina, even though influence on policy-making fell, respect for rules remained high. Countries with the highest difference between scores for rule deference and influencing policy included Jordan, Chile, Togo, Tanzania, Mongolia, and Argentina. Some of these countries have or recently had authoritarian regimes, while others, like Tanzania have high levels of corruption.

The implication for research is twofold. The first is that contextual factors matter. If state and civil society do not engage in win-win types of processes, this could be because there is a possible lag between feelings of efficacy in policymaking and support for the system of

rules. But it could also be because the strength of political society varies from one country to another. The intermediate mechanisms between civic associations and interest groups, on the one hand, and government, on the other, such as political parties, electoral systems, and legislatures are not very well institutionalized in many of our countries. This finding is in line with the conclusion that Linz and Stepan²⁸ draw in their overview of democratic transition and consolidation in Southern Europe, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

The other implication is that the nature of associational life varies across countries because different types of social capital prevail. The idea that ‘bonding’ and ‘bridging’ types are enough to classify social capital is being challenged by our study, which indicates that the variation in form is greater. For instance, the relative strength of civil society in Jordan is not adequately explained by Putnam’s distinction. Nor is the associational life in countries like Tanzania where inter-ethnic ties are strong without being bridging in a ‘civic’ sense. We believe that this issue, like the one of the relation between civil and political society, deserves more attention by the research community.

Practice

There are several ways that our study sheds light on challenges for the practitioners in the governance field. The first concerns the scope of concern under the rubric of ‘civil society’. We show that there is much more to the relationship between state and civil society than is captured by the concepts of ‘participation’ or ‘accountability’ alone. By recognizing the dual function of civil society as an arena for both political socialization and interest articulation, we are able to capture more of both strengths and weaknesses than those approaches that assume governance to be associated more specifically only with qualities associated with liberal democracy.

The second is that we cannot continue treating civil society and state as if one is the “good guy”, the other the “bad guy”. Civil society has often been regarded in the past ten years as the hope for the future, especially where governments are weak and corrupt. While it is sometimes true that civil society has accomplished things that the state has failed to do, the

²⁸ Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

assumption that it is a matter of “either-or” is mistaken. The two should be treated as inter-linked. Experience tells us, and this survey seems to confirm it, that the quality of the state reflects the quality of its societal base. Public officials are also members of society and carry the same values as other citizens. It is important, therefore, that efforts to improve governance tackle reforms of the state as part of strengthening civil society and the linkages between the two.

The third is that many of the countries included in our sample are newcomers to a system in which civil society is meant to play an important part in the political process. Institutions are only now being introduced or put into place. With regard to such key functions as adopting views from the public and transforming them into policy, our survey confirms that individual actors and organizations are still learning. They make mistakes and there is reason in some places to consider whether the rules adopted so far really are the most suitable for the country’s continued development.

The fourth is that many of the shortcomings of civil society are directly attributable to the behavior of individual members of the legislature. They do not necessarily live up to the expectations associated with the rules or, even worse, they outright violate these rules. We came across frequent references to elected representatives having abandoned their constituents or having engaged in corrupt behavior. These breaches of expected norms have definitely contributed to lowering the legitimacy also of civil society at large in some of the countries covered by the WGS.

In conclusion, we like to say that while development programs often leave a lot to be desired, clearly the investments made since the late 1980s are beginning to pay off as far as civil society is concerned. Not only do WIPs feel that they increasingly can speak out and form groups, but in many countries there is a stronger link between exercising these rights and influencing the policymaking process.