

PARTNERS, COLLABORATORS OR PATRON-CLIENTS: DEFINING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE AID INDUSTRY

A SURVEY OF THE ISSUES

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1.0 INTRODUCTION²

"Partnership" is at the centre of the so-called "new agenda for development assistance" proclaimed by the development assistance community and aptly captured by the publication of the OECD-DAC report, *Shaping the 21st Century: The Role of Development Cooperation in 1996*⁽ⁱ⁾. This report marked a watershed in the development assistance industry. Principally, it claims a broad consensus status, constructed over prolonged consultations with key stakeholders in the aid industry, i.e. among donors, between donors (and their institutions) and recipients (and their institutions) as well as with other actors -- the private sector and civil society organisations. Being consensual implies, among other things, a substantial foreclosure of the debate about the causes of aid ineffectiveness, and there lies the weight of its propositions.

The central elements of this alleged consensus include: a recognition of market oriented economic objectives as central to promoting development; a rediscovery of the critical role of the state, especially in promoting "good management"; and the importance of a democratic environment that upholds property rights, the rule of law and is receptive to participation of civil society organisations. Arising from this alleged consensus is the new development assistance agenda for the development assistance enterprise. Central to this new agenda is a framework where "civil society organisations" (including but not restricted to NGOs) are expected to work in "partnership" with participatory and accountable governments as the "only means of ensuring and sustaining participatory, equitable and sustainable development."⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ This agenda therefore seeks, among other things, to promote partnership through improved collaboration, coordination and capacity building.

The purpose of the "partnership" framework is to address what recent diagnoses of the aid industry conclude are the critical gaps which accounted in the past for the ineffectiveness of aid. These are identified as: (1) the lack of local "ownership" of policies and programmes --perceived as the key to good management; (2) inappropriate donor behaviour, including aid coordination and the ineffectiveness of conditionality as a surveillance and quality control mechanism; and (3) the underlying environment, including the nature of policies, institutions and the political system. Consequently, partnership seeks to address inclusiveness, complementarity, dialogue and shared responsibility as the basis of managing the multiple relationships among stakeholders in the aid industry. ³

This paper argues that, notwithstanding the validity of such propositions as inclusiveness, more accommodating dialogue, local ownership of the development process etc., "partnership" is an overstated ascription of what is possible with the best of intentions. If addressing ineffective utilisation of aid is intended, a more modest and yet appropriate agenda may suffice, i.e. promoting mutual transparency of interests and agendas requiring honest dialogue about the importance of democracy and the rule of law, inclusion, the liberalisation agenda, etc. If addressing inequality in the relations governing the industry is what is intended, we propose an alternative framework -- that of solidarity -- as the basis for constructing those relations, be they between governments and their institutions or between non-governmental actors and their constituencies.

We also argue that, as currently conceived, the partnership agenda is essentially a proposition for donors to be more intrusive in the management of the economies and societies of developing countries, the very opposite of what actually is represented by "local ownership of a development agenda". It is essentially a proposition for a more effective, more collective, enforcement of the liberalisation agenda.

The paper reviews the background to the emerging partnership concept as a response to the aid crisis; how the concept inter-locks with other concepts -- the state, ownership, governance, civil society, community and the private sector -- and the complexity of the relationships generated thereof. It examines how these concepts are perceived, interpreted and applied in the context of the "new development agenda". It visits a much debated question: can partnership work in the context of aid relations? It concludes with brief thoughts about "solidarity" as an alternative framework.

2.0 THE DECLINING AID ENTERPRISE AND THE SEARCH FOR RELEVANCE

2.1 The Nature and Causes of Decline

The "Partnership" concept, like similar frameworks that have come and gone⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾, is one more effort at addressing the decline in the aid industry, the nature and scale of which have been much studied. There is unanimity that the industry is in crisis at a time when the need for more and effective aid (concessionary loans, grants and debt write-downs) couldn't be more obvious, at least for the poorest countries facing sustained external shocks on their economies.^(iv) The evidence shows clearly that ODA levels have been declining in real terms since the end of the Cold War, more dramatically in the case of the USA, but consistently so across the board; and that political support for the enterprise is progressively difficult to sustain in donor countries and increasingly so in developing countries.^(v)

Two sets of factors are employed to explain this decline: factors which are exogenous to the industry itself (both internal and external) and those affecting the effectiveness of aid which feed back to ill-will and declining support. The exogenous factors are largely political in nature including:

- the loss of geopolitical/security significance of developing countries after the Cold War and therefore gradual erosion of support for international development especially in the USA;
- a change in attitude by former colonial metropolises towards developing countries, partly as a result of declining feelings of guilt and responsibility towards them (Killick, 1998);
- the emergence to prominence at centres of power of right-of-centre political players who traditionally have much less affiliation to the aid enterprise and who have accused the

system of fostering "statism and command and control economies whilst stifling the private sector." (Alexander, N., 1998)⁴;

- the effectiveness of a civil society lobby of multilateral institutions (World Bank, the EU and the IMF in particular) in bringing to public attention the non-transparent, non-accountable and ineffective (in terms of poverty reduction or growth objectives) nature of their operations (Abugre C., Alexander, N., UNCTAD, 1998); and
- the developments in global capital markets which signal the growing significance and dominance of private capital thereby making it difficult to mobilise interest and support for official development assistance in DAC countries.

These factors are compounded by the quality of aid issues -- i.e. the growing evidence suggesting the absence of significant association between aid inflows and economic growth in recipient countries (Mosley, 1987, and Burnside and Dollar, 1996)^(vi) and the fact that except for limited project aid with significant NGO involvement, the evidence equally suggests that no significant impact of aid on poverty reduction has been achieved. On the contrary, rather than decreasing, poverty has increased both in absolute terms and in terms of depth and severity.^(vii)

The factors accounting for the low quality of aid have tended to be attributed largely to those internal to the recipient countries^(viii), notably the quality of domestic economic policies, the political environment and the development priorities of the government. Recent explanations of the limited social impact of aid have however, acknowledged to some extent, mistakes associated with an over-zealous promotion of the market's allocative efficiency (through structural adjustment programmes) to the neglect of the state. Market failure is acknowledged as a limitation on the supply of social goods.^(ix) It is also increasingly acknowledged that focus on economic growth as an objective of policy may have been a limiting one. Instead, such goals as broad improvements in the quality of life are put forward as the objective of economic and social policy, thereby further enhancing the importance of government.

Several recent studies have concluded that the difference between good and bad performance, in relation to economic reform generally and aid effectiveness in particular, is accounted for by the domestic policy environment (government failure). Sound management is said to deliver positive impact on growth and poverty reduction (Burnside and Dollar; Dollar and Alesina 1998; Hadimichael, *et. al.*, 1995; World Bank, 1998). By "sound management" is meant: a stable macroeconomic environment, open trade regimes, protected property rights and efficient and non-corrupt public bureaucracies that can deliver education, health and other public services" (World Bank Policy Research Report, 1998).

The World Bank study cited above claims that, with sound management, 1% of GDP in aid reduces poverty by 1%. It also claims that with sound management, aid works in partnership with the private sector, such that 1% of GDP in aid crowds in another 1.9% of GDP in private investment. For sound policy reforms to be effective, "governments have to be genuinely convinced that the reforms have to be implemented and considers the reform programmes its own," (World Bank, 1997) -- i.e. they must "own them" -- since conditionality is unlikely to bring lasting reform if there is no strong domestic movement for change (World Bank, 1998)^(x).

These recent studies also conclude that a good institutional environment matters. By "good institutional environment" is meant "an efficient, decentralised public sector, able to promote participation including the involvement of NGOs and CSOs, and managing public expenditure prudently in the interest of social development." It is claimed that "beneficiary participation quintuples project success" and that NGOs, adept at promoting beneficiary participation and management, are therefore valuable as sub-contractors of service provision. "Capacity building" is critical to unlocking the potential of the public sector for "good management" by, among other things, penetrating administrative procedures, enhancing the analytical and policy-formulating capacity of the bureaucracy and the policy technocrats and strengthening the service delivery and advocacy role of NGOs and CSOs. Ensuring good governance and "local ownership" through a partnership framework produces superior results compared to conditionality "without a domestic movement for change."

These are basically the analytical foundations of the so-called new consensus on the agenda for development assistance. They are aptly captured in the OECD (DAC) report, *Shaping the 21st Century: The Role of Development Cooperation* (1996) and codified into *Principles of Effective Aid: Guidelines and Best Practices for Policy Orientation and Operational Issues*; the essential elements of which are currently doing the rounds in various circles under different guises. The "agenda for development assistance" is reflected in as diverse a range of initiatives as James Wolfensohn's Comprehensive Development Framework within the World Bank, and the "Partnership for Capacity Building" scheme within the Africa Region of the Bank. It is also very much influencing the Civil Society Capacity Building plans of NGOs pioneered by the NGO Committee on the World Bank. The agenda is also clearly reflected in the various bilateral programming frameworks, not least the CIDA Country Frameworks.^(vi) The task of partnership is ostensibly to take forward this agenda. As a result "partnership" has become an essential component of this agenda.

2.2 The So-Called "New Agenda/Strategy for Development Assistance"

It is necessary to recap the key conclusions and the essential elements of this new agenda, and the role carved out for civil society organisations in this agenda, in order for the implications of the partnership concept to be fully appreciated.

1. Good management is the key to good performance of economies generally and the effectiveness of development assistance, in particular. Good management (governance)^(vii) means good policies and institutions.

- By "good policies" is meant market-friendly policies (open, privatised and stable economies) and pro-poor government expenditure.
- By "good institutions" is meant pro-reform bureaucracies and technocracies, able to deliver efficiently, willing to encourage participation of citizens and civil society organisations, and able to build consensus and to express "ownership over reforms and

national policies". Good institutions ensure the protection of private property, the rule of law, pluralism, reduced military spending, etc.

2. Participation by NGOs in service delivery enhances good management because they are said to be good at encouraging beneficiary participation, perhaps cheaply. Civil society involvement in policy debates should be encouraged because they can keep government on their toes and promote accountability.

3. Because of market failure, government action is crucial to ensure that social goals are delivered by correcting these failures and leveraging development assistance for local investment. Thus the importance of good governance. In addition, the quality of government expenditure is crucial to poverty reduction given the magnitude and scope of the problem.

4. The volume of development assistance does not matter as much as its quality. The new role for development assistance is not to serve as a source of capital, but to support good institutions and good policies. Capital will be attracted from the private sector as a consequence of good management.

5. This means that selectivity is the key. Those governments practicing good management should be rewarded with more aid compared to those who do not.

6. Donors should focus on:

- Better coordination less fragmentation.
- Promoting country ownership of strategies.
- Transforming the larger picture (macro and sectoral) through the promotion of ideas (analysis) and sector-wide and programme funding approach rather than flag-carrying projects.
- Promoting a common vision and strategy of development assistance.
- Transforming their partnership cultures and consultative frameworks.

7. The challenge of the new approach to development assistance is to convene all major stakeholders -- donors, governments, civil society organisations (including NGOs) and for-profit corporations (large or small, local or foreign) -- around a country's development strategy. This is to be constructed with the full participation of donors, through a partnership framework based on shared objectives and comparative advantage.^(xiii)

8. To ensure that this partnership functions, donors commit to "capacity building" aimed at strengthening the strategic role of civil society, country level dialogue among donors, host governments and their civil society; and revising donor styles that may undermine public administration.^(xiv)

This, essentially, is the new partnership agenda. It is premised on the economic reform (liberalisation) agenda and sees as largely complementary to this agenda, a democratic environment which promotes participation and inclusiveness as the means of securing local ownership of this agenda. Civil society's role in this agenda is clearly carved out.

3.0 CLARIFYING THE CONCEPTS

3.1 Partnership

The concept of "partnership" in development assistance is a much debated one, dating back at least three decades. Since then many definitions and interpretations have been given by various agencies.^(xv) Most of these are largely captured by Robert Picciotto's definition of partnership as *"a means to an end – a collaborative relationship towards mutually agreed objectives involving shared responsibility for outcomes, distinct accountabilities and reciprocal obligations."* He describes as hollow partnership, the situation where *"there is no common vision of what the partnership is about; no mutual stake in the outcome; lack of clarity in task allocations or imbalances in influence and unfairness in allocation of costs and benefits."*^(xvi)

To the concept of "hollow partnership" may added such concerns as "inflexible partnerships" (Maxwell and Riddell, 1998)^(xvii); unequal partnerships (Alexander, N, 1998) or "something nothing" notions (Saxby, 1996). Kamal Malhotra (Malhotra, 1996) dismisses the notion of partnership governing the relationships between NGOs north and south, or even between NGOs and communities, and prefers "counterparts" or "development alliances", rather than "partnership" as understood in its literal Thai translation, synonymous with a prostitute-client relationship.

So what is the essence of "true" partnership if such exists? Picciotto's assessment of partnership in the business world is revealing. He argues that in the business world, true partnership means "some or all the owners accept unlimited liability for the organisation's debt and jointly exercise management control."^(xviii) Partnership carries reciprocal, mutually enforcing obligations. He argues that partnerships are more appropriate in professional service organisations, compared to manufacturing firms, where the most important asset is the knowledge and experience of the partners; where reputation and team work are central to success and where peers are in a better position than bosses to judge the quality of professional work and to monitor one another.

The legal definition of partnership,^(xix) according to Picciotto, justifies partnership "only if the benefits exceed the cost and the net benefits are equitably assigned to the parties." The Department for International Development (DFID-UK), defines partnership in its "Partnership with Business" manual as involving "an agreement to work together to fulfil an obligation or undertake a specific task by committing resources and sharing risks as well as the benefits." Partnership is founded on shared values (including trust and loyalty), commonly owned objectives and a judicious balance in meeting the needs of all partners. Partnership cannot operate on the basis of asymmetrical relationships for the reason that reciprocal enforcement of

liabilities and obligations are not practicable. Reciprocity, symmetry, equity and fairness are the bedrock upon which partnership is founded.

This is the understanding of partnership against which we assess the relationships in the aid industry, be these relations between NGOs (North and South), between NGOs and aid institutions, between donors and recipient governments, or between large companies and small ones. Our argument is that partnership connotes more than "shared objectives and a framework for collaboration." Without symmetry, reciprocity, equity and fairness, relationships may be described as collaborative but not partnership. In some cases, the relationship may more appropriately be described as a "subject-emperor" relationship.^(xx) This distinction is crucial.

3.2 The Underlying Concepts of State, Civil Society and Private Sector⁵

"I am still looking for the modern day equivalent of those Quakers, who ran successful businesses, made money because they offered honest products and treated their people honestly, gave honest value for money, put back more than they took out and told no lies."

Anita Roddick, KLM *Herald* magazine, August, 1999

The expectation of the partnership framework is that if the right conditions are in place, a cooperative relationship will result among the various 'stakeholders' -- state, civil society and the for-profit sector -- and that these relations will lead to the optimum production and equitable distribution of social goods in society. These social goods include economic goods and services, respect for human rights and norms of equality (e.g. gender, caste, generation, etc.) and the rule of law including protection of property and life; peace and security, etc. These expectations arise from presumptions about the nature, purpose and functions of these actors in society distinguishing each from the other, and determining the cumulative products. These presumptions are deeply embedded in the theory of state and its relations with civil society and the market as promoted by the "new agenda". Given that the partnership framework seeks to transform society in a chosen direction, it implies transforming these relationships. For that purpose alone, these embedded concepts should be unpacked.

The concepts of civil society trumpeted in the dominant literature, including those arising from NGO discourse, are heavily influenced by Euro-American political science discourse.^(xxi) The widely used definition of the term civil society is that it represents all the "non-primordial" social groups lying between the patriarchal family and the universal (autocratic) state in the public arena. Civil society is seen in a diametrical relation with the state, existing as a legitimate arena of defence against the state and as a natural condition of freedom against the institutional despotism of the state, or as a product of historical product of multidimensional relations⁷

arising from the emergence of the market seeking the freeing up of the economy from the arena of politics and extra-economic relations (Mamdani, 1995).

In the view of Hegel and de Tocqueville, the birth of civil society signals a capitalist transition and therefore a product of contradictory relationships, ridden by conflicts between class and groups. Seen in this way, the movements arising from civil society cannot simply be romanticised as advancing one set of values -- those of democracy, human rights and equity. They could advance totally contradictory values in opposition to each other, so that the dominant values arising from these conflicts will reflect the dominant interests.^(xxiii) Even if they were to advance democracy, asks Mamdani, isn't it right to ask what democracy is being advanced, in whose interest, and who is pioneering the general demand for democracy? If the dominant interests are secured through social movements in civil society, isn't the real issue to unpack these movements in order to find out which organisations have the greatest influence? Are they those of workers, farmers, women and children, people with disability? Or are they those of business, finance houses, the intellectual elite, etc.?

Associated with the essentially conflictual notion of civil society is the vast structural differentiation that characterises organisations in civil society.^(xxiii) To be an NGO says little. It matters if you are a small one, a community-based one, one with a national presence or an international NGO etc. The degree of influence and interests vary with character. To be in the private sector says little. It matters whether you are a household firm, a peasant farmer, a large local corporation or a branch of a transnational corporation; whether you are in finance or manufacturing. Similarly, it matters much whether the government dealing with a donor is that of a small aid dependent country such as Ghana or a large country with substantial resources, military power and capable of accessing capital from a variety of sources such as China or India. These differential characteristics determine bargaining space and determine the extent to which interests may coincide, collude or conflict over time and how opportunities, rights and obligations are distributed and enforced.

A third dimension of the civil society/state relations is one advanced by Marx, the fact that there is no neat dichotomy between the state and civil society.^(xxiv) The state itself is a product of interests and the contradictions in civil society are reproduced in the state. Civil society is not simply external to the state, which is "simultaneously an arena of struggle for forces whose springboard is none other than civil society". Interests advanced by the state can be reciprocal or contradictory to those of civil society. Decision-making within the state is a process of struggle, reflecting contradictory interests springing from relations between civil society and the state and between various apparatus of state.

Civil society may be state organised, e.g. NGOs who receive grants from the state may work for the state and may therefore be both part of the state and part of civil society. But these NGOs may be state controlled. While they are autonomous of the state, Mamdani argues that they cannot be independent of it. (Mamdani, *ibid.*)^(xxv) The agency that defines the character of civil society, in Marx's analysis, is the bourgeoisie. For Gramsci who believes that the realm of civil society is public opinion and culture, the agents of civil society are the intellectuals. Are community-based indigenous voluntary or popular religious organisations, present all over Africa, agents of civil society? Does civil society include the traditional sphere where power is

organised on the basis of succession not competition? (Mamdani) What about organised social action groups of scheduled tribes, scheduled castes? (John Samuel, *Humanscape*, India, November 1996.)

The accompanying dimension of the civil society/state relations is the perception of the nature of the state itself and therefore the roles and functions assigned to it in relation to the society and the economy. The nature of the state caricatured in the dominant discourse is by and large conventional, often homogenised, simplistic and analysed in a comparative context to European state formation. The caricature of the character of the state is broadly as follows. As a relatively new endeavour to centralise power from dispersed power conditions in the pre-modern/traditional society, this project is suffering decay. As a result, the state is characterised as "weak" or "soft", "omnipresent but not omnipotent".

The reference point for this centralising project was the authoritarian colonial state with the result that the post-colonial constructions assumed an authoritarian and "patrimonial" character whilst adopting personalised leadership forms, both political and administrative, institutionalising mechanisms for extracting resources for personal gain and those of their sectional constituents, at the expense of the public good and for the political self-preservation of these interests. The state-led economic development agenda served essentially these vested interests and until they are dismantled, the public good is unlikely to be served. The state as caricatured is variously described as "vampire", "prebendalist". The problem of the decay of the state is the conflict between the institutional interests (e.g. corruption) and those of economic managers working for efficiency, order and growth -- the problem of good governance.

The challenge for good governance is seen as redefining and re-orienting the functions of the state from an exploitative/exclusionist role into a cooperative/supportive one; from oppositional/adversarial (in terms of its relations with its managers, the private sector and civil society) into a complementary and reinforcing one; from an accumulative role into a facilitative one. This is the partnership agenda for the state under the "new development agenda".

As with the concept of civil society, the concept of state and its characteristics caricatured above denies complexity. First, no state anywhere expresses itself in a homogeneous form. At any time, the character of the state is shaped by complex and contradictory process and struggles and heavily influenced and impacted by both these internal processes as well as external and historical factors. Arising from this is the apparent denial of the role of popular resistance in political struggle or at best a reduction of the character of that struggle to organised formal interest groups of the middle classes and conventional power blocks (Akin Aina, 1996).⁹

The consequence of the reduction of state formation to the realm of state managers and organised middle classes is to elevate these groups into the centre of the "civil society participation" project with the consequential denial of a central place for other social movements and pressure groups not seen as essential to the new development agenda. Thirdly, the simplistic notion of state as political managers and their institutions with a neutral role of facilitating cooperative and mutually rewarding relationships denies the collusion of interests consistent with power formations; class, gender, caste, ethnicity with the consequence that less transparent transactions

are encouraged. Privatisation is a potent example of the collusion between government officials and the private sector, often at the expense of the taxpayer.

This neutralist perspective of the state serves the "new development agenda" well. It has the potential of hoodwinking oppressed groups into believing that their interests coincide necessarily with those of corporations, the intellectual community and middle class civil society groups, and that if they sit around the same table with government and donors there will be optimum benefits equitably shared. Here lies an immense danger of the partnership project as promoted by the "new development agenda".

The role carved for the state in the World Bank's 1997 *WDR Report* is instructive and reflective of the "new agenda for development assistance". Hailed as a reversal of the Bank's hitherto strident anti-state rhetoric, a close examination shows a more careful restatement of the agenda carved for the state within the liberalisation context. The WDR sees the state and markets not as opposites but as complementary. The state is essential for putting in place the institutional framework and ensuring the policy environment for the market.

The task for states is twofold. First, they must match their role with their capability. Then, they should work to raise their credibility and capability. By credibility is meant "predictability of rules and policies and their consistent application". Weak states should first establish the foundations of the rule of law, maintain macroeconomic stability, invest in social services, protect the vulnerable and the environment. Then they should move to address corruption, foster competition and increase citizens' participation. But participation is seen largely as engineering consent to policies framed by governments with the support of their international donors. The benchmark for assessing political processes and institutions is whether "they act as lubricants or potential barriers to free market economic reforms and fiscal discipline." (Nicholas Hildyard, 1998).

Whilst encouraging participation in decision making in order to bring government closer to people, this agenda rules out participation in macroeconomic policy, since this "requires insulation from political pressure." Companies are treated solely as "engines of growth", with nothing said about corporate power and the abuse of power, corporate accountability and labour rights.

The 1997 WDR can be said to be the reference document on the role of the state for the "new development assistance agenda". The strategic role carved for civil society organisations on the other hand is to enhance the functioning of the market by making up for the failures of the state in the cases where the legal and institutional mechanisms for regulating competition are weak.

4.0 PARTNERSHIP IN PRACTICE

Mainstream discourse traces the partnership concept as applied to aid relations to the report of L.B. Pearson, chairman of the Commission on International Development, in a report entitled *Partnership for Development*, which saw partnership as a means of "advancing understanding

between recipients and donors expressing reciprocal obligations, directed at a clear objective or a finite enterprise, beneficial to both." The Lome Convention between ACP countries and former European colonial metropolises (the EC) was hailed for taking this framework perhaps a step further by addressing reciprocity of interests, using in some cases, non-reciprocal instruments, e.g. market access conditions favouring ACP countries.

Parallel to the Lome agreement, was, however, a set of commodity agreements which served at the time to regulate prices in the interest of stability of European industry. Those were the days when commodities played a significant role in the accumulation process in Europe and were therefore critical to domestic stability. At that time, one could argue, the basis of partnership existed. As the economic conditions changed, so did the relationship, marking the collapse of the Lome partnership as currently reflected in the reciprocity conditionalities flooding the on-going Lome negotiations.

The Lome Agreement aside, relationships between donors and recipients have been regulated through various mechanisms and frameworks: aid groups (such as Consultative Groups and Round Tables); various instruments of agreements with the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), bilateral agreements; special strategic alliances such as the Special Programme to Assist Sub-Saharan Africa (SPA) and Trust Fund-stimulated initiatives such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and others. Similar arrangements existed between foundations and their collaborators. The relationships between NGOs (North and South) have evolved and are very much applying the partnership tag. What has been the nature of these relationships in the past? What is intended for the future? How can we assess value of what is expressed?

4.1 Partnership Frameworks Between Donors and Recipient Governments

The partnership strategy claims to represent a new approach to development assistance, one which convenes all major stakeholders around the country's development strategy, programs and projects which are broadly owned by the country. The country's development strategy will embody a Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) which promotes economic wellbeing as well as social harmony, democracy and participation and environmentally sustainable development in an all-inclusive manner. The task of partnership is to: promote national capacity- and consensus-building; support the development of a national development strategy; and arrange partnership frameworks between development actors based on shared objectives and comparative advantage (World Bank Partnership Group).

As we observed in section 2.2 above, the partnership framework is underscored by the "new development agenda" premised on a liberalisation agenda and its glasnost accompaniment. This is the crucial prerequisite of the relationships. Supporting a national development strategy which is "broadly owned by the country" implies putting the liberalisation agenda at the centre of development strategy and getting buy-in from important stakeholders notably, noisy NGOs, private capital and political activists and the intellectual community. Central to inserting this

agenda at the heart of the development strategy is the recommendation to donors to pay more attention to the underlying studies (e.g. the economic and sector studies) and the "broad transformative processes" rather than project supervision.

Clearly, it is not intended to promote a truly locally-driven development agenda with the possibilities of rejecting the liberalisation agenda as the defining framework. This is implied in the nature of consultation envisaged and participants perceived as central to this dialogue. If true local ownership were the intention, greater emphasis would be given, for example, to independent parliamentary processes and the framework of engagement between parliament, citizen groups and the executive. Such a framework would normally be perceived as time consuming and prone to capture by diverse interests. Ensuring "broad ownership", meaning securing public support, is the crucial task of the partnership framework.

Once the defining agenda is agreed, the second task is to define the partnership framework and approach in-country. The framework includes the institutional arrangements by which in-country dialogue takes place and the approach refers to the specific strategies to be employed in operationalising the "partnership framework". The World Bank Partnership Group recommends, among other things, more intensive consultation around Country Assistance Strategies (CAS) and the convening of Aid Groups (consultative groups) in recipient countries, thereby allowing for participation of business groups and civil society organisations. This is intended to break the practice of exclusion and unequal engagement that past CGs convened in Paris represented. It also recommends the harmonisation of bilateral and multilateral country strategy documents around the common agenda.

The sticky issue as observed by the Bank, however, is the IMF's instrument, the Policy Framework Paper (PFP), whose "objective remains elusive...and there is a general yearning for a truly country-specific PFP agreed on the basis of a government-led consultation process." (External evaluation of ESAF, 1998) Given the pre-eminence of the IMF over the World Bank in respect of macro economic policy and the "transformative framework", the relative lack of interest of the IMF in any suggested openness implies a foreclosure of the macroeconomic agenda.^(xxvii)

There is also much silence about other strategic fora such as the SPA, which is an exclusive forum of donors discussing Africa's economic restructuring process. It is also worth noting that the partnership framework has yet to put at the centre of the dialogue, issues around global trade and investment asymmetry and the control of volatile capital, critical to the stability of developing countries. There is continued reluctance by the major donors to really deal with the areas of much interest to developing countries, such as commodity prices and the terms of trade, debt write-down, exploitative tariffs charged by global corporations and carriers of communication, air and sea shipment, and patents. These reinforce the view that the pronounced objective of promoting a "broadly owned country development strategy" is limited to one dictated by the external environment as a given. The role carved for civil society and NGOs in this framework can only be to legitimize this agenda.

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4.2 Partnership Among Donors

Once agreement is obtained on the agenda, donor responsibilities are defined as:

- Ensuring the supply of resources.
- Participating in the research and strategic policymaking process.
- Coordination and harmonisation of procedures and assistance frameworks.
- Developing a conducive partnership culture.
- Developing flexible mechanisms for cooperation.
- Reaching out to civil society and the private sector.

The reform of the cooperation frameworks (i.e. CGs and UNDP Round Tables) is meant as a step in the direction of promoting more inclusive and transparent consultation, and as a means of coordination. The implication is that these frameworks are the crucial loci of decision making for donors. They may not be. For example, the OECD-DAC forum, the EU, NAFTA, etc, are clearly more crucial *fora* than a CG. It is in a DAC forum that the strategic positions of donors are debated and adopted. Recipient countries may be excluded or only selectively consulted. The development assistance policies may also be underpinned elsewhere than the aid framework, e.g. in WTO rules and negotiations dominated by the same DAC countries.

The benefits of development assistance may also be undermined by DAC country actions elsewhere, e.g. in the intellectual property regime or the failure to regulate volatile capital. Indeed, we will argue that the crucial indictment of the partnership concept is its total silence about the external environment and asymmetrical global governance institutions (Malhotra, 1999).

4.3 Partnership Framework Among NGOs and the Private Sector

The debate about partnership among NGOs and between NGOs and their constituencies is an equally old one and extensively documented. What is relevant for this paper is how that debate which has sought to clarify power relations among them is subsumed into the "new development agenda" where the objective of addressing unequal power relations is lost.¹⁰ As explained in section 3.2 above, civil society is treated more or less as a monolithic arena where actors share common or complementary interests so that cooperative action among them and between them and the state will produce optimum public goods. Perceived as independent of the autocratic state, and often in opposition to it, civil society is a guardian of democracy. NGOs in particular are guardians of local level participatory management irrespective of their social character (e.g. whether they are high caste-dominated bodies, middle class elites or grassroots activists).

The task therefore is to create the conditions for enhancing their engagement with government (through advocacy) and around the table with the other partners in the interest of consensus building on national development strategy. These conditions lie in unlocking governmental and bureaucratic hesitations on the one hand and capacity building for these actors, especially NGOs on the other. Massive investments have subsequently been made to assess capacities and capacity building needs of governments, civil society^(xxviii) and the private sector in the South.

Here again, capacity building, initially debated within the NGO circuit as a means of addressing asymmetry in power relations arising from unequal control of information, facilities and access to decision-making processes, is subsumed in the mainstream as a technocratic constraint and an internally-focussed project. Consequently, capacity building has become understood as "an explicit intervention to improve an organisation's performance in relation to its purpose, context, resources and sustainability... with the aim of developing a more effective, viable, autonomous and legitimate organisation by creating the conditions in which change can take place from within the organisation."^(xxix) By a leap of faith, this definition of capacity building is perceived to bring about empowerment.

This notion of capacity building divorces attention from power relations at the societal level and the understanding of the context of power. It is this notion that permits Northern NGOs to believe that they are doing good running operational programmes; middle class elite bodies to sub-contract projects on behalf of the poor with little backward accountability, and for environmentally polluting and socially destructive firms to establish alliances with NGOs in the name of capacity building. It is clear that unless progressive NGOs seek to extricate themselves from this mainstream agenda, the NGO phenomenon as a force for social resistance will disappear. In return, they will be worthy ambassadors of the "new development assistance agenda".

5.0 RECAPTURING THE CONCERNS ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP CONCEPT

"Do not use a cannon to kill a mosquito"

Confucius

From both the conceptual review as well as the brief assessment of the empirical application of the concept, we conclude the following:

1. The values espoused and promoted by the industry over 50 years conflict profoundly with the values and practice entailed in a partnership concept. Partnership connotes trust, equality and reciprocity and implies shared liability and mutual accountability between giver and receiver --

values and practices which are hard to attribute to the aid industry since its application to developing countries in the late 1940s. Why should an industry, which has pursued, and still pursues, the largely narrow commercial, self-preservation and security interests of donors since its birth,^(xxx) an industry that shapes its policies and conditions through forums and strategic alliances to the exclusion of the recipients, be expected to trusted to convey markedly new values? The partnership dialogue includes a mute.

2. Based on the definitions and preconditions for partnerships reviewed above, it is clear that certain circumstances, including projects, lend themselves better to the partnership conception e.g. in a savings and credit programme, than others, e.g. in a primary school construction project. A credit programme which desires financial viability and scale will entail clear rules of accessibility, liability, obligations and incentives. Obligations are mutually enforceable and it is in the interest of both parties to abide by them. A school project brought to a community is a public good with unclear rules governing accessibility, obligation, exclusion and clear means of enforcement, except price. People may **collaborate** around the school project but need not be **partners** in the school project.

3. Partnerships are possible among countries, i.e. where the costs of failure of relationships lead to substantial economic and military losses to both sides. That is why it is possible to talk, to some degree about, partnership between China and the United States, or India and the UK, or South Africa and the Netherlands etc. It is quite a different thing to describe the relationship between Chad and the United States as a partnership.

4. There is a conflation of complex and sometimes contradictory relationships into one framework, partnership. For example, relations between citizens and their government are not governed by a partnership concept but by a constitutional framework which allocates rights and responsibilities. A private mining firm may maintain a good relationship with the communities living around its concessions by providing them with services. It does so not as a partner of the community but simply as a sensible investment in security and long-term profits or perhaps even from plain altruism (being a good corporate citizen). The mining firm cannot and need not be a partner to communities because the mining firm's obligations and liabilities are regulated through a different relationship, e.g. its legal agreement with the state or its shareholders. But different mining firms can be partners in the exploitation of a concession because that partnership clearly specifies obligations and how they will be enforced or resolved by either party in the event of disagreement. As these examples show, at the heart of partnership is power, enforceable obligations in both directions, a clear regulatory framework and mutual interests and values. The desire by the "partnership" promoters to conflate these diverse relationships into one conceptual framework underlines the dangerous nature of the enterprise.

5. Underlying the concept are sweeping assumptions about mutuality and coincidence of interests and values among the multiple stakeholders in society including donors, recipient governments, private for-profit corporations and civil society organisations. In a competitive and asymmetrical world, interests are more often contradictory, conflictual and competitive than they are complementary and additive.

6. There is an apparent denial, or at least a lack of acknowledgement, of the entrenched asymmetry governing the complex relations among donors, recipient governments, private for-profit corporations and civil society organisations and the fact that this asymmetry has been at the heart of the causes of aid ineffectiveness in the past.
7. The concept seems to take, as its starting point, simplistic notions of the state, civil society and their roles and relationships between one another and with external actors -- donors, foreign capital.
8. The concept focuses overwhelmingly on the domestic policy and institutional environment. It takes almost for granted the effects of the external environment on aid effectiveness and therefore, by default, denies the need for reform in the global environment and governance institutions regulating e.g. trade, commodity prices, capital flows, conduct of for-profit companies and military hardware. Therefore there is no serious reciprocity built into the relations.
9. The process of defining the partnership agenda itself bears the marks of asymmetry in the form of dominance by donors and their institutions in the forums in which the key decisions about the agenda were taken; and the origin of the dominant ideas, analysis and discourse that shaped the "consensus". The accountability implied, and experienced, in aid relations is almost entirely in one direction -- from the receiver to the giver. This is unlikely to change given that the aid relationships do not have effective mechanisms for sharing liability equitably.
10. The partnership agenda seeks a more, not less, intrusive agenda for donors in the determination of the development strategies and direction of recipient countries. It seeks to intervene at the strategic levels – research, the shaping of ideas and ideology, transforming the broader picture (macro and sectoral); reforming the legal framework, etc. The coordination framework suggested can be put to other uses, such as cross-conditionality or collusion of donors around consensus they reached in their separate forums (e.g OECD-DAC), etc. Indeed, the partnership agenda turns governmental accountability on its head. Governments have a duty to account to their people first and foremost, through their parliaments and other mechanisms, quite independently of their obligations to external parties. Participation of external actors in this process ought to be secondary and incidental as is obviously the case in the domestic policymaking processes of the donors themselves.
11. The partnership concept could have the effect of eroding the social consciousness of NGOs and co-opting them into the liberalisation agenda as "beneficiaries", "contractors", clients and "capacity builders". Already, NGOs are lining up for this role, transforming their working programmes in order to engage with the corporate sector, to wholesale "civil society support funds" from their governments in the North to their NGO partners in the South. Advocacy is increasingly internally oriented at developing country governments for a variety of objectives: participation, basic education, food security, and so on, and less at examining the international financial architecture. This is a process of further weakening already fragile states, effectively letting go those to whom popular pressure ought to be directed.

5.1 An Alternative Framework

In place of the partnership concept, we propose **solidarity** as the defining framework for several reasons. First, history has shown that actions based on solidarity have produced the most progressive and most transparent of relationships among people and nations, be they in support of anti-colonial struggles, in the interest of the equality of races/castes/indigenous and minority peoples, or for fundamental human rights or the preservation of the natural environment. Secondly, solidarity brings less ambiguity about power relations and recognises powerlessness and inequality as being at the core of poverty domestically and globally. Thirdly, solidarity brings shared values and ethics to the centre of relations. In contrast, partnership presumes shared values, interests and power and in this way sustains unequal relations. Fourthly, solidarity makes no pretence about shared interests at all levels. It does, however, recognise shared ideology and values and requires transparency of agendas.

ENDNOTES

1. The paper reviews the partnership discourse from a particular backdrop -- the set of views and framework captured by the OECD-DAC consensus on aid effectiveness. In that sense, it sees the partnership discourse essentially as an aid effectiveness issue and does not therefore approach the subject in a programmatic fashion, i.e. how partnerships can be constructed on the ground.
2. It is important to stress from the outset that this paper's analysis is affected by the author's perhaps unbalanced focus on Africa's place in international relations. Whilst this does not do justice to the larger developing countries where aid flows constitute a smaller proportion of national income and where there are examples of the successful application of aid to support development (China, India, South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, etc.), Africa demonstrates the true nature of relations governed by markedly unequal power. Africa is considered the "real challenge in development assistance." It is the most aid dependent and therefore the most manipulated and most vulnerable. It is the arena where all development assistance experiments are tested and discarded.
3. In its multiple forms the aid relationship involves government/government relations (South-North; North-South, South-South); relationships between governments and for-profit corporations (foreign and local, big and small); between civil society organisations and government (North and South) and inter-NGO relations (North/North, South/South and South/North); and between all these external actors and affected communities and peoples.
4. In *The World Bank's New Strategic Alliances*, Development Bank Watchers Project, Bread for the World Institute, Washington DC.
5. Given the extensive nature of the literature on civil society and the state, no attempt is made at a review of this literature. I draw however from a limited number of writings, especially from

Mamdani and other African writers to put forward the view that the notions are too simplistically presented in the "new agenda" to be of much good; but potentially of a lot of harm.

6. This is the view of Thomas Paine, de Tocqueville and others. See John Keane, *ed.*, 1988, *Civil Society and the State*, for an expose of the historical background to the debate on civil society.

7. These are the positions held by Hegel and Marx.

8. See Alexis de Tocqueville (1996), *Democracy in America*, edited by J.P. Mayer and Max Lerner, New York.

9. In *Globalisation and Social Policy in Africa. Issues and Research Directions*, CODESRIA Working Paper Series 6/96.

10. It is not in the ability of this paper to revisit the gamut of debate about partnership among NGOs. Instead, it remains focussed on how the partnership concept defined by the new development agenda affects NGOs.

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(i) The "new development agenda" is associated with the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) report, *Shaping the 21st Century: The Role of Development Cooperation*. This report defined the basis of partnership. It defined developing country obligations as; a strong commitment to an effective policy environment aimed at pro-poor growth in exchange for increased financial support of these policies with an emphasis on participation, good governance, gender equity, the environment and capacity building. These were set up in a comprehensive Principles for Effective Aid which also defines aid coordination and aid management mechanisms.

(ii) See Petesch, L. Patti (1996), *Managing Aid for National Development -- Moving Towards Ownership, Participation and Results*, a paper prepared for Bread for the World Institute and Friedrich Ebert Foundation Workshop on "National Programming for the New Global Development Agenda: What role for civil society?" For similar positions also see the World Bank (1997), WDR, "The State in a Changing World". For a discussion of the latter, see Murrell, Peter (1997), *From Plan to Market: The World Development Report 1996. An Assessment in UNCTAD, International Monetary and Financial Issues for the 1990s*, Vol. VIII, 1997.

(iii) The revival of the "partnership" rhetoric follows closely on the heels of host of initiatives to improve the flow and effectiveness of aid. These include: the High Impact Adjustment (HIA) initiative temporarily tested by the Africa region of the World Bank to improve conditionality; strategic alliances, the Autonomous Development Funds concept pioneered in 1995 by Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM); the concept of Development Contracts

proposed by UN-WIDER in 1993. It follows on other partnership claims such as the United Nations Programme of Assistance for Africa's Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD), and the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA) which displaced and replaced UNPAAERD. More recently, the World Bank is pioneering the Comprehensive Development Framework, incorporating concepts of *Partnerships and Partnership for Capacity Building in Africa: Strategies and Business Plan* (the latter an initiative of the African Governors of the World Bank). The EU Decentralised Administration Programme is aimed at constructing "partnerships with decentralised government bodies, CSOs and the private sector."

(iv) The discourse on the purpose and effectiveness of aid is extensive. For recent references see Killick, Tony, *Responding to the Aid Crisis in International Monetary and Financial Issues*, UNCTAD, 1998; *Assessing Aid*; World Bank Policy Research Report, 1998; Petesch, L. Patti, "Managing Aid for National Development--Moving towards Ownership, Participation and Results." See also Collier, P. (1997) *The Failure of Conditionality*, in C.Gwin, and J. Nelson, eds. *Perspectives on Aid and Development*, Overseas Development Council. For other recent studies of the decline in aid and aid effectiveness, see: Killick, T. (1994), *Responding to the Aid Crisis*; Killick, T (1991), *The Development Effectiveness of Aid in Africa*; Riddell, R.C (1996), *Aid in the 21st Century*, UNDP Discussion paper 6; Mosley, P. (1987), *Overseas Aid: Its Defence and Reform*" World Bank Policy Research Report, (1998), *Assessing Aid*; Dollar D. and Alesina, A (1998), *Who Gives Aid to Whom and Why?*, NBER working Paper 6612; ICVA and Eurostep (1996), *The Reality of Aid*. For recent aid effectiveness studies by Africans about Africa, see for example: Ayettey, E (1996); *Aid Effectiveness in Ghana*, and Carlsson, J. and Saasa Oliver (1996); *The Aid Relationship in Zambia: A Conflict Scenario*, The Nordic Africa Institute.

(v) ODA as a proportion of donor GNP declined from 0.34% to 0.27% between 1992-95. Official aid from non-OED countries have dwindled to insignificance since the collapse of the COMECON countries. A study by Killick (1998) of 21 DAC countries showed indicate a trend toward declining aid budgets, including traditionally strong givers like Canada, the Netherlands and Germany. In contrast private capital has grown in importance but bypassing the poorest countries. Aid to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union increased from \$0.36bn in 1989 to \$9.04bn in 1995, representing 15% in the latter year of total aid. There has also been an increased use of aid for debt relief (11.5% of ODA in 1995) and for global emergencies (5% of ODA). In addition, donor countries have used aid to subsidise the loan payments of the IMF (ESAF) and The World Bank (IDA) in order to avoid default. The decline in US ODA causes particular concern because of burden sharing implications especially in multilateral aid arrangements where the volume of other DAC country contributions are tied to the US contribution.

(vi) Mosley (1987) concludes that "the desire to help the poor does not penetrate into the administrative procedures, so that such help as the poor and destitute get from aid is largely adventitious." Various World Bank OED Evaluations of the impact of adjustment on poverty have concluded likewise. A 1989 15-year overview of rural and agricultural projects by the World Bank concluded extremely low success rates.

(vii) In a speech to the Overseas Development Council (ODC) Congressional Staff Forum in 1997, James Wolfensohn pronounced that "poverty is not diminishing, its increasing; the gap between the poor and the rich is not decreasing, it is increasing; the environment is not improving, it is degrading." In this speech he also set out what was to become the Bank's contribution to the "new agenda" as contained in his Comprehensive Development Framework(CDF) -- the promotion of knowledge, decentralisation, private sector development, aid effectiveness, selectivity, partnership and participation.

(viii) Various academic studies have sought to explore the determinants at the macro-level of the effectiveness of aid. ODI (1993) suggested 3 factors: the rate of return on private and public capital; the allocation between recurrent and capital budgets; the impact on the structure of prices affecting private investment sector. Various reviews of the impact of World Bank and IMF adjustment programmes have concluded that there is no consistent association between these programmes and growth in come, though they are associated with export performance and BOP improvements.

(ix) In a famous speech criticising the "Washington consensus", Joseph Stiglitz (cited by Hanlon, 1998) argues that there are failures in both market and government intervention both of which need to be managed for the public good to be maximised.

(x) Several studies about the effectiveness of conditionality, be they project-oriented or programme-oriented (e.g. structural adjustment) have concluded that conditionality may be a useful short-term "bribe" to get governments along some way but is largely ineffective for sustaining reform and implementation. Four reasons are advanced: (1) The problem of monitoring -- how to treat external influences on the domestic implementation process (the problem of subjectivity). (2) The multiplicity of conditions -- in some evaluations SAP conditions can be as many as 193. The problem is how to attach weights to them, sequence them and isolate other influences. (3) The transitory nature of conditionality. Conditionality has force only while they are in place. (4) Conflicting self-interest. Aid agencies have interest in disbursing funds not with holding them. As a result, various efforts have been made to improve conditionality (e.g. the High impact Adjustment experiment of the Bank; Development Contracts and the role of the Global Coalition for Africa) as attempts to secure up-front commitments.

(xi) The 1999/000 to 2004/05 Ghana Programming Framework of CIDA completely internalises this agenda. DFID adapts this agenda to its so-called Rights-based Approach to Development Assistance -- promoting the enjoyment of civil, economic, political and cultural rights by citizens. Swedish SIDA incorporates more strongly the rights of workers, equity issues and open consultative frameworks. CIDA's additional emphasis in the governance agenda in Ghana is support for decentralisation and capacity building for two sub-committees of parliament critical to the economic governance agenda -- the Public Accounts and the Finance Committees. Similar to the Nordic countries, CIDA also strongly links aid allocation to political reforms, human rights and military spending. See Williams, Kelly J., *et. al.*, *Aid Coordination and NaTCAP Evaluation: UNDP's Role in Aid Effectiveness*, UNDP, 1995.

(xii) The claims that good governance impacts positively on programmes and projects is contested. Aziz Mohammed (G24) argues that it is hard to prove this link. Moreover, he

questions the MDB's credibility and ability to apply this conditionality on the grounds that; it is difficult to monitor compliance of conditions that inevitably call for subjective judgements; how to prevent a weakening of governmental authority when calling for the participation of NGOs especially the foreign NGOs; how to ensure non-discrimination among borrowing members. See Mohammed, Aziz, A (1997), "Notes on MDB Conditionality and Governance" in *International Monetary and Financial Issues for the 1990s*, Vol. VIII, UNCTAD. Also see Kapur, Devesh (1997), "The New Conditionalities of the International Financial Institutions", *ibid*. Kapur argues additionally that the governance conditionalities raise substantially transaction costs of borrowing and therefore will bite mostly those borrowers whose demand elasticity for Bank loans and aid in general is low, mainly IDA countries.

(xiii) See *Partnership for Development: Proposed Actions for the World Bank*, discussion paper, May, 1998.

(xiv) See OECD/DAC Development Cooperation Report; *Final Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Participatory Development and Good Governance*, 1997.

(xv) The genesis of the interpretation of the partnership concept is traced to L.B. Pearson (1969), chairman of the Commission on International Development, in a report entitled "Partnership in Development" where he defined partnership as an understanding between donors and recipients expressing reciprocal and obligations, directed to a clear objective, or finite enterprise, beneficial to both. Since then many agencies have adopted their own definitions. USAID defines it "two-way street based on shared rights and responsibilities". The OECD defines it as "a set of relationships based upon agreement, reflecting mutual responsibilities in furtherance of shared objectives". The World Bank's operational definition of partnership is "a collaborative relationship between entities to work towards shared objectives through a mutually agreed division of labour." See *Partnership for Development: Proposed Actions for the World Bank*. A discussion paper, May, 1998.

(xvi) See Picciotto, Robert (Sept 1998), *The Logic of Partnership: A Development Perspective*. Director General, OED, The World Bank.

(xvii) By "inflexible partnership" is meant rigidly conditioned aid flows, with little scope over reassessment of outcomes. They also define "hollow partnership" as one where the terms are entire defined by one party, the donor.

(xviii) The legal definition deployed by Picciotto is: "joint rights and responsibilities in a common enterprise set up with the understanding that there shall be communion of profit between the parties."

(xiv) Nancy Alexander defines as "subject", a "person who undergoes some from of treatment at the hands of the other. Subjects may be studies, interviewed, consulted by the Bank or government but they do not share control over decisions and activities. A subject may be a consumer who takes in or assimilates information and marketing messages. She suggests that the World Bank does exercise control over subjects -- people and communities affected by Bank-financed operations -- as an Emperor might.

(xx) Reviewing the types of alliances the World Bank enters into, Nancy Alexander distinguishes between powerful parties (partners, funders and large borrowers) on the one hand, and powerless parties (collaborators and subjects) on the other. She defines as subjects those "who undergo some form of treatment under the other. They may be studied, interviewed or consulted but they do not share control of the decisions of the bank. Sometimes, subjects are customers who assimilate information and marketing messages. Collaborators on the other hand refer to actors, such as NGOs, who lack leverage." She defines a body as a partner of the Bank if that body, government or private, "has significant levels of resources and power (relative to the Bank) over development outcomes". See Alexander, Nancy (1998) "The World Bank's New Strategic Alliances." Bread for the World Institute.

(xxi) The literature on the state is too extensive for reasonable reference in this paper. As applied to the African state, the recent literature is aptly chronicled by Mahmood Mamdani in his essay. *A Critique of the State and Civil Society Paradigm in African Studies*, in *African Studies in Social Movements and Democracy*, edited by Mamdani and Wamba-dia-Wamba. In this essay Mamdani reviews leading Africanist writings on the subject, groups them into two major traditions and concludes, among others that Africanist theory of the state is burdened with a unilinear evolutionist discourse and treats the concept of civil society simply as a turn-key project.

(xxii) Steven Friedman, a South African policy analyst shares the view that civil society is a contested terrain, composed of "myriad organisations from the far right to the far left, efficient band inefficient, accountable and non-accountable, subversive and patriotic, representatives of the privileged and the underprivileged." He however argues that it is this contestation that essentially holds the government accountable.

(xxiii) In a study of religious institutions and political liberalisation in Kenya, Nguyi characterises the civil society in Kenya as structurally differentiated rather than simply pluralistic, and shows the manner which these organisations have systematically been subject to state initiatives of a disorganising nature. See Gibbon, Peter (ed.), 1995, Nordic African Institute, Uppsala.

(xxiv) The NGO phenomenon aptly demonstrates these inter-meshed relationships. The typology of NGOs presented by Fowler include various dimensions of government-influenced, -- established or -managed NGOs and those NGOs established by government officials once they have left government.

(xxv) Friedman contests this notion of dependence arguing that civil society is always independent of the state although it continually interacts with the state. See Devan Pillay, (Dec. 1997). *Globalisation, Marginalisation and the Retreat of the State in Africa: The Role of Civil Society in the Pursuit of Democratic Governance, Socio-Economic Development and Regional Integration*, ISTR Report.

(xxvi) When the Lome Convention was proclaimed in 1975 it claimed to be based on a "partnership between equals," based on mutual rights and obligations over a long-term basis. At the time, ACP countries took a lead role in managing EU resources, with the EU playing a

supportive role. A complex set of joint institutions was set up. The concept of partnership, grounded by the principles of dialogue, contractuality and predictability, adds up to what is called the Lome culture. Twenty years later, partnership has all but ended, replaced with paternalism. This erosion of partnership arises largely from the disappearance of conditions of mutual interdependence. See ECDPM (June 1997), *Beyond Lome IV: Exploring Options for Future ACP-EU Cooperation*, Policy Management Report Number 6.

(xxvii) The IMF has responsibility for balance of payments surveillance, trade statistics, national income accounts, money supply monitoring, inflation, fiscal monitoring and targets, all of which are at the core of the appraisal system of the BWIs. Article IV reviews, conducted annually for problematic countries, are the key surveillance mechanism for the macro-economy, which tends to be treated in a closed and secretive manner.

(xxviii) Literature on capacity building of NGOs is extensive. For a sample see: Kaplan, A, (1996), *Capacity Building: Shifting the Paradigms of Practice*, CDRA, Capetown. Elliot, S., Ryder, P., James, R., *Survey of Northern NGO Approaches to Capacity Building*, April, 1998, INTRAC. Tandon, R. (1997), *Capacity Building in Society*, PRIA, and *The Meaning of Capacity Building*, *ibid*.

(xxix) In 1996, the Southern NGOs in the NGO-World Bank Committee proposed the formation of an international working group on capacity building of Southern NGOs. This project undertook several activities. It surveyed 16 official donors, conducted surveys among Northern NGOs, surveyed NGO views about capacity building concepts and needs in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and hosted an international conference on capacity building (held in Brussels, May 1998.) In the survey reports, 91% of Northern NGOs were said to be involved in capacity building, which they define as "any activities which increase our partners' ability to carry out or assist others to carry out efforts successfully to improve the lives of the poor." Capacity building activities were, across the board, understood as: organisational development and renewal, planning and strategic management, leadership development, staff development, financial management, fundraising, monitoring and evaluation; all basically oriented towards project delivery .

(xxx) James Wolfensohn captured this justification aptly in a speech delivered at an Overseas Development Council (ODC) Congressional Staff Forum in 1997 when he said: "The bottom line is simple and stark. If we do not create some sense of social equity and development with those 4.7 billion (soon to be 4.8 billion) people living in poverty, our children will not live in peace. If we cannot create economic growth in these poorer countries, we will not have economic growth in the world. If we cannot begin to arrest environmental degradation, we will all begin to feel the effects."

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