Introduction

Global civil society includes a vast and diverse set of organisations, associations, networks, movements, and groups whose overall contours and the forces that shape them we are just beginning to fathom (Anheier, Glasius, and Kaldor 2001; Keane 2001). Global civil society organisations (CSOs) range from large-scale charities with hundreds of staff to transnational volunteer-run networks with no real expenditures at all; from non-profit corporations with franchises in numerous countries to ‘virtual’ associations with no identifiable location; from single-issue campaign groups and professional service providers to voluntary organisations offering humanitarian assistance; from democratically run organisations to autocratic sects; from anti-globalisation groups and environmental movements to Christian revival groups and trade unions; and from philanthropic foundations with multi-billion-dollar endowments to savings clubs among migrant communities spread across different countries.

These examples illustrate that CSOs vary in structure, governance, formality, and the scale and scope of their operations and revenue. Importantly, they also show that CSOs include many more forms than the term ‘non-governmental organisation’ (NGO) suggests, and the organisational repertoire of global civil society goes well beyond what more narrow interpretations suggest (e.g., Grimond 2002). Yet, whatever their name or form, in their totality CSOs make up the organisational infrastructure of global civil society. The purpose of this chapter is to throw light on some of the principles underlying the various forms CSOs take in an effort to understand more about the roles they play in a globalising world.

In this chapter we use insights from organisation and management theory to examine this organisational infrastructure. Organisation theory shows that form matters to the way we organise and manage (Williamson 1985; Aldrich 1999) and for the structure and dynamics of the societies we live in (e.g., Castells 1996; Meyer et al. 1997). ‘Organisational form’ is a somewhat technocratic term for those characteristics of an organisation that ‘identify it as a distinct entity and, at the same time, classify it as a member of group of similar organisations’ (Romanelli 1991: 81–2). Organisational form is more than formal organisational structure, and includes resource types, governance, accountability, organisational culture, informal structures, and external relations.

For example, service providing and advocacy NGOs are both part of the larger category ‘non-profit organisations’ and share similar governance and accountability structures, but they differ in terms of activities, output, cost and revenue structure, and, most likely, in their inter-organisational relations. The Internet organisation One World, dedicated to free information access, may differ from other ‘dot-causes’ in terms of professionalism and decision-making structure (see Clark and Themudo forthcoming), but they share the same crucial resource, i.e., the Internet, that makes their existence possible.

In contrast to more established fields in politics (e.g., party systems), social policy (welfare systems) or the economy (e.g., specific industries like petroleum, electronics, or insurance markets), the organisational infrastructure of global civil society is less settled and in a state of flux, with new forms emerging and others becoming less frequent. This accounts for the somewhat ‘fluid’, even ‘ephemeral’ nature of some types of organisations and network forms that observers like Clark and Themudo (forthcoming) and Lindenberg and Dobel (1999), among others, report. As communication costs plummeted internationally in the 1990s, network forms of organisation (Powell 1990) emerged among CSOs and are, as we suggest below, becoming a signature element of global organising.

Network forms emerge, for example, when national affiliates of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) increasingly cooperate and coordinate their activities outside the conventional headquarter-subunit structure, and develop lateral
relations both locally and internationally. In this sense, Oxfam India may be more closely involved with, for example, Save the Children India, World Vision India, other Indian NGOs, local UNICEF branches, local governments, and social movement networks than with Oxfam International headquarters in London. We therefore use the term ‘organisational form’ in a broader sense as ‘organised and structured action’ rather than applying it to formal, singular organisations only. Thus the term covers networks, coalitions, partnerships, and social movements in addition to more conventional forms such as NGOs and other non-profit organisations.

The case of Jubilee 2000 helps illustrate what we mean by organisational form (see Box 8.1). Indeed, by examining its form we can identify the reasons for the organisation’s success and difficulties in mounting a global advocacy campaign on the rather difficult issue of debt cancellation for developing countries.

From an early stage, Jubilee 2000 adopted a social movement form, with little central coordination, dispersed resources, and decentralised information management. As it grew rapidly, Jubilee 2000 soon encountered conventional organisational problems such as overreach, lack of central coordination, mission dilution, and ‘scapegoating’ (see Anheier 1999). Moreover, its decentralised information system failed to detect such problems early on and divergent strategies began to take root leading to the movement sending mixed signals to their audience. The movement had quickly become global but without a global governance and management structure that reconciled emerging tensions between national and global. These problems reduced the movement’s cohesion and, ultimately, we believe, its effectiveness and legitimacy. Marlies Glasius (Chapter 6), in describing the CSO coalition that lobbied for the formation of the International Criminal Court,

**Box 8.1: The challenge of success – Jubilee 2000**

Jubilee 2000 started in 1996 as a partnership of UK development NGOs. It grew very quickly into a large international movement campaigning for debt cancellation for poor countries. In 1998 in Birmingham it gathered about 50,000 people in a human chain around a G7 meeting (Bauck 2001). From the outset, Jubilee 2000 avoided a formal structure and instead preferred to adopt the structure and identity of a social movement (Jubilee 2000 UK URL). This structure gave Jubilee 2000 a great fluidity and ability to grow. Rather than growing as a single organisation, it encouraged similar groups to form in other countries with little central oversight. There was almost no standardisation of message or philosophy. This growth by replication rather than internal expansion bypassed limitations of central coordination capacity of the founding group and enabled a very fast growth of the movement. Albeit limited, their achievements were substantial in a very difficult area where many NGOs had campaigned for years without much success. The Jubilee movement form was a key ingredient of its success, enabling the mobilisation of around 24 million people worldwide within a relatively short period of time (Jubilee 2000 UK URL).

Eventually, however, North-South tensions began to emerge within the movement. Some Southern-based groups such as Jubilee South and Jubilee South Africa began to openly question the positions of Northern Jubilee 2000 members, which they perceived to be too narrow to really address global inequality problems. Alongside a North-South rift there were also strong conflicts between moderate and radical members at the national levels in, for example, the US Jubilee 2000 (Bauck 2001). These conflicts transpired in their campaigning exposing an increasing internal rift. The result of the antagonism was an erosion of legitimacy for the overall movement (Bauck 2001). Today Jubilee 2000 UK has turned into Jubilee Debt Campaign but much of its dynamism appears to have withered.

While the movement form facilitated a very fast growth of support for the cause, its lack of formal decision-making and governance structures also led to a difficulty in coordinating the various interests in the movement. Jubilee 2000 had a global presence but not global governance. What was a very appropriate organisational form for some purposes in a given context (e.g., to get 24 million people to sign a petition worldwide) was less appropriate for other purposes and contexts (e.g., to sustain a global advocacy campaign over a long period).
presents interesting decision-making and transparency issues that resulted from the coalition’s organisational form.

Thus, forms that are appropriate for specific purposes (e.g., expansion and organisational growth) in certain environments (e.g., Europe) can be disabling for different purposes and phases (e.g., consolidation or retrenchment) as well as environments (e.g., global or transnational). Choice matters in two other important aspects as well: organisational legitimacy and impact. If CSOs challenge the accountability of other social actors, they must themselves be accountable (Edwards 1999). Otherwise, their ability to be effective advocates in supporting democratization or addressing North-South power imbalances, among other issues, will be limited. Moreover, as seen in the Jubilee 2000 example, one single movement can achieve much and may have significant impact on global governance, which suggests that the organisational forms CSOs take is closely related to their capacity for effecting change.

While forms typically develop more or less ‘organically’ over the life cycle of organisations, they can also experience fundamental changes and major redesigns (Greiner 1972; Aldrich 1999). For example, Amnesty International underwent frequent reorganisation as it grew to a presence in over 100 countries in just over 40 years and evolved from a small volunteer-run group to a transnational organisation with a highly complex governance structure (Anheier and Themudo 2002) with members in over 140 countries (see Box 8.2). Likewise, in recent years most of the large international relief and development NGOs have undergone profound form changes that go beyond the reorganisation of their structure to involve changes in mission and culture as well (Lindenberg and Dobel 1999; Korten 1990). We suggest that the reason why many NGOs finds themselves in more or less ‘constant reorganisation’ is closely related to the environment in which they operate. To explore this further, we will take a look at the relationship between form and environment.

**Forms Old and New**

*Launched in 1961 by British lawyer Peter Benenson, Amnesty International has today more than 1,000,000 members, subscribers and regular donors in more than 140 countries and territories. The organisation’s nerve centre is the International Secretariat in London, with more than 320 members of staff and over 100 volunteers from more than 50 countries around the world. The movement consists of more than 7,500 local, youth & student, and professional Amnesty International groups registered at the International Secretariat plus several thousand other youth & student groups, specialist groups, networks and coordinators in nearly 100 countries and territories throughout the world. There are nationally organised sections in 56 countries, and pre-section coordinating structures in another 23 countries and territories worldwide . . . Rapid action for prisoners and others . . . is mobilised by the Urgent Action (UA) network made up of more than 80,000 volunteers in some 85 countries’ (Amnesty International URL).
based versus non-membership-based organisations, several striking results emerge over the 20-year period from 1981 to 2001 (Table 8.1).

As readily indicated by the upward trend in Figure 8.1, the number of known INGOs increased from about 13,000 in 1981 to over 47,000 by 2001. The number of INGOs reported in 1981 would make up just under 28 per cent of the stock of INGOs 20 years later. The most numerous forms are the category ‘internationally-oriented national organisations’ with a share of around 40 per cent over the two decades. This includes ‘national organisations with various forms of international activity or concern such as research, peace, human rights, development or relief’ (UIA URL), e.g., NGOs like Human Rights Watch that have mainly a national presence (USA) but with an international or global orientation. Other examples include Article 19, Minority Rights Group or the German relief organisation Bread for the World.

Of the various forms listed in Table 8.1, only the small group of federations of international organisations, typically umbrella organisations linked to the UN system, seem to have declined in absolute numbers over the 20-year period. Conversely, the frequency of all other forms has increased in absolute terms since 1981. Yet some forms have increased more than others. Among those that experienced absolute growth but relative decline are membership organisations which saw their share go down—a trend most pronounced for regional ones limited to particular political or geographical regions (e.g., EU, Africa).

By contrast, what seems to have expanded in both absolute and relative terms is what the Union of International Associations (UIA) classifies as ‘organisations of special form’. Their share of all INGOs has increased from 7 per cent in 1981 to 15 per cent in 2001 with their absolute numbers growing by more than five times in the same period. UIA (URL) describes

![Figure 8.1: Growth in international organisations: 1900–2000](source: Union of International Organisations)
### Table 8.1: International non-governmental organisations by major form characteristics, 1981–2001

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>International organisations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Federations of international</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>organisations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Universal membership organisations</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>427</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intercontinental membership</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>773</td>
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<tr>
<td>organisations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regionally oriented membership</td>
<td>2,991</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organisations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisations of special form</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent bodies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Org’s emanating from places,</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>persons, bodies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Subsidiary and internal bodies</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious orders and secular institutes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National bodies (claiming wider relevance)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Internationally oriented national</td>
<td>3,443</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7,867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organisations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational substitutes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Autonomous conference series</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>9,789</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>17,826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dead, inactive, and unconfirmed bodies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recently reported bodies–not yet confirmed</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissolved or apparently inactive</td>
<td>1,212</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organisations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently inactive non-conventional</td>
<td>1,769</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bodies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3,520</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5,809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total recorded</strong></td>
<td>13,309</td>
<td></td>
<td>23,635</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The form characteristics are based on the classification of the UIA and were especially computed for the purposes of this chapter. We thank Nadia McLaren and Anthony Judge at the Union of International Associations for making the data available and for conducting a special analysis exploring form differences among the many thousands of organisations in the UIA data bases.

Source: Union of International Associations
organisations with special form as international organisations ‘whose formal characteristics would raise fundamental questions if they were allocated to any of the preceding types’ in Table 8.1. They include foundations and funds, financial organisations, information networks, certain types of educational and training organisations, exile and diaspora organisations, and, significant for our purposes here, ‘discontinuous’ bodies, and hybrids such as ‘informal quasi-organisations’. Thus, there is a growing number of organisations that no longer fits standard classifications of INGO forms—forms that are neither conventional membership organisations nor typical NGOs but somewhere in between or altogether different.

Next to ‘special forms’, dependent bodies, too, have expanded in absolute and relative terms when taken together. These are organisations that are dependent on some other organisations or are subsidiaries thereof, be they secular or religious. Examples would be national chapters of Amnesty International or organisations linked to the Catholic Church that are international in focus. The growth of dependent bodies from 14 per cent of all classified INGOs in 1981 to 19 per cent in 2001 suggests that existing INGOs are growing not only in numbers but also in organisational scale by creating subsidiaries in an increasing number of countries. They are becoming federations of national organisations.

Finally, the relative share of INGOs classified as ‘dissolved or apparently inactive’ and ‘currently inactive non-conventional body’ has increased significantly over the last two decades. Nearly 18,000 strong in number ‘currently inactive non-conventional bodies’ make up the largest classification category in 2001, a major increase over 1991 even when data coverage is taken into account. Whatever the finer points of definitions and measurement criteria might be in distinguishing active from inactive organisations, together with the other category of ‘organisations of special form’ the figure in Table 8.1 suggests a dramatic conclusion: a very large proportion of existing CSOs fall outside conventional classification criteria. They do not fit clearly into previously defined forms, i.e., ‘conventional bodies’, which suggests that a high rate of form differentiation and innovation has taken place especially in the past ten years.

The fact that many of these non-conventional bodies are either ‘currently inactive’ or ‘apparently inactive’ suggests that they are less regular and less permanent than typical INGOs. It reflects the ‘fluidity’ of some organisational forms in the emerging organisational infrastructure of global civil society. Indeed, many of the organisations classified as currently or apparently inactive may still exist and could potentially be mobilised, if necessary.¹

The latter is particularly the case for social movement organisations, like environmental groups that organise around specific issues and entities associated with particular events such as alternative summits.

Of course, the data reported in Table 8.1 are limited to INGOs and exclude many organisational forms that do not register on the ‘radar screen’ of official statistics, as would be the case for many Internet-based organisations or very small, informal, grass-roots organisations such as immigrant networks and diaspora organisations (see Chapter 9) and various small religious groups (see Chapter 3). Nonetheless, the results that emerge from Table 8.1 seem indicative of a general empirical pattern: CSOs have expanded in number both within existing and into new forms.

What forces and factors are behind this trend? Our answer involves two arguments, one pertaining to the organisational environment in which CSOs operate, the other to the constraints of existing forms. Put differently, one relates to the larger environment in which civil society organisations operate and emphasises new and growing needs and opportunities. The other focuses on the constraints and dilemmas civil society organisations face in this environment. While the former pushes CSOs toward expansion, the latter propels them towards innovation.

¹ Moreover UIA’s tracking techniques may not work as well for organisational forms that are less institutionalised and resemble movements and networks, which are less likely to respond to official surveys.
First, the expansion of CSOs within existing forms is possible in an environment that seems to have significantly expanded or opened up in recent years. The capacity of the environment to accommodate CSOs appears not to have reached its limits, and CSOs do not yet amount to collective numbers that threaten their survival, given the resources available. This is shown by the historical growth of INGOs in Figure 8.1, which has not yet seem to have peaked or reached some kind of equilibrium. Organisational theorists use the term ‘carrying capacity’ (Aldrich 1999) to refer to the size of a population of organisations a given environment can support with the resources available. For example, how many ‘Jubilee 2000’s, ‘Amnesty International’s or ‘GreenPeace’s can there be relative to available resources (members, finance, causes)? We suggest that, whatever that number, CSOs do not seem to have reached some critical size yet (see Figure 8.1), although, as we argue below, competition for financial resources is increasing among professionalised INGOs in particular (Foreman 1999).

Second, the expansion of CSOs in new and emerging forms, i.e., the special and non-conventional forms in Table 8.1, reflects less the limitations in the overall carrying capacity than the constraints inherent in existing forms that prevent them taking full advantage of the opportunities that are presenting themselves in an increasingly global environment. To be sure, the carrying capacity for some forms and sectors may be reaching a limit, implying greater competition among forms and forcing innovations and differentiation among organisations such as Northern-based development and relief NGOs. For example, ActionAid is experimenting with moving its headquarters from the UK to the South (probably India or South Africa) in an attempt to differentiate itself from typical ‘Northern NGOs’. This is partly related to a shift in donor preferences to fund NGOs in the South as well as the belief that such a move will make ActionAid more effective and more accountable to their Southern constituencies.

As we will show below, there is a frequent mismatch between existing forms and the complexity of the organisational environment in which CSOs operate. For conventional CSOs, this mismatch creates tensions and problems of all sorts and, ultimately, incentives for new forms and other organisational innovations. Thus, we suggest that the tension between needs and opportunities on the one hand and the constraints of existing organisational forms on the other create a push towards differentiation and innovation. Over time, these processes lead to the development of new forms.

**Opportunities and Constraints**

Form changes are often responses to changes in the environment in which organisations operate. Indeed, organisational theorists like Hannan and Freeman (1989) suggest that the array of organisational forms existing at any point in time is a product of responses to prior environmental conditions. Moreover, they argue that current form changes are a function of both environmental variations and the capacity of existing and emerging organisations for innovation. Forms that offer competitive advantages over others are more likely to be selected by new and existing organisations for maximising their sustainability, while other forms become less frequently used (Aldrich 1999). Thus, understanding form developments in global civil society organisations requires a look at both the larger environment in which they operate, e.g., globalisation, and the responses of existing and emerging organisations in reaction to these changes, with a particular emphasis on innovation and growth.

Organisations can typically choose their forms from a range of options in terms of legal status, governance, and accountability, and management models relative to their activities and objectives. For some organisations these choices are straightforward while for others they are complex and unpredictable.

Clearly, globalisation changes the organisational task environment for many CSOs, and going global entails dealing with the challenge of increasing complexity and unpredictability (see Bartlett and Ghoshal 1997). Indeed, some analysts suggest that ‘global trends challenge civil society organisations...
to rethink their mandate, mission and strategies' (Edwards, Hulme, and Wallace 1999: 134).

**Opportunities**

The organisational environment for CSOs has expanded in recent decades, particularly since 1989, and offers greater opportunities for organising across borders than before, in terms of both resources and access to centres of influence (Clark 2001; Dichter 1999; Edwards 1999; Lindenberg and Dobel 1999; Kriesberg 1997). Along this with we suggest that the global environment for organising over the last decade has been characterised by:

- an opening of political opportunities outside and beyond conventional national politics, due to the end of the Cold War and to a superpower, the US, in favour of a minimalist, liberal state; the rise of a ‘New Policy Agenda’ pushing for the global spread of liberal economics and democratic governance, which emphasises the role of civil society and sees INGOs ever more part of an emerging system of global governance and welfare (Edwards and Hulme 1995);
- the development of international forms of government and interstate and inter-regional coordination, from the UN system to the European Union and from Mercosur to ECOWAS (Kriesberg 1997);
- major reductions in the cost of communication, in particular for telecommunication and Internet access, which increases information sharing while reducing coordination costs overall (Clark 2001; Naughton 2001; Warkentin 2001). The development of communications technologies has decreased the costs of organising and thus increased the carrying capacity of the organisational environment;
- generally favourable economic conditions in major world economies since the late 1940s and a considerable expansion of populations living in relative prosperity (Hirschman 1982; Kriesberg 1997);
- a value change over the last 25 years in most industrialised countries that emphasises individual opportunities and responsibilities over state involvement and control (Inglehart and Abramson 1995); and
- a major expansion of democracy across most parts of the world, with freedom of expression and associations granted in most countries (Linz and Stepot 1996; Diamond 1997). The ‘thickening’ of the international rule of law since the 1970s has greatly facilitated the growth of global civil society organisations (see Keck and Sikkink 1998) (see also Records 8 and 9).

It is this opening of a transnational and increasingly global ‘organisational space’ and the greater recognition of cross-border needs (e.g., environmental protection, human rights) that has provided, and continues to provide, the opportunity for CSO development and growth. This opening has led to the rise in the economic importance of private, non-profit organisations in social services, health care, education, and culture (Salamon et al. 1999), which resulted in large-scale national non-profit sectors that increasingly operate across borders (Anheier and List 2000; Anheier 2002). While none of these social factors alone, be they political, sociological, economic, or technological, could have brought about the expansion in organised global civil society, it is the combination of these factors that made it possible.

We can easily see that the combination of opportunities appears stronger in some parts of the world than in others. The combination of factors and the strength of each seem more pronounced in OECD countries, and it is here that we also find the centres of global civil society (Anheier, Glasius, and Kaldor 2001; see also Records 16–29). By contrast, in other areas we find different scenarios, and some factors are typically weaker, making their combination less forceful. In Africa or Latin America economic and political conditions have been much less favourable than in countries of the OECD, and in parts of central Asia and the Middle East value changes may have been regressive rather than progressive in terms of human rights and tolerance, thereby reducing the ‘space’ for CSOs.2

Different combinations of these factors will create opportunities for CSOs and encourage different globalisation options and the adoption of different organisational forms. Cheaper communications, for example, will encourage greater

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2 This is not a claim about the quality or ‘health’ of civil society in those regions. It is a simpler claim that the organisational environment in some regions is more supportive of CSOs than in others, particularly in their ability to globalise and link up with CSOs in other regions.
networking but will tend to do so more in countries where communication technologies are already widely available and accessible. Middle class confidence is not growing equally across the globe, and concern for ‘global goods’ such as the environment or cultural heritage are less potent in some parts of the world than in others (Kaul, Grunberg, and Stern 1999).

Constraints

The social forces that bring new needs and open up opportunities also imply constraints, challenges, and dilemmas for civil society organisations. These challenges ultimately raise the question of what kind of organisational form is best suited for CSOs working in complex task environments. Typical organisational dilemmas revolve around questions of ownership, governance and accountability, organisational structure in terms of decentralisation and centralisation, internal democracy, and the type of organisational culture. The evolving interplay of opportunities and constraints creates a need for organisational innovations.

For international NGOs some of these dilemmas are amplified by the significant growth they experienced in recent years both as a form and also frequently as individual organisations (Anheier and Themudo 2002; Lindenberg 1999; Meyer et al. 1997; UIA url). To address global problems and issues, NGOs have themselves grown into global entities (Young 1992) and increasingly ‘network’ and operate transnationally (see Tarrow 2001). Not surprisingly, this growth, fuelled by the many new opportunities that have opened up, brings with it new organisational challenges (Clark 2001; Lindenberg 1999; Young 1992).

Specifically:

- By growing into global entities and by becoming transnational in character, CSOs also incorporate, and must address, the complexity and diversity of the political, economic, and cultural environments in which they operate.
- By networking transnationally, they also relate to diverse constituencies and stakeholders, which can lead to contradictions that entail complex political dilemmas (see Chapter 2).
- By working in multiple jurisdictions, they must develop ways of managing tensions and conflicting requirements that stem from the intricacies of different legal and fiscal systems.
- By incorporating and dealing with different organisational, national, and religious cultures and value systems, they acquire the need to develop some common base and understanding to make communication and decision-making possible (see Chapter 3).
- At the governance level, critical challenges develop from the need to remain accountable to a dispersed membership base, and have boards that reflect the diversity of the organisation in structure and composition.
- Similarly, at the transnational level, governance structures must outline responsibilities as well as oversight and enforcement mechanisms across various parts and locations of the organisation.
- At the managerial level, CSOs face problems associated with increased organisational size in more competitive funding environments, which can increase management and administrative costs to hitherto unknown levels, creating the potential of frictions with members, the board, and other stakeholders (Anheier 2000).

From Bureaucracies to Network Organisations

Managing the tensions arising from the organisational environment in which CSOs operate becomes critical for sustainability and survival (Fowler 1997). The pressures created by these tensions may trigger a large-scale search for organisational forms capable of handling such challenges and constraints, as suggested by the categories ‘special form’ and ‘non-conventional bodies’ in Table 8.1. We can assume that at some point the carrying capacity of the global environment for CSOs will reach a critical stage, particularly in terms of resources, and encourage a search for forms that could transform, even revolutionise, the organisational infrastructure of global civil society. At present, however, it appears that we have some way to go before reaching this point, but there are clear indications of form transformations, as we will see below.

Since the industrial revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, organisational history has

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3 See Aldrich (1999) and Romanelli (1991) on the general background of organisational theory, in particular on form emergence and survival.
seen three major epochal developments that cut across the constraints of existing forms. The first, identified by Max Weber ([1924] 1997; see Perrow 1986), was the full development of the modern bureaucracy, a major innovation that made the nation state and the industrial corporation possible. With a premium on stability, predictability, responsibility, and the long term, bureaucracies were efficient tools of administration and production. State agencies, industrial giants, and even charities and religious organisations became bureaucratic organisations.

The second major organisational innovation of the industrial era involved, according to Chandler (1962; 1990), a fundamental shift from hierarchical relationships organised along functional activities (e.g., accounting, marketing, production) to multi-divisional coordination within modern firms. This shift was first noticed in the US and Germany where expansion and product diversification placed costly strains on the conventional hierarchical or unitary structure. Corporations divided their operations into divisions, with each responsible for a different product or geographical region and each organised along functional lines. Organisations changed from a unitary, hierarchical U-form to a more decentralised, multi-divisional or M-form. Decentralisation allowed parts of the organisation to be managed as relatively autonomous subunits along functional lines. The adoption of the M-form began as a slow process that nonetheless revolutionised the organisational landscape of modern industry within 50 years. In 1929 fewer than 2 per cent of the 100 largest non-financial companies in the US had adopted the M-form; by 1979, 84 per cent had adopted it (Alrich 1999).

Whereas bureaucracies brought certainty of performance and increased volume (scale economics), the multi-divisional form allowed for the combination of scale and scope economics. This development made possible hitherto unknown levels of national and international expansion. Economies of scale require integration and centralisation as core management tasks while economies of scope imply coordination of decentralised, semi-autonomous units (Chandler 1990). The multi-divisional form was able to combine both centralisation and decentralisation imperatives, reaping the benefits of both scale and scope economies, which made it attractive not only to corporations but also to public agencies and non-profit organisations, and helped pave the way for new public management (Ferlie 1996).

Yet for organisations operating in complex environments greater decentralisation also requires greater predictability in the way organisational units relate to each other. This, however, may ultimately push organisations towards greater formalisation in the way they manage internal information flows and decision-making (Hatch 1997; Scott 1998) and thereby increase rather than decrease the costs of organising. Decentralisation and formalisation therefore stand in some tension with each other, and this tension puts pressure on information management and decision-making, which becomes the crucial nexus in the relationship between central (e.g., the headquarter) and decentralised units ‘in the field’ (Perrow 1986; Pugh 1997).

While most information is generated in decentralised units, it passes upwards in the organisational hierarchy for processing by central management before being passed down in the form of directives. Central management, however, is typically confronted with a limited capacity for processing information and for translating it into actionable decisions, particularly across national, legal, and cultural boundaries (Bartlett and Ghoshal 1997). The result is an information overload of central managers (Day et al. 2001). In such conditions, efficient decision-making should rest closer to where the information is collected (Dawson 1996). This, however, implies yet further decentralisation, which, in turn, increases the cost of information management and the transaction costs of decision-making and coordination throughout. As a result, most CSOs like corporations and state agencies are in a more or less constant...
struggle to find the right balance between decentralisation and centralisation (see Clark 2001; Lindenberg and Dobel 1999).

One strategy to find a balance between form and environment is the relational or network organisation, which constitutes the third epochal form development. While the shift from functional to multi-divisional forms was based primarily on scale and scope economies, the relational form is fuelled primarily by transaction cost considerations, i.e., the costs of ‘organising and doing business’ (see Williamson 1985). Pressures to minimise transaction costs encourage form innovations and the evolution of forms based on inter-organisational cooperation (Powell 1990; Thompson 1991), and, ultimately, to some form of disaggregated complex organisation (Day and Wendler 1998; Day et al. 2001). In particular, in competitive, global markets, higher-scope economies combined with lower communication costs (i.e., reduced transaction costs) to provide strong incentives for outsourcing activities to networks of suppliers, producers, and distributors. The result has been the increased role for ‘relational’ forms, such as the network organisation, and extensive production and distribution chains criss-crossing the globe (Dicken 1998; Held et al. 1999). It is important to see that the network form is by no means limited to the world of transnational business. According to Wainwright (2001), the network organisation and other non-hierarchical forms have long been used in civil society by, for example, the women’s movement and the anti-Vietnam War movement. In this context, a key driver of the network form was its emphasis on equality and individual autonomy in relations.

Relational forms are somewhat ‘fluid’ organisations particularly suited for highly variable task environments. Without central coordination for everyday management tasks and operations, decisions are made at the local levels with a minimum of costs for consultation and negotiation. Adaptability is maximised when undertaken by small independent units rather than large bureaucratic...
organisations. By implication, lack of coordination can reduce opportunities for scale economies and also invite ‘free riding’. The nature of networks can lead to difficulties in sharing development costs as well as brand and knowledge management sharing, i.e., activities that require some form of collective action and common identity.

This network form constrains identity formation, collective action, and perhaps even the legitimacy of the organisation speaking with one voice. But on balance, and on largely economic grounds, the global organisational environment for CSOs would favour the network form with decentralised and autonomous units. There is some empirical evidence to support this claim. Using data from the Union of International Associations, Smith (1997) found that between 1973 and 1993 the number of coalitions (a form of network organisation) increased from 25 per cent to 40 per cent of the total number of INGOs observed. The number of coalitions Smith observed in the UIA database rose in absolute and relative terms.

Figure 8.2 summarises the evolutionary relationship between form characteristics from the nineteenth-century bureaucracies to twenty-first-century network organisations. We are not claiming that network forms are better or ‘more evolved’ than hierarchical, unitary forms. There are many successful unitary or M-form CSOs operating at global level (e.g., Human Rights Watch; see Clark 2001). There are many advantages to the centralisation of activities, as we discuss throughout this chapter. We are, however, suggesting that the general historical trend identified in the organisational literature for firms (e.g., Day et al 2001; Powell 1990) has some correspondence with the evolving form of civil society organisations. What, then, will be the major organisational innovations of global civil society in contrast to existing forms, structures, and management practices?

Organisational Dynamics

Most organisations that populated nascent global civil society, let’s say some 100 years ago, were basically membership and non-membership organisations modelled on the Weberian model of bureaucracy. They included scholarly associations, the International Chamber of Commerce, the Red Cross Federation, and various political party alliances such as the Socialist International. Non-membership organisations like the Catholic Church too, were outgrowing their late medieval past and developed into formal bureaucracies at local, national, and international levels resembling the modern state administration. Some organisations like some national Red Cross societies or the Salvation Army incorporated distinctive military elements in their organisational design and structure.

As well, INGOs with observer status at the UN from the 1950 onwards were rather conventional bureaucracies, and largely indistinguishable in their structure from national organisations and perhaps even state agencies. Yet, as suggested above, the growth of CSOs into more global organisations has brought new challenges and opportunities to experiment with multi-divisional and network forms that push them away from the model of nineteenth-century bureaucracies. CSOs like Amnesty International or Action Aid are engaged in ongoing processes of reorganisation so as to capitalise on the new opportunities and respond to the new environmental challenges. These reorganisations are quests for innovations in organisational forms that are more suitable to the complex task environment of a globalising world than bureaucracies and multi-divisional forms, or variations thereof, are at present.

To untangle the organisational dynamics of global civil society, we put forward four main propositions.

Proposition 1. The symmetry between environment and form is difficult to achieve and maintain for CSOs in a globalising world, which encourages diversity and innovation.

As it expands, global civil society is incorporating different elements and is becoming itself more diverse as a result (Table 8.1). It is not difficult to provide examples of the diversity in organisational forms existing in global civil society. For example, Care International is an NGO with over 10,000 professional staff. Its US affiliate alone has income of around $US 450 million. Not surprisingly, its structure is very professionalised. Friends of the Earth (FoE) is a confederation of 66 member organisations, some of which are very large (FoE-UK has 10 per cent of total membership) and others very small (see Box 8.3). The World Conservation Union is a CSO that brings together 735 NGOs, 35 affiliates, 78 states, 112 government agencies, and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries.

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5 We say that the Catholic Church is a non-membership organisation because its members have no democratic voting power in the organisation’s governance. We discuss this distinction below.
in a unique worldwide partnership (IUCN URL). Alcoholics Anonymous is a volunteer-run NGO. One-World.net is an Internet-based NGO dedicated to providing free information for development.

Organisational theory (Hannan and Freeman 1989; Aldrich 1999) suggests that organisational forms will be as diverse as the environment that supports them and that organisations are more sustainable if they adapt to specific environmental conditions, i.e., a niche. This symmetry between environmental niche and form is more difficult to achieve when organisations face not one but multiple, complex environments, as is the case for CSOs with activities across the globe. Critical elements include:

- **Funding sources.** CSOs raise funds from a wide variety of donors (e.g., individual members and sympathisers, foundations, and bilateral and multilateral agencies) and other sources (sales, fees, and charges) that spread across different countries and that typically involves a geographical separation of contributors and beneficiaries (Edwards and Hulme 1995; Hansmann 1996).
- **Staff, members, and volunteers.** CSOs typically hire staff from a number of different countries, and recruit members and volunteers from sometimes even larger number of countries and regions. Care International, for example has 10,000 employees, 9,000 of whom are nationals of the countries in which they work (Care UK URL).
- **Diversity of missions.** From the preservation of wetlands to the promotion of micro-credit, from working with recycling in the North to supplying humanitarian assistance in conflict areas, CSOs are concerned with a multiplicity of issues and missions. Depending on local conditions, within the same organisation different parts of the mission may be emphasised at the expense of others. For example Southern parts of environmental CSOs norm ally pay greater attention to development aspects of environmental protection than their Northern counterparts (Clark 2001; Princen and Finger 1994). Similarly the importance of class, caste, or gender relations will vary in different cultures, with immense implications for management.
- **Need to be locally responsive, conform to national regulations, and be globally relevant.** CSOs work with very different beneficiaries who...

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**Box 8.3: Friends of the Earth – Global federation**

Friends of the Earth International (FoE) is a federation of 61 groups with an international secretariat and an executive committee to oversee the operations between biennial General Assembly meetings. It is a federation of membership organisations, i.e., its membership base is primarily organisational; individual members join at the national level. Together the FoE federation of member organisations combines about 5,000 local groups and 1 million members. FoE is highly decentralised network of autonomous organisations. About half of the member organisations use the name FoE, others prefer names in local languages.

Entry into the federation is a very strict process based on wide criteria, with internal democracy at its centre. Applicant organisations must be membership-based and have clear internal democratic procedures, including a representative board. They must also be independent from religious and political affiliations, dedicated to national and international issues, and work on more than one environmental area. After a first administrative screening, applications are submitted to the International Executive Committee (IEC) that meets three times a year. If considered suitable, the IEC will then submit the application to the General Assembly for final approval. Normally some 50 organisations apply and only one or two are approved.

Biennially, a week-long General Assembly of representatives of member organisations decides on the policies and activities of the federation. All member organisations have the same vote. The General Assembly elects a nine-member Executive Committee, which meets four times a year.

**Sources:** Interviews and FoE (URL)
have different views of a ‘good society’ and require very different tasks and management models. The local-national-global link requires skilful handling of needs, resources, and expectations. Being able to linking the local with the global is essential for the effectiveness of global CSOs (see Edwards, Hulme, and Wallace 1999).

- Varying costs of communications and organising. Different parts of the world have very limited access to new information technologies. This ‘digital divide’ requires CSOs to organise in different ways in different areas. The extent and intensity of networking forms will vary dramatically between North and South (Clark and Themudo forthcoming).

These factors interact to create the diverse, multiple local and global organisational environments that CSOs face. As a consequence, in CSOs operating across the globe the principle of symmetry is difficult to achieve and maintain, as they need to organise differently in different locations depending on their portfolio of products, markets, geography, or culture (Bartlett and Ghoshal 1997). For example, FoE is highly decentralised in Sweden, where it has a long history and faces a culture of association and participatory democracy; at the same time, it is much more centralised in a country like Colombia, where it faces a generally antagonistic government, a small membership base, and limited participation (interviews at FoE international).

Such diversity generates both intra-organisational and inter-organisational differentiation. For example, there are differences in individual membership rights between organisations but also within different national branches of the same organisations. Variations exist because of historical and legal conditions that influence the type of governance structure that is chosen in each national chapter of the INGO. In most national branches, GreenPeace members do not have voting power. For example, the board of GreenPeace US is self-appointed and members have no voting rights. In Spain, however, members have voting rights and elect GreenPeace Spain’s board democratically (GreenPeace Spain url) because national law requires most NGOs to be ‘associations’. In contrast to GreenPeace, most FoE national branches are strongly committed to internal democracy, and members have voting power. In Canada, however, FoE members do not vote, and the national branch has a self-appointed board (Anheier and Themudo 2002). Such diversity is promoted not by the global mission, which is fairly homogeneous, but by national variations of historical and regulatory conditions as well as different cultural interpretations of that global mission.

**Proposition 2. CSOs are becoming more similar and dissimilar at the same time.**

Despite the remarkable diversity that characterises CSOs we also observe common characteristics and patterns of similarity, which organisational theory refers to as ‘isomorphism’ tendencies (Powell and DiMaggio 1991). In terms of internal structure, CSO forms cluster around various models of federation, a version of the multi-divisional form. Specifically, the need to balance pressures towards centralisation and decentralisation, economies of scale and scope, flexibility and adaptability appears to translate into a widespread adoption of the federation as an organisational form. Lindenberg and Dobel (1999) found this tendency among large INGOs dedicated to relief and development. Young et al. (1999) found a similar tendency among international advocacy NGOs.

In terms of external relations, economic and political pressures encourage inter-organisational collaboration in the form of partnerships and coalitions—examples of the network organisation described above. Together, federations, partnerships, and network structures seem to emerge as signature elements of organised global civil society.

At the same time, the trend toward coordination rather than the hierarchical control of semi-autonomous units has become more pronounced in recent years. In particular, decreases in transaction costs act as centrifugal tendencies in global civil society organisations and encourage a move away from global hierarchies (unless central units control the resource environments). The result has been a trend towards ‘operational downsizing’ where organisations concentrate on their ‘core activities’ and contract out auxiliary activities (see Day and Wendler 1998; Powell 1990). So for example many Northern development NGOs have grown in size and resources in the past two decades but they have reduced their operational involvement in the South,
preferring instead to sub-contract operational activities to Southern NGOs. Northern NGOs for their part concentrate on fund-raising, capacity building, and advocacy (Edwards 1999; Lewis 2001). On the other hand, small organisations may still need to globalise some of their activities but their reduced size may prevent them from setting up a federation structure across many different countries. Instead some organisations have chosen to network and collaborate across borders, thus taking advantage of some of the opportunities of globalisation.

These trends foster inter-organisational cooperation. In terms of service delivery, many North-South NGO partnerships have sprung up in recent years. Oxfam International, for example, has over 3,000 partner organisations in the South (Clark 2001). This partnership push is a North-South division of labour based on ‘inter-organisational’ cooperation and contracting rather than vertical expansion of Northern NGOs. The resulting division of labour is based as much on efficiency as on normative pressures exerted by donors that stipulate NGO collaboration and partnership as a precondition for funding.

In international campaigning, coalitions have become a common organisational form (Smith 1997). Coalitions are a more structured form of transnational advocacy networks (Keck and Sikkink 1998). The recent success and visibility of coalitions such as the Coalition for an International Criminal Court (see Chapter 6), Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (Box 8.4), Campaign Against Landmines, International Action Network on Small Arms, Jubilee 2000, and the Climate Action Network clearly demonstrate the wide use of this organisational form for global organising, which further encourages its use for advocacy campaigns more generally.

Other factors, too, encourage similarities among CSO forms. The absence of some global regulations of CSOs significantly reduces legal standardisation when compared with the national level. Yet Meyer et al. (1997) point to more subtle ways in which CSOs are becoming more alike. This is the development of a ‘world culture’ and organisational blueprints that at the global level give greater legitimacy to some forms of organising (typically Western forms) than to others such as Chinese or Indian. Clark (2001) has argued that US civil law practices and tax regulations have spread to other parts of the world (e.g., central and eastern Europe) and helped policies that encourage ‘enabling frameworks’ for civil society.

We suggest that a growing group of international professionals transmits the development of a world culture. Members of this group may have studied at similar universities, learned the same professional skills, and share similar knowledge irrespective of their world-views and values. As a result, they may run organisations in similar ways.

Another powerful set of isomorphic tendencies derives from the global funding environment. CSOs’ resource dependency on a limited set of funders increases the possibility of external influence on organisational form (see Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). There are indications that competition for scarce funding is increasing for global civil society (Foreman 1999; Lindenberg and Dobel 1999). At the core of the greater competition for resources is the fact that in some fields, such as development and humanitarian relief, the growth of INGOs seems to have surpassed the expansion of resources available to them, either from private (donations and dues) or public (government grants and contracts) sources. Such conditions increase environmental uncertainty, which leads organisations to imitate those they perceive to be successful, resulting in greater homogeneity (see Powell and Dimaggio 1991).

Moreover, intense competition between CSOs for global funding, which is provided by very few major donors, provides strong pressures for isomorphism not only among CSOs but also between CSOs and funding agencies (intergovernmental organisations, governments, and foundations). NGOs face strong pressures for bureaucratisation and the imposition of reporting requirements to suit donors rather than beneficiaries (Edwards and Hulme 1995). Competition need not necessarily lead to isomorphism as donors can, and often do, encourage innovation and diversity among CSOs. However, there has been a general trend for donors to emphasise efficiency over
innovation (Riddell 1999; Salm 1999), thus promoting isomorphism. Alongside competition, pressures for isomorphism can equally come from increased collaboration, such as in the case of partnerships among CSOs and between CSOs and state or business (Tuckman 1998). Inter-organisational collaboration can produce ‘co-evolutionary arrangements’ whereby collaborating organisations jointly adapt to environmental changes through division of labour, mutual learning, and the diffusion of best practices. In this way, current efforts of capacity building of CSOs both by donors and by agencies, peace and disarmament groups, veterans’ associations and youth movements, teachers and students, religious groups and trade unions, academics and other interested individuals. Together we number more than 500 organisations. These committed organisations and individuals have been the very heart of the Coalition’s campaign and a critical factor in its success.’ (CSC URL)

The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (CSC) – ‘relational’ organisational form

‘The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers was formed in June 1998 to advocate for the adoption of, and adherence to, national, regional and international legal standards (including an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child) prohibiting the military recruitment and use in hostilities of any person younger than eighteen years of age.

The Coalition was founded by six international NGOs—Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Save the Children Alliance, Jesuit Refugee Service, the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva, and International Federation Terre des Hommes—and later joined by Defence for Children International, World Vision International, and regional NGOs from Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. The Coalition has also established partners and national coalitions which are engaged in advocacy, campaigns and public education in nearly 40 countries. . . . The Coalition has established and maintained active links with UNICEF, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNHCHR and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. . . . the Coalition has established partners and national coalitions in nearly 40 countries. These local campaigns have been organised in different ways, in some places formally constituted in others through loose networks of organisations and individuals. They bring together international, regional and local human rights and children’s rights non-governmental organisations, humanitarian and developmental organisations, peace and disarmament groups, veterans’ associations and youth movements, teachers and students, religious groups and trade unions, academics and other interested individuals. Together we number more than 500 organisations. These committed organisations and individuals have been the very heart of the Coalition’s campaign and a critical factor in its success.’ (CSC URL)

The CSC is one example of a relational organisational form. The CSC is extremely fluid, as demonstrated by the variety of organisations that compose it and the different structures used in different local contexts. Globally its form is a hybrid of a coalition, a joint venture, and a federation. A number of INGOs got together to create a new, separate organisation to pursue their common interest in the subject of child soldiers. The founding INGOs are the ‘owners’ of the organisation. The founding organisations retain control through the steering committee, setting the CSC’s mission and directing the organisation. The CSC has no power over the founding organisations. So as well as being a coalition the CSC has formal elements of a joint venture. It also establishes or accepts local and regional coalitions as part of the larger CSC family. Some of these local elements have representation at the governance level, being more than simply ‘sections’.

CSC is also very much like an international federation. Despite having an international secretariat staffed by only four people, it maintains an organisational structure with a global level (secretariat),
There is some evidence that public and private agencies partly adapt to CSOs, with corporate social responsibility as perhaps the best example (see Chapter 4). But because of resource dependency it seems that, by and large, CSOs have been doing most of the adapting while trying to obtain funding. This challenge of adapting to both funders and very diverse local conditions is why flexible intra- and inter-organisational forms (i.e., federations, partnerships, and coalitions) are so prevalent in global civil society.

Proposition 3. *Globalisation has varying impacts on organisational form.*

Dealing with globalisation is the single most important concern of multinational enterprises (Micklethwait and Wooldridge 1996). The degree of globalisation varies with respect to (1) the proportion of activities undertaken that are international (as opposed to national), measured by the income of foreign affiliates compared with domestic income; and (2) the number of countries in which the organisation either conducts activities or obtains resources and revenue. At low levels of ‘globalisation’ CSOs develop an awareness of international issues. Some of a CSO’s activities are concerned with scanning and monitoring the international environment for threats and opportunities (e.g., funding). As globalisation increases further it establishes increasingly formal relations with organisations from a wider range of countries. It may even join a formal international coalition/network or enter into partnership agreements with foreign organisations. At the highest levels of globalisation it becomes a global organisation either by creating franchises or by setting up foreign affiliates.

What is the impact of changes in the level of globalisation on organisational form? When developing into transnational organisations, most INGOs tend to adopt a multi-level structure that involves local, national, and international components. As mentioned above, multinational NGOs work in different cultural, political, and economic settings, often with very different problems and organisational tasks. Environmental variations across local chapters and national societies are high, which suggests that a decentralised mode is best suited for achieving results locally. Decisions should be made at levels where expertise and knowledge are greatest—which may not necessarily be at the central level at all. At the same time, local resources are unevenly distributed, and task requirements do not match available support, requiring resource redistribution across different parts of the organisation. In situations where tasks and resources vary across geographically dispersed organisations, a federal form is best. In this model, the main purpose of the central body is twofold: first, to maintain diversity and expertise at appropriate levels, and second, to coordinate among units and to take on collective action vis-à-vis third parties. This is typically done with a division of labour between local and non-local tasks.
At the global level, the organisational form is determined by the need for affiliate self-determination, economies of scale, resource acquisition, protection of global brand, pressures for global accountability, scale of impact, and technology (Lindenberg and Dobel 1999). Unitary or corporate models facilitate coordination and help maintain a single clear brand identity. On the other hand, weakly coordinated networks maximise organisational autonomy and adaptation to local conditions.

INGOs must find a balance between centralisation and decentralisation, standardisation and flexibility. According to Foreman (1999: 179), ‘advancements in communications, increased social mobility, and greater competition for resources will tend to push an NGO toward centralising its control and increase standardisation among its domestic members. [T]he diversity and instability of the working environment . . . will encourage an NGO to decentralise decision making to its domestic member organisations to increase flexibility and adaptability. [These pressures] must be balanced within the context of an NGO’s organisational culture, history, and mission to determine the appropriate governance structure.’

Increasing globalisation of activities leads to an increase in the complexity of organisational task environment. The reason for this is a general understanding that internationalisation represents an increase in the scope of the organisation’s activities (see Hatch 1997). Generally speaking, increasing globalisation of organisational activities leads first to an increase in complexity and in the scope rather than the scale of organisational activities, which then leads to pressures toward decentralisation and formalisation. At the same time, reductions in the costs of communications lead to downsizing and greater demands for coordination, which favours ‘networking’ rather than ‘controlling’.

On the other hand, globalisation may also allow for greater economies of scale, which would strengthen the centre’s position vis-à-vis its geographically dispersed units. However, to the extent that globalisation produces economies of scale, greater integration and centralisation will counter some of the pressures towards decentralisation and coordination. Of course, globalisation of organisational activities is not the only determinant of organisational form. Technology, mission, resource environment, or legal frameworks will influence form choice.

Proposition 4. Form constraints encourage innovations and the creation of hybrid and relational forms.

Hybridisation implies the combination of elements of two different organisational forms to generate a third form (Romanelli 1991). This combination entails an effort to maximise the strengths of both forms while minimising the impact of their weaknesses. Global civil society tends to encourage the emergence of hybrid forms, for several reasons. First, the global organisational environment is very diverse and changing, and rewards flexibility and adaptation. Because they combine selected elements of two or more forms, hybrid forms tend to provide the flexibility needed. Second, to be successful, global CSOs must often combine elements borrowed from public agencies as well as business. This need places global CSOs in a naturally ‘hybrid environment’ between the state and commerce. Third, the global organisational environment with its combination of national and international cultures and ways of organising displays tensions that require a hybridisation of national and international organisational forms such as the federation.

Hybridisation involves two main processes: recombination and refunctionality. ‘Recombination’ involves the introduction of new elements into an existing organisational form. Global CSOs have adopted many elements from their state funders. For example, the ‘log-frame’ approach to project planning and implementation was developed for the public sector and is now widely used by INGOs in their development projects (Riddell 1999). On the other hand, non-profits are increasing creating commercial enterprises (Weisbrod 1998) such as charity shops, mail-order catalogues, or Fair Trade products. As they do so they find themselves increasingly relying on private sector management tools such as marketing, benchmarking, franchising, branding, and other corporate management tools.
INGOs have also pioneered elements that are now being introduced into other organisational forms. Participatory processes in development projects were developed by NGOs and are now widely employed by public agencies. The term ‘reverse agenda’ suggests that NGOs are influencing aid policy (ODI 1995; Lewis 2001). Increasingly, businesses use methods developed by NGOs to evaluate social impact (see Lewis 1998; Zadek and Gatwood 1995) and social responsibility (see Chapter 4).

‘Refunctionality’ means the relocation of one form in a different context, e.g., the migration of for-profit providers into fields previously populated primarily by non-profits, as in social services. The loss of legitimacy of the state implied by the ‘New Policy Agenda’ (Edwards and Hulme 1995; Lewis 2001) allowed NGOs to move further into the development-service delivery field, which used to be dominated by the public agencies. Similarly, NGOs are increasingly moving into the provision of credit, entering an area currently occupied mainly by business.

However, it would be premature to claim that the recent growth of CSOs was, in organisational terms, the sole result of recombination and refunctionality rather than a linear, quantitative expansion along the trajectory local-national-international. The figures in Table 8.1 suggest that both processes have been taking place, but that the expansion of existing forms has been the primary locus of this growth. At the same time, as shown above, innovation towards hybrid forms is taking place, indicative of qualitative changes in the composition of organisational forms across different branches and segments of the economy, both private and public, locally, nationally, transnationally, etc. (see Box 8.4).

The process of hybridisation and innovation at global level has already been extensive, and some organisations look more like patchworks of different structures networking with other structures united by some shared goals but at the same time competing in other fields. Some authors describe these organisational developments as the constitution of multi–member global ‘organisational families’ (Lindenberg and Bryant 2001).

To address North-South imbalances of power, some INGOs have tried a number of organisational form innovations. For example, the World Rainforest Movement has experimented with placing power in Southern units by setting up its international secretariat in Uruguay and a powerful fundraising ‘Northern Office’ in the United Kingdom (WRM URL). The World Social Forum is trying to develop a ring structure with rotating headquarters where any country member organisation can become the headquarters for a period of time (WSF URL). The main objective of this organisational form is to build local capacity and create a more egalitarian relationship among parts of the organisation. Panos is another example of a CSO trying to develop a similar ring structure with rotating headquarters.

In terms of internal governance, some INGOs such as Amnesty International have created a ‘global democracy’ form by varying the number of representatives from a member country according to the size of that country’s membership, avoiding the typical ‘one country, one representative’ governance system of federations. Other INGOs like FoE have created a governing board election system that gives a majority to Southern members even though Southern countries contribute fewer resources and members to the organisation.

Because information is critical for advocacy, communications technologies have a profound impact on organisational form in this field. One example is the emergence of ‘dot-causes’, Internet-based advocacy organisations (Clark and Themudo forthcoming). By using the Internet, these virtual organisations represent a radical breakthrough. Their flexibility, informality, and rejection of hierarchy (see Box 8.5) make them ideal vehicles for organising anti-globalisation movements (Clark and Themudo forthcoming) as well as other movement organisations such as the Anti-Landmines Campaign.

In most cases, however, few ‘pure’ innovations occur, and it is frequently the hybridisation and the importation and modification of ideas from different circumstances, or the pursuit of analogous problem-solving techniques from quite different sectors and
contexts, that lead to innovative approaches. For example, venture philanthropy imports the idea and analogous investment approach from the field of finance into the field of philanthropy. Under this approach, instead of making a grant, donors ‘invest’ in CSOs for specified ‘social returns’.

Impact of Organisational Forms

The organisational dynamics explored above have important implications for global civil society, in particular for effectiveness and sustainability, internal and external democratisation and accountability, and North-South tensions.

Variety of organisational form is essential for the sustainability of the infrastructure of global civil society. This form variety provides an insurance against environmental changes that can threaten some parts and elements of the infrastructure while leaving others to thrive and yet others unaffected. Diversity can also lead to greater overall effectiveness, as it constitutes a laboratory for social experimentation that leads to learning and improvement. The development of more appropriate forms to a given mission and task environment can lead to more effective organisations. At the same time diversity can be very wasteful in terms of organisational efficiency. Many experiments fail and best practices are not shared. So the drive to increase efficiency can in fact lead to reduced diversity, particularly when competition is intense and donors value short-term cost-efficiency and certainty over long-term effectiveness and innovation that might involve risks. In this scenario, competitive pressure and donor influence help select forms and generalised best practices that are efficient but potentially less effective, and isomorphic niche-seekers rather than diverse innovators.

Democratisation is the second critical area of impact. Some suggest that economic globalisation is leading to a democratic deficit at the global level (e.g., Boggs 2001), and question whether current organisational forms do indeed address ‘the need to bring greater democracy to global civil society’ (Keane 2001: 43). Ownership and the structure of decision-making in CSOs are critical issues in this respect.

Two major ‘ownership’ clusters seem to have emerged among CSOs: membership-based organisations and non-membership, or supporter-based, organisations, each with important implications for decision-making, accountability, and legitimacy (Anheier and Themudo 2002). Simply put, membership-based organisations give their members the right to vote in organisational governance. Non-membership organisations often refer to their
individual donors as ‘members’ (e.g., GreenPeace) but they do not give them any governance role. In a strict sense, non-membership non-profit organisations are non-proprietary organisations and have no owners as such (Hansmann 1996). However, even though many CSOs are legally either associations or corporations, each category leaves significant room for ‘quasi-ownership’ among different stakeholders, i.e., board, management, clients and users, and members, including donors. In the case of non-membership CSOs, decision-making is not based on democratic principles but on the relative influence (e.g., financial resources, legitimacy) of different stakeholders (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). The contribution of this type of CSO to democratisation is increased pluralism of society generally. This may involve giving voice to otherwise excluded groups and taking up emerging issues that turn out to be critical—e.g., the environment—but accountability remains weak (Edwards and Hulme 1995) and legitimacy claims are easily questioned (Hudson 2000; Hudson and Bielefeld 1997).

Membership organisations have the greater potential for democracy and accountability (Yeo 2002). By providing formal mechanisms for the representation of different groups, they reinforce notions of citizenship and enhance the democratic potentials in society (Selle and Strømsnes 1998), performing a role of ‘schools of democracy’ (Putnam 1995). Some authors argue that the accountability of membership-based organisations to the grass roots distinguishes them from corporate, non-membership NGOs that are ever more similar to the business sector (see Uphoff 1995). However, there are also some pitfalls. Because some members are more committed than others, all democratic membership organisations have to address the tension between the free riding of uncommitted members and tendencies towards elite control by core activists. Most members participate by paying dues only and leave the organising to a dedicated few (Lansey 1997; Putnam 1995). The latter stand in danger of developing into an elite that dominates the organisation, thereby undermining democratic ideals.

Using UIA data, Anheier, Glasius, and Kaldor (2001) show that membership of INGOs increased between 1990 and 2000. However UIA’s definition of membership does not distinguish between membership based on voting rights and membership in the sense of general support (e.g., GreenPeace, WWF). Trends of decreasing membership in traditional CSOs such as trade unions (Clark 2001) and cooperatives (Yeo 2002) suggest that much of the growth in membership numbers may take place in supporter-based CSOs rather than membership CSOs. If confirmed, this apparent shift from member-based to supporter-based CSOs suggests a challenge for their potential impact on global democratisation. This challenge is made all the greater by the low active participation of most members in membership-based CSOs.

North-South tensions are a third critical area of CSO impact. How equal are the relationships between Northern and Southern parts of the same organisation or between Northern and Southern organisations working in partnership or within coalitions? Vianna (2000) describes a risk of ‘neo-imperialism’ in the tendency of some Northern NGOs to determine the agendas of Southern NGOs, due to their privileged access to centres of power and resources (see also Chapter 2). Similarly, Hudson (2000) and Lister (2001) suggest that Northern NGOs claim legitimacy for ‘representing’ Southern NGOs and tend to speak on behalf of Southern CSOs without proper consultation, with partnership being little more than rhetoric in practice. Indeed, for Lewis (2001) partnership often becomes a vehicle for ‘one way’ influence in exchange for resources. Likewise, advocacy coalitions see power not equally distributed, and Northern members have typically greater voice and influence (see Princen and Finger 1994; Vianna 2000). In this respect, is the reality of North-South relations among CSOs best described as hierarchy or partnership?

Within global CSOs, the distribution of power between headquarters and national affiliates is critical for addressing this question. On global issues, international secretariats tend to speak on behalf of national affiliates, which, in turn, influence organisa-
tional decision-making at the international level. In formal CSOs, two basic forms emerged: the ‘global democracy’ model and the ‘global federation’ model, each with different implications for internal democracy and North-South relations.

The ‘global democracy’ form, used for example in Amnesty International, gives equal voice to individual members. But because most global CSO members reside in the North, in particular Europe (Anheier, Glasius, and Kaldor 2001), the principle of ‘one individual member, one vote’ can lead to an over-representation of the North at the global level. By contrast, the ‘global federation’ form gives representation on a ‘one country section, one vote’ basis. This form is used for example by FoE. It can give greater weight to Southern voices and help to address internally some North-South power imbalances. However, a country representation means that countries with fewer members (normally Southern) have the same voting power as countries with more members (normally Northern). As a result, individual members from the South have greater power than members in the North, an imbalance politically made more sensitive by the reliance of most CSOs on funds provided by Northern sections.

It appears that global civil society is incapable of overcoming global power inequalities such as the North-South difference within conventional forms. It is here that we can expect innovation and new form developments to take place over the next few years. Much of this experimentation will be aided by the factors mentioned above, in particular lower communication costs. Some innovations are already happening, such as split headquarters functions, ring structure, and Southern majorities on boards that force CSOs out of established forms and introduce new structures and elements to address North-South power differentials.

Concluding Comments

Underlying our discussion of organisational forms in global civil society is the realisation that being global is different. Being global is more than an increase in scale of national work. It is qualitatively different from being national. Being global is different because there are fewer ‘tested and proven’ forms available for working globally than is the case for national and transnational CSOs.

The absence of an international legal framework, mixed messages about resource dependencies, and unresolved issues of internal democracy and accountability to multiple stakeholders may sooner or later drive CSOs to seek alternative forms at global level. Mimetic isomorphism resulting from increased competition for scarce funding may be encouraging global CSOs to be more like transnational corporations and less like international state agencies modelled on some modernised version of the UN system. There is some support for this hypothesis. Over a decade ago, Korten (1990) argued that many NGOs were simply ‘public sector contractors’ behaving like bureaucratic businesses that work for government. More recently, Dichter (1999: 52) argued that many NGOs ‘have taken on aspects of the current commercial zeitgeist’, while Edwards (1999: 263) claimed that there is a trend ‘among NGOs everywhere to internalise market values and dilute the links to a social base’. The Economist (29 January 2000: 25–8) made a similar observation and suggested that ‘NGOs are also looking more and more like businesses as they get larger. Clearly, this trend, if true, will have wide-ranging implications for global civil society.

Donors play an important role in this trend. In terms of isomorphism, donors can evaluate CSOs on their efficiency and promote the adoption of best practices. In terms of diversity and innovation, donors can evaluate the innovativeness of different funding proposals and provide ‘seed’ funding for pilot projects. Donors can also create more flexible systems so that a greater variety of organisations can benefit from funding. Unfortunately, it appears that, so far, official donor agencies continue to emphasise cost-efficiency rather than innovation (Riddell 1999). At least for development NGOs, this preference has promoted isomorphic tendencies in organisational form (e.g., federation), objectives (e.g., self-help), and operations (e.g., logical framework evaluation). While this trend can increase efficiency and even impact effectiveness,
it can also signal wide co-option and vulnerability once funding preferences shift.

How can global CSOs escape these pressures, which are likely to strengthen with increased competition? One approach, as suggested above, would be for global CSOs to become in fact socially responsible businesses or modernised quasi-state agencies. This would solve some of the democratic and accountability dilemmas CSOs face, and it may also contribute to resource stability. It would not, however, make them necessarily more effective and innovative organisations, and other stakeholders and influences would take hold. In any case, they would be more part of global capitalism and governance systems, and likely to lose the special functions civil society institutions have by providing the (often fragile) counterbalance to the dominating forces of state and market.

Indeed, one suggestion, the world-polity/culture theory (Meyer et al. 1997), sees INGOs very much in the light of what could be called a ‘precursor organisation’ for global, i.e. Western, capitalism and forms of governance. According to Boli (2000: 3), INGOs are ‘the primary organisational form through which transnational (world) culture is developed, elaborated, and propagated in the world polity’, paving the way for other organisational forms to take hold. If this theory is right, the organisational form and dynamics of global civil society will have vast implications for a globalising world.

A different approach would be to seek innovative ways for CSOs to develop from within existing forms. Their ability to do so will rest partly on attracting resources with fewer strings attached (see Edwards and Hulme 1995; Fowler 1997). But it will also rest on CSOs’ ability to seek innovative governance models that break away from the constraints inherent in conventional forms. They must also be able to ‘practice what they preach’ and seek greater internal democracy and equality in North-South relations. In other words, because being global is new and uncertain, global civil society must experiment with different forms and explore different models of governance, accountability, decision-making, and resource generation and distribution. Importantly, donors should provide room for such experimentation, allowing some experiments to go wrong so that innovative breakthroughs can occur.

We have described some such past innovations (bureaucracy, multi-divisional form, network organisation) and some of the forces behind form developments (carrying capacity, isomorphism). We can only speculate what the future form of global civil society infrastructure will look like. Yet, whatever the contours of CSOs in 30 or 50 years’ time will be, they are likely to be as different from conventional NGOs today as the industrial giants of the early twentieth century are from present transnational network organisations. Future CSOs will also most likely be as different from each other as the European Union is from the League of Nations. These are stark contrasts, we admit, but we nonetheless suggest that epochal transformations are beginning to take hold. Having expanded both within and outside existing forms, future increases in CSO numbers are likely to lead to an innovation push in the way global civil society is organised.

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