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Privatising Protest: NGOs and the Professionalisation of Social Movements

Many of those who seek to understand the process of consolidation of democracy point to the importance of civil society in creating a bedrock of opinion and a foundation of relationships which enhance the democratic ethos. Key to civil society are two sets of agents, social movements and NGOs, both of which contribute to the construction of civil society's fabric and which influence the issues and demands expressed from within society. The importance of NGOs and other organisations rooted in civil society has become of particular importance with the expansion of the global trend to utilise them as agents in the implementation of government policy; this trend is common not only in western, northern nations but also in the newly democratising countries of Latin America, and indeed beyond. In this context NGOs are portrayed as being non-political actors, however, while they are seldom overtly partisan they are, as we shall illustrate, clearly engaged in the dissemination of particular political ideas, and in the setting up of mechanisms of communication between citizen and state which conform to neo-liberal interpretations of their role.

This paper will address the role of NGOs in two Latin American nations, Chile and Argentina. It will trace the changing nature of NGO activity, with particular reference to Chile, going on to explore the relationship between NGO and state agency, focusing mainly on Argentina. In particular, the paper will seek to analyse the relationship between NGOs, social movements and the state in the context of the new democracies, a multiple interaction within which previously sharp boundaries have become blurred, with each element influencing the other and with new alliances being formed. Neo-liberalism is already well established in Chile, as it was the focus of the Chilean government's economic and political programme from the mid 1970s onwards. In Argentina, the adoption of economic structural adjustment and a liberalising political revolution is still in the early stages, having been first implemented by President Menem in 1989. Each, though, is engaged in the creation of a specifically neo-liberal

democracy, in which the enhanced role of civil society is being encouraged as a means of both consolidating a democratic ethos and as a vehicle for social improvement and development.¹

The Role of NGOs in Government and Society

The role of NGOs has been altered dramatically by the advent and development of neo-liberal concepts of the state. Essentially, the role of the state in contemporary politics has been much reduced and private organisations, broadly defined, have become the favoured agencies of interaction within society. These explicitly *non-governmental* entities, of varying types, form relationships which are based on the workings of the market and respond primarily to dynamics present in the market, which allocates resources and channels activities in response to impulses expressed through supply and demand. This dynamic lies in contrast to previous understandings of the role of the state in which ideology and political objectives were the primary motive force behind policy decisions and in which the state played a key role as both formulator and implementor of policy objectives. However, democratic governments are still driven by predominantly political aims and are still vulnerable to the opinions of those whom they serve (they can be voted out of power). For example, the question of poverty requires a political response and a policy of amelioration (governments must be seen to be "doing something" to tackle the issue) if they are to maintain support. Citizens often regard governmental indifference to such an issue as being "callous" and "immoral", yet the minimal state severely curtails the ability of the government to respond to contentious issues; they can neither devote substantial resources, given the trend towards low levels of public expenditure, nor can they justify state interference in the lives of individuals, given the preeminence of individual liberty in such neo-liberal democracies. One way in which governments can square this circle is to utilise non-governmental agencies as vehicles through which politically motivated policies can be enacted.

It is in this context that NGOs occupy a privileged position in neo-liberal democracies. Firstly, they are regarded as being compatible with the neo-liberal trend towards a minimal state, in that they are private organisations which tender in a competitive arena for funding with which to develop their projects. As such, they are seen as having the virtues of the market, primarily efficiency and responsiveness to the "consumers" of their programmes who exercise power and express preference through the laws of supply and demand. They are also, though, regarded as being virtuous by those who seek to engage in ethical development projects. They generally target the most impoverished sectors of the population or those who are marginalised from the dominant dynamic (such as women, ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples) and they stress empowerment and participatory practices. The key to their success lies in their perceived credibility as agents of change in the eyes of all concerned; governments, international agencies and those they serve directly at the grassroots. In the case of Chile and Argentina, and indeed in many newly democratised nations, their credibility at the base is

¹ This paper is based on research carried out in Chile and Argentina during the academic year 1993/4 as fieldwork for doctoral studies. The assertions made in this paper are based on findings based on extensive interviews and research.

enhanced by their active participation in the anti-authoritarian struggles, where they are commonly viewed as being progressive agents for the dissemination of democracy and rights.

Neo-liberalism does not necessarily imply a passive and atomised society engaged in selfish individualism; in fact, the successful neo-liberal polity must beware of unbridled individual competition which tends to fragment society, to create conflicts and internalised problems, and leads to bitterness on the part of those who don't succeed. It must counter these negative aspects by fostering a social arena which creates cooperation and mutual benefit and which forges links between citizens to create a coherent and cohesive society. This form of democracy highlights the individual yet locates her within society, emphasising her social role, instead of privileging her position within the polity and underlining her political role. Indeed, in an age of increasingly complex and elitist politics and an ideological context which presents no real option to liberal democracy, the political sphere offers few opportunities for the citizen to enact change, and consequently a socialised understanding of participation has a great deal more resonance. It is in this socialised arena in which NGOs can be utilised to implement policies in a localised and responsive manner and can credibly act as channels for the expression of grievances and needs and as the vehicles for governmental solutions. Indeed, the predominance of effective social organisations and NGOs increases the trend which shifts the focus of participation away from political activity and the conflict of ideologies, turning towards social organisations which focus on the material improvement of individual lives through collective action; for example, the building of a community centre or the creation of a children's playground.

Such activity and organisation in the social sphere privileges civil society as the agent of social change and the improvement of individual lives through community development. By encouraging an active civil society, a neo-liberal democracy is thus enhancing its position doubly. Firstly, an active civil society plays the same role as in any democracy; it teaches and encourages forms of conduct which enhance democratic values in public behaviour, such as listening to and respecting the views of others, negotiating and reaching a consensus, organisation and delegation, upholding rights and taking responsibilities seriously in relation to the community and its project. Secondly, by increasing the social power and capability of civil society it demonstrates that it is society and not the state which is best able to solve people's problems, thus justifying the presence of a minimal state and encouraging citizens to search for solutions at the local level and among themselves. While the former contributes to the consolidation of democracy, the latter outlines and reinforces the neo-liberal form which that democracy will take.

Social Movements, NGOs and Democratisation

During the dictatorships of Chile and Argentina, social movements, local NGOs and international NGOs created a network of activism in the social sphere which directly challenged the authoritarian governments and their policies. Such relationships were best established and most widespread in Chile, where social movements and local NGOs were more numerous and more active. For example, a typical shanty town would have a soup kitchen - an ad hoc organisation which developed out of necessity,

which had an organic and horizontal structure and which had no official accounts or formally demarcated areas of responsibility. It would be funded by those who came to eat and later also by a European solidarity group. The women who ran the soup kitchen would meet to discuss not only their project, but also the political situation in general and strategies for dissent (participation in a demonstration, for example). This group would form part of a wider network of dissent, linking with community human rights groups, health groups, theatre groups etc. The group of women would commonly be approached by a local feminist organisation which would give classes teaching skills that women could utilise to earn money and would also run consciousness-raising workshops. In contrast to the soup kitchen, these local NGOs would often have a semi-permanent, paid staff and were formally structured and organised. In turn, they were often supported by external funding, which might come from a sister feminist organisation in Europe or the US or they might be the beneficiaries of finances from western governments or the EU. Thus an intricate network of contacts was built up both horizontally (among shanty town organisations or within the community of national NGOs) and vertically (local, national and international links). NGOs became a central element in the issue-led social movements and in the broader pro-democracy movement; they could often be seen marching alongside the more ad hoc movements during demonstrations and participating in the plethora of umbrella groups which sought to coordinate dissent within civil society.

In both Chile and Argentina there is a strong link of continuity between the work of the NGOs during the dictatorship and in the contemporary democracies; particularly in Chile, this reflects the dual tasks of encouraging "good citizenship" and teaching economic skills to individuals. Firstly, scholars and activists alike attribute to them the key role of "keeping the flame of democracy alight", that is, they actively pursued democratic practices within their organisations and they upheld the values of democracy (justice, equality, freedom) in their campaigns, thus sustaining a democratic practice and ethos within an overarching culture of authoritarianism. Secondly, it was they who began the practice of teaching skills to individuals in order that they adapt to the rigours of neo-liberal hardship, and of organising groups within given localities to solve the problems of the residents.

There is one striking difference, however, between the activities of NGOs during authoritarian and democratic rule. During the dictatorship, Chilean NGOs were engaged in the active denunciation of the military regime and its tactics of authoritarian rule and physical repression; their stance was overtly political. Similarly, they taught survival strategies whilst at the same time denouncing the economic policy to which they responded. During democratic government, this element of political opposition has been substantially eroded; whereas before they attacked the incumbent government and neo-liberalism and placed themselves outside the system, now many are acting in tandem with the state and are firmly incorporated within the system.

The strategy of encouraging a strong yet depoliticised civil society has been adopted in contemporary Chile. Whether this strategy was selected by design or by default it is hard to say, but certainly this policy for society is aligned to the dominant economic and political dynamic. As we shall see, the government has enlisted the help of the professional agents of civil society, the NGOs, in providing the finance and expertise to oil the workings of civil society and to act as the private sector conduit for social

investment. The Argentine experience differs, in that the country is still in the throes of adjustment and has yet to reap any possible rewards from the neo-liberal project. However, it is beginning to develop a similar relationship to human rights and women's issue NGOs and it might be expected that their incidence will continue to grow and that they will become, as in Chile, one of the key avenues of policy implementation. Given this, the relationship between NGOs, social movements and the state has changed considerably. Not only have NGOs become more distanced from the grassroots movements, many have developed intimate links with the state and the role of state organisations has also undergone a qualitative change. These shifts are related to the process of democratisation itself and also to the changing role of the state and its altered relationship with society.

Changing Relationships between NGO and Grassroots Movement

With the coming of the new democratic context, the relationship between local NGOs and grassroots movements has altered. There had always existed substantial differences in roles and goals; the grassroots movement were more combative and felt a greater emotional commitment to the anti-military movement due to their direct experience of repression and poverty, while the NGOs approached the issues from a more professionalised position - it was they who "taught" many of the skills and the movements who "learned" the analysis of patriarchy and political oppression. Also, while many of the grassroots activists came from the lower classes, the majority of workers in the NGOs were university educated and came from the middle class. During the dictatorships in Chile and Argentina, then, a form of power relationship did exist between the educators and the recipients of knowledge, but this was largely counteracted by the force of political commitment among the social movements and their courage, determination and ability to mobilise which won the undoubted respect of the NGOs. Each had a role to play in the wider anti-military movement and each valued the efforts of the other. Once the military were ousted, though, the common cause which had united NGOs and grassroots groups disappeared, and while vestiges of the former equality have been retained a new hierarchy has emerged.

With the general decline in political activity, the grassroots organisations withered and lost much of their power and energy. The NGOs, though, maintained their commitment to projects in the shanty towns and with "vulnerable" groups such as women and youth, and continued to be active as educators and agents of empowerment. Without the political focus, though, the relationship between agency and beneficiary has become more formalised and less reciprocal, and is increasingly translated as professional/client, teacher/pupil, problem solver/problem bearer, social worker/social victim. A concomitant distance between NGO and grassroots group has emerged which has been encouraged by a newly legitimised rhetoric emanating from government which focuses on personal development and the acquisition of applicable skills as a means of fostering both individual and national economic development.

The element of continuity has contributed greatly to the success of the various projects. Firstly, these organisations had the skilled personnel, the premises and the technology which allowed them to start programmes immediately or to continue successful projects already established - there would be no lead-in time, and no delays.

Secondly, they had wide experience of running similar courses and had developed forms and styles of instruction which were attuned to their potential clients' needs. Thirdly, they had a wide range of contacts within the target communities and enjoyed already established networks onto which the government schemes could be grafted. Finally, they carried with them the trust of the people and the political credibility which accrued from their anti-regime activities; their credentials as progressive organisations were established and would lend credibility to the government-funded projects.

The case of Chile gives us an example of a polity in which the neo-liberal project is well advanced and indicates the possible future course for neo-liberal democracies in their search to create a sustainable economic and political regime through investment in civil society and in the people themselves. Here, the government does not just verbally encourage this form of NGO activity, it has shown itself very willing to finance projects, largely through the auspices of FOSIS. The Fund for Solidarity and Social Investment was set up in 1990 under the slogan "Investing with the People."² It aims to target state funding to the poorest sectors of the population, using intermediate organisations as the vehicles of development; these include technical colleges, municipalities, community organisations and, most especially, NGOs. The use of NGOs as agents of personal development is nothing new; as we have seen they performed this role throughout the 1980s and did so with substantial success, what has changed is the source of funding. Yet whereas before funding came from external entities direct to the local NGO, now much of it is channelled from western governmental development agencies, from large international NGOs and from international organisations through to national government from where, in turn, it is distributed to NGOs working at the local level.

Changes to the funding have also had an impact on the NGOs themselves. Whereas previously funds might set up and maintain an NGO, the grants now only allow for running costs in terms of the proposed project, excluding overheads. Funding also now more typically covers a shorter time span (six months to a year). These trends make it more difficult for NGOs to plan ahead as they are unsure of their forthcoming budgetary requirements, their employment needs and indeed their existence in the near future. Short term grants also have an impact on the character of the projects undertaken by the NGOs. While they are entirely compatible with programmes which seek to satisfy concrete needs, they are not compatible with projects which aim to have an ongoing impact and to tackle deeper problems. A shift has occurred, therefore towards more superficial and easily achievable goals, rather than engaging with more profound issues which defy "quick-fix" solutions. As such, this short-termism leads both to financial insecurity on the part of the organisations and the curtailment of, or inconsistencies within, longer term projects.

² During the period 1990 to 1993, FOSIS financed 5,102 projects, 64.5% of which fell within the category of Investment in Production and Training for Work. For a statistical analysis, see Fondo de Solidaridad e Inversión Social *Estudio de Proyectos de FOSIS según Ejecutores y Temáticas: Periodo 1990 a Agosto 1993* Santiago, Chile: Departamento de Planificación Fondo de Solidaridad e Inversión Social, March 1994. For a government document outlining the aims and purpose of social investment, see Ministerio de Planificación y Cooperación *MIDEPLAN Participación de la Comunidad en el Desarrollo Social: Logros y Proyecciones* Santiago, Chile: Ministerio de Planificación y Cooperación, April 1992.

Although the search for NGO project funding was always competitive, this has been enhanced and a new spirit of market forces now infuses NGOs placing professionalism at a premium. The competition for project finance is intense and presentations require a high level of expertise, knowledge of the funding system and access to desk-top technology in order to gain success. The climate of insecurity and competition among NGOs, of which FOSIS is an integral part, implants ideas of cost-effectiveness and marketing which displace the political convictions which dominated NGO work during the dictatorship. The solutions offered by NGOs have also been depoliticised and rechannelled to become compatible with wider political trends. For example, whereas previously training for work was often aimed at women, was linked to economic survival and was related to a political position rejecting neo-liberal adjustment policies, current initiatives target young males, training them in long-term skills and promoting functional not political goals.

These shifts towards professionalism and non-partisan projects should be understood not only in relation to the dominance of the neo-liberal economic development project, but also as a result of the decline in political activism at the grassroots which is related to the advent of representative democratic government. These factors are two sides of the same coin, the decline in political activism allowing for the expansion of government-sponsored initiatives and each simultaneously contributing towards depoliticisation of both the issue and the NGOs themselves. Having said this, there are a substantial number of NGOs which continue to function independent of FOSIS and the government and which pursue projects directly designed to politicise or to raise awareness of, and combat, patriarchy. Moreover, there is also evidence that some project proposals submitted to FOSIS might adopt the current jargon as a cynical move to gain funding.

Notwithstanding such continuities, the role of Chilean NGOs has expanded dramatically and has changed. During the dictatorship they acted to implement policies funded externally which ran directly counter to the policies of the incumbent regimes; they were implementors of "subversive" projects and as such they were overtly political. Now they are vehicles of policy implementation funded by the incumbent government; they are the implementors of "cooptive" projects and while they now appear to have a non-political role, they are assisting in the anchoring of a political concept of development. Theirs has been an extremely successful role in the consolidation of democracy. They have directly contributed to the positive results achieved by the Chilean government in its aim to tackle poverty; their aptness and sensitivity have ensured that most of the projects have been a success and this has reflected upon the government, ensuring its re-election in 1993. More profoundly, the consequent enhanced prosperity and material improvement to people's lives has assisted in the consolidation of democracy by proving that democratic governments too can run a clean and prosperous economy and that they can be responsive to the needs of those they represent.

NGOs and State Agencies

The new democratic context has also had a profound effect on the relationship between NGOs and the state. During the period of dictatorship in Chile and Argentina, NGOs were located firmly in opposition to the military state and its agencies, and had

little or no contact with it. With the advent of democracy, though, both NGOs and grassroots movements are no longer positioned against the state, instead a complex relationship has developed of interaction, mutual dependence and guarded conflict. Links are particularly strong in relation to the new state entities, set up in direct response to the demands of the anti-military movement; human rights and women's agencies.

In both Chile and Argentina the government created commissions to investigate human rights violations by the military and from these developed state agencies which were designed to respond to further denunciations and to develop programmes which might foster a respect for human rights (in Chile the Corporation of Reparation and Reconciliation; in Argentina the Subsecretariat of Human and Social Rights). These entities have been staffed by former human rights activists (typically lawyers involved in human rights' defence) and with them they have brought an experience of political combat and personal commitment which is uncommon in other state agencies. Moreover, these public servants already had strong links to the grassroots movements and NGOs through their personal involvement and contacts, and due to the emotive nature of the issue, these contacts could not be easily severed. Indeed, many of those involved in the state agency show clear political and personal motives behind their actions and programmes; they had experienced the era of demonstrations and saw the state agency as another avenue through which to promote human rights and thus ensure that "never again" should such a fate befall another Chilean or Argentine citizen.

Similarly, the governments of both countries set up state entities to respond to calls for national action on women's issues (in Chile, SERNAM the National Service for Women and the Family; in Argentina, the National Women's Institute). These had been a central demand of the women's movement which had risen to prominence during the struggle for democracy, and feminist activists (as well as *políticas*) in both countries have become involved in the new women's state agencies. Again, the aims of the women who took up posts in these state entities were to further the cause of the women's movement, broadly understood, by raising awareness of women's position in a patriarchal society and by incorporating women into the formal political and economic realm.

Clearly, these state agencies had a closer and more reciprocal relationship with the social movements from which they sprang, and the expectations of norms and behaviour were entirely different to those between civil society and the functionaries of other Ministries and Directorates. The former were understood (at least at first), in some ways to be an extension of the movement within the formal, institutional arena, indeed many Chilean women hoped that SERNAM would become a super-NGO and it was obliged to hold a day-school to disabuse women's activists of this impression. At the root of the confusion and ambiguity surrounding the new state agencies lies in the partial relocation of the issue (human rights or women's position) from the social arena and the social movement to the political arena and the state. Such a translocation implies the injection of party politics and the practice of pragmatic negotiations which rest uneasily with the continuing presence of the moral, ethical and intransigent elements which made up the founding identity of the issue itself.

This contradiction is perhaps most keenly felt by the functionaries of the state agencies themselves due to the structural position of the institution, which demands loyalty to the incumbent government, and their emotional ties to the issue and the grassroots movement. For example, chatting to professionals employed by the Argentine Subsecretariat of Human Rights it became clear that many had experienced a crisis of conscience when President Menem granted a Presidential Pardon to the junta leaders who had been imprisoned for their involvement in human rights violations. Such public employees must balance the heart-felt ideals of the movement with the pragmatic demands of political expediency within an institutional context which regards their activities as peripheral "extras" and a financial context of public spending austerity. This awkward position is exacerbated by the pattern of policy implementation which utilises NGOs and grassroots groups as the vehicles for its projects within society. As well as providing link to the grassroots, communication is also channelled from the base towards the state, which leaves the state open to criticism of its programmes or insufficient funding. On the other hand, the general decline in social movement activity and public mobilisations in the informal political arena places greater pressures on these state organisations to "lead" the social movements. Movement activists criticise the state agencies for not being radical enough and at times shift responsibility for putting issues on the public agenda from the social movement to the institutional entity. This trend is resisted by the agency workers, as one employee of the Argentine National Women's Institute explains in reference to the issue of abortion: "it is important to make priorities and to defend our institutional space. There is no sense in taking risks when there is no social movement... if there were marches in the streets then it would make sense to put ourselves out front. It is not the role of the state to put itself in the vanguard when sufficient forces are not present in civil society."³ Moreover, they are also subject to intense criticism from the NGOs and women's groups at the base precisely because they are part of Menem's government machine which has overseen the introduction of neo-liberal reforms and their attendant hardship: "If we do things well, they react against it because this goes to the credit of the government which the majority of feminists are against, and if we do it badly, we do it badly. It almost as if they prefer us to do things badly, because this is easier to cope with in party political terms."⁴ The root of these ambiguous responses to the state agency lies in its position which straddles civil society and state, finding its identity in the social movement and its (relative) structural power in the state.

However, within this uneasy relationship also lies a degree of mutual dependency. For the NGOs and grassroots groups, this dependency takes the form of financial assistance, in relation to the "tendering out" of projects, and also political assistance. An example of the latter is given by the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo who are engaged in the search for their disappeared grandchildren, as one activist explains: "we get a lot of help in the Subsecretariat... we have people who will help us to present our work where we couldn't gain access, or they may be able to obtain documents because they are from within."⁵ In turn, for the state agencies the pressure applied outside the institutional arena is also vital; it strengthens the entity within the institutional hierarchy and allows the agency to apply pressure for an increased (or sustained) budget and

³ Norma Sanchis, Instituto Nacional de la Mujer: Buenos Aires 1/7/94.

⁴ Norma Sanchis: Buenos Aires 1/7/94.

⁵ Rosa Rosinblit, Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo. Interview: Buenos Aires 21/6/94.

enhances (or maintains) its status within the governmental machine. One human rights activist explains the nature of this relationship, speaking of the then Director of the Argentine Human Rights Subsecretariat, Alicia Pierini: "If she feels our pressure, she must respond and she needs our support in order to apply pressure herself within the government. She needs our support, because if we don't support her, she doesn't exist."⁶

The relationship between NGO and state agency is complex and riddled with tensions and contradictions. At the heart of this ambiguity is the blurred boundary between civil organisation (social movement and/or NGO) and state agency, and the multiple identities of those who work in the new state entities, who are often party members, institutional employees and former activists in the social movements, each of which creates a pattern of contacts and affiliations, both formal and affective, which may coincide but which also often conflict. This situation is exacerbated by the partial transferral of the issue itself to the sphere of state responsibility and the concomitant intrusion of party politics and negotiated solutions which this implies. Confusion abounds as to the points and strategies which each element of the broad campaign should promote and in relation to who is responsible for what in the pursuit of common goals. In part, though, this crossover is also the greatest asset of these broad women's and human rights "movements", in that a real relationship between exists between state and civil society, fostering dialogue, responsive policies and a campaign which functions within both arenas.

Conclusion

We have seen that the role of NGOs has been expanded and enhanced during the transition to neo-liberal democracy. This phenomena is more advanced in Chile, where the neo-liberal project was introduced in 1975, and just as Chile provided an early blue-print in Latin America for this ideological interpretation of economic and political development, so perhaps Chile gives us a foretaste of how polities undergoing the process of neo-liberal revolution might consolidate their project through an enhanced civil society mediated by non-governmental organisations.

It was argued at the beginning of this paper that NGOs can assist in the consolidation of both actual governments and the system of democracy. An essential feature of a democratic government is representation, usually "measured" through its responsiveness to demands from the citizenry, and in a neo-liberal system it is in this arena of response that NGOs can mediate and bring substantive improvements to the lives of the people. If they succeed, not only do they improve the standing of the incumbent government, they also prove that democracy "works" in that it provides a mechanism of demand articulation and satisfaction. Moreover, NGOs provide another essential feature which embeds government and democracy alike in that they are associated with progressive policies and with an ethical attitude to political and economic change. They are perceived to be moral agencies staffed by committed individuals and to be acting in the best interests of those who they wish to help - and

⁶ Leopolda de Llegali: Asociación de Familiares de los Detenidos-Desaparecidos y Presos Politicos. Interview: Buenos Aires 21/6/94.

more often than not this is true. Finally, NGOs both exercise and encourage democratic relationships which help to embed the values of a democratic ethos in the fabric of civil society.

However, the incorporation of NGOs and former NGO workers into the state machine, either directly through employment in state agencies or indirectly through project tendering and finance, has led to the emergence of ambiguities and the blurring of boundaries between civil society, NGO and state. This has led on the one hand to confusion concerning the relative roles and responsibilities of each sector, and on the other to the development of antagonisms and conflicts which were much less visible during the dictatorships. Partly, this is due to the process of incorporation, a process which, it could be argued, shows that government is acting with sensitivity and is following good democratic practice. It is also, though, due to the end of an era during which the players on the political scene were easily categorised as being "good" or "evil", "with us" or "against us". The social movements are understandably bewildered by the end of such dichotomies - while they have maintained their staunch positions, the NGOs and the state have changed, politics and policy have been injected into the issues making them subject to negotiations and to the strictures of public spending and the issues have been "taken over" by these formal entities. Moreover, a new kind of civil society has taken root, one which strives for social, not political, goals and which seeks tangible personal or community benefits, rather than holistic, societal goods of a less material nature. Their combative and intransigent campaigns clash with the dominant discourse of negotiation and compromise, and they are portrayed as being a danger to the consolidation of democracy (when only a few years ago they were heralded as its champion).

Some interpret these changes as capitulation to the military and/or to neo-liberalism, yet it would be wrong to claim that NGOs are now no more than Trojan horses bringing neo-liberalism into the social sphere and facilitating its colonisation; they are often outspoken about government policies and few have adopted any more than the rhetoric of neo-liberal self-help. However, we should also beware of going too far the other way, of claiming that NGOs are the Trojan horses of the "left", infiltrating the state and utilising its funds to promote moves against neo-liberalism; in the complex world of state agency-NGO relations under democracy, their projects are altered by the nature of the policies under implementation and the more ready recognition by NGOs of the need for negotiated compromises and short term goals. NGOs are neither gorgons nor paragons, rather they have the aspect of Janus, looking both to the civil and the formal arenas, to the past and to the future and they form just one of the bridges between state and civil society, influencing each. While undoubtedly their projects, particularly training for the self-employed, enhance neo-liberalism's anchorage in society, they also project democratic values into society and help to create the structures of civil society which encourage organisation and participation. Moreover, they do have an impact on state policies through the nature of the projects which they propose and the personal links between state and NGO employees; not only this, in the human rights and women's issue agencies, social movements can also influence the nature of the projects and the means of policy implementation formulated by the state.

The days of "us" and "them" are gone and the current reality shows a complex network of old and new connections within and between the movements, NGOs and state agencies. Each seeks to preserve its own integrity yet each needs the other in

order to survive. What continues to link those who work on the same issue is the common sense of purpose, in broad terms, and the common past which they share. It is this emotional experience and its ethical element which unites social movement, NGO and state agency and it is upon this foundation which each must build, recognising the limitations of one another and accepting them and building multiple alliances which emphasise commonalities instead of differences. Within this relationship is the capacity for mutual destruction but also the capacity for mutual reinforcement and it is towards the latter that each must strive if the goals of meaningful human rights and substantial advances for women are to be achieved.