

# Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly

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**Book Review: Transnational Civil Society: An Introduction, edited by Srilatha Batliwala and L. David Brown. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2006. 270 pp. \$25.95. Unexpected Power: Conflict and Change Among Transnational Activists, by Shareen Hertel. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006. 159 pp. \$45.00**

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*Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 2007; 36; 739 originally published online  
Sep 14, 2007;

DOI: 10.1177/0899764007304753

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## Jeff Unsicker

*Transnational Civil Society: An Introduction*, edited by Srilatha Batliwala and L. David Brown. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2006. 270 pp. \$25.95.

*Unexpected Power: Conflict and Change Among Transnational Activists*, by Shareen Hertel. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006. 159 pp. \$45.00

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These books are welcome additions to the growing literature on transnational civil society activism for political, economic, and social justice. Several years ago, when I began planning a Policy Advocacy course focused on this type of activism, I was struck by how fundamental a change had occurred in this literature since 1988, when I taught what must have been one of the first college courses on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and development. Then the only substantive text I was able to find was a special issue of the journal *World Development* titled *Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs* (Drabek, 1987), an edited collection of papers from a symposium in London.

At that time, the term *civil society* was not yet part of the development discourse even among those concerned with development alternatives. Although there had been a number of what is now called *transnational civil society* campaigns (the literature frequently describes the antislavery movement of the 1800s as one of the first), no symposium paper even addressed global-level action. The cutting-edge issues of the day were bottom-up, grassroots initiatives and the right of Southern NGOs to define their own development agenda in a way not dictated by the funding policies of their partners in the North.

At this writing, there is no shortage of literature on development NGOs and civil society organizations, North and South, and even the number of books,

articles, papers, and case studies on transnational campaigns is overwhelming. Certainly, my challenge in covering this topic in Policy Advocacy courses (in recent years, I have expanded the focus of those courses but transnational campaigns remain a major module) is not finding a text but choosing among the many options. In this context, what do these two books offer?

In *Transnational Civil Society* (TCS), Srilatha Batliwala and L. David Brown set out, as their subtitle suggests, to provide an introduction to TCS—in fact, a textbook for “undergraduate and postgraduate programs and courses on civil society, often including the study of TCS . . . [to] help first-time students make sense of this complex yet exciting terrain” (p. 9). In the book’s introduction, the editors define that terrain as “a concept with three interrelated aspects: the sector of civil society associations; the values, norms and aspirations of a society governed by civil processes; and the provision of spheres for public discourse on issues and ideas” (p. 2). Fortunately for someone with an interest in TCS as an activist force in global politics, the editors do not go on to operationalize the sector portion of the definition, as do others, as the sum of all nonstate, nonmarket associations around the world, whether they have similar values and goals or whether they are connected together to achieve some of those values and goals. Rather, they limit their focus to “what we call progressive TCS—namely initiatives and movements that promote the values and goals of tolerance, equity, non-violence and democratic participation” (pp. 3-4).

Building on that focus, the next four chapters consist of different authors’ analyses of “transnationalism and global power.” They are followed by six chapters by additional authors examining specific TCS movements—international labor, environment, economic justice, women’s rights, human rights, and peace. A conclusion by the editors synthesizes lessons from those chapters. As such, the book competes for a place in the syllabus with a number of other edited collections of contextual analysis, case study, and synthesis chapters. Prominent among these books are *Creating a Better World: Interpreting Global Civil Society* (Taylor, 2004), *Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks and Norms* (Khagram, Riker, & Sikkink, 2002), *Global Citizen Action* (Edwards & Gaventa, 2001), and *The Third Force: The Rise of Transnational Civil Society* (Florini, 2000).

In fact, the overlap of case studies in these four books and that under review is significant.<sup>1</sup> Of the six cases in *Transnational Civil Society*, the only topic not addressed in the earlier books is peace movements.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the others include a number of important topics not covered or only briefly covered in this book—for example, movements working for a ban on landmines, debt relief (or repudiation and reparations), democracy, anticorruption policies, implementation of United Nations declarations, and so forth as well as protests against the World Trade Organization (Seattle) and G8 (Genoa) and the role of the World Social Forum.

Given this robust literature, I have generally asked students to read from a number of different texts as well as from the many papers and documents

now easily available via the Internet.<sup>3</sup> When one case (e.g., Jubilee movements around debt) is covered in multiple sources, I often ask students to read two different accounts to gain a more complete understanding of the case and a more critical assessment of how different authors' theories and frameworks influence what they include (and omit) and the conclusions they draw.

However, were I to need or want a single text to anchor a course on the topic, I would choose *Transnational Civil Society*. Although its being the most current book would be a factor in my choice, the primary reason would be the quality of some of the contextual chapters and some of the case studies. That quality is largely attributable to the backgrounds of the editors and authors—including a significant effort to make the book “as transnational as its subject,” including an effort “to find chapter authors from the geographical and global South, and to recruit authors from the industrialized world who have the capacity to represent critical and Southern viewpoints as well as Northern perspectives” (p. 9).

The editors' scholarly and professional knowledge, experience, and networks are significant. Batliwala is an Indian “feminist scholar-practitioner who has combined grassroots activism and research throughout her career.” Brown, from the United States, cofounded and directed a leading NGO–civil society think tank and capacity building organization (the Institute for Development Research) while on the faculty at Boston University. Brown is currently the Director of International Programs, and Batliwala is a research fellow at the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations at Harvard University.

Many, though not all, of the chapter authors also draw on combinations of scholarship and practice. For example, Peggy Antrobus, from the West Indies, has been engaged in numerous development alternatives over the past decades and was the author of one of the articles published in the 1987 special issue of *World Development*. She and Gita Sen, from India, the coauthors of the book's chapter on women's rights, have been leaders within Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) and other transnational activist groups as well as university faculty members. Kumi Naidoo, from South Africa, has held numerous leadership roles in the anti-apartheid and postindependence phase organizations in his own country, was a Rhodes scholar at Oxford University, and is now Secretary General of CIVICUS, one of the preeminent networks within TCS.

All but one of the chapters are useful (the exception is a chapter on “The New Globalism” that simply seems out of place with the rest of the book), and the best are by those noted above and other authors with similar backgrounds. For example, Antrobus and Sen's analysis of the tension between identity politics and a more inclusive and transformative social project approach within the global women's movements is infused with insights that integrate academic and activist perspectives. Naidoo's chapter on TCS and global governance reflects a similar integration as he analyzes not only

the democracy deficits of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, G8, and so forth but also the critiques and internal debates regarding accountability, legitimacy, and political responsibility: "Transnational movements must confront . . . the extent to which civil society has come to mirror the power and resource structures of globalization" (p. 61). Too often Northern NGO domination of the South (and Southern NGO domination of associations of the poor and marginalized) is reflected in who speaks for whom at international policy conferences, who controls funding, whose language dominates communication within TCS, who has the best access to the Internet and new technologies, and so forth.

Naidoo's chapter *Unexpected Power: Conflict and Change Among Transnational Activists*—an exploration of ways that civil society actors in the South resist or counter Northern domination—is an important new work. Shareen Hertel's analysis is empirically grounded in two detailed case studies of transnational advocacy campaigns, one focused on child labor and child rights in Bangladesh and the other on discrimination, the right to work and reproductive freedom in Mexico. The "two cases are unique because in each, the very people the campaigns were intended to help—those on the 'receiving end' of the campaign . . . challenged the way that the [Northern] organizers of each campaign defined human rights as well as the corresponding policy priorities of the campaign" (p. 3).

The book is based on the author's doctoral dissertation and specific body of theory and debates within her discipline of political science. However, to Hertel's credit, in the book the relevant concepts (norms, framing, etc.) are synthesized in a clear and relatively concise manner that is accessible to persons outside the discipline or academia in general—partially through her systematic application of the concepts to the two cases.

Hertel has been strongly influenced by the work of Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, best known for *Activists Beyond Borders* (1998), in which they used political science theory and concepts to analyze transnational campaigns where Southern activists have employed a "boomerang" approach to achieve their agenda. In these cases, local activists wish to change their government's policies (or policy implementation) but cannot do so directly for many of different reasons. Therefore, they work behind the scenes with activists from outside the country, most often the North, who pressure—directly or through pressuring their own government or international institutions—the Southern activists' government.

Hertel builds on Keck and Sikkink's (1998) work by identifying additional approaches used by Southern activists but in situations where they are not the campaign initiators and do not accept the norms and frames of the Northern outsiders who are the initiators.

In the Bangladesh case, labor and other activist organizations in the United States advocated for boycotts, trade sanctions, and other means to end the use of child labor in sweatshop garment factories. Hertel then explains

the process by which activists in Bangladesh blocked the central human rights message of this transnational campaign until . . . [it] evolved to reflect a broader interpretation of children's rights than solely the right to be protected *from* child labor . . . to include children's rights *to* education and basic income. (p. 31)

In the Mexico case, a human-rights NGO and other activists from the United States advocated the use of North American Free Trade Agreement labor accords and other means to end discrimination against pregnant women in maquiladora factories. Hertel explains, "Rather than 'block' a campaign that emphasized civil and political rights over economic and social ones, the Mexican activists brought the latter rights into the [transnational] campaign through the 'back door,'" creating "two intertwined campaigns" (p 56).

Hertel argues that the cases represent two distinct but related approaches by which Southern activists resist or challenge Northern domination: blocking mechanism and back door mechanism. At points, the reader may tire of the author's multiple discussions of these mechanisms, stated and restated in the introduction, a chapter on theory, the case study chapters, a chapter on the campaigns' effects, and the conclusion. On the other hand, the book does indeed break new ground. Moreover, I am not aware of any other substantive case studies of these two important campaigns (they are not included among those in *Transnational Civil Society* or any of the other books noted above). In concluding, Hertel makes a strong argument about how the two mechanisms can illuminate other campaigns that have been more widely studied, such as the Jubilee campaigns related to international debt. Thus, as with Batliwala and Brown's book, *Unexpected Power* will become part of the reading list for my Policy Advocacy syllabus.

## Notes

1. Some of the authors also overlap. Batliwala, Brown, and five chapter authors are contributors to one (and in one case two) of these four books. Moreover, Batliwala's chapter in Taylor (2004), "Grassroots Movements as Transnational Actors," and Brown and Jonathon Fox's chapter in Edwards and Gaventa (2001), "Transnational Civil Society Coalitions and the World Bank," are two of the strongest pieces in those other collections.

2. With regard to the other case studies in *Transnational Civil Society*, international labor is the topic of chapters in two of the other four books, environmental activism in two, economic justice activism in three (two of which have multiple case studies focused around transnational civil society activism toward the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, or the World Trade Organization), women's rights activism in one, and human rights activism in two (and the specific topic of children's rights in a third book).

3. For example, see reports from the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development ([www.unrisd.org](http://www.unrisd.org)) research program Civil Society and Social Movements and especially its project Global Civil Society Movements: Dynamics in International Campaigns and National Implementation.

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### Herrington J. Bryce

*Financing Nonprofits: Putting Theory Into Practice*, edited by Dennis R. Young. Lanham, MD: AltaMira, 2006. 454 pp. \$85.00 (cloth), \$39.95 (paper).

DOI: 10.1177/0899764007304752

With this commendable volume, *Financing Nonprofits: Putting Theory Into Practice*, Dennis R. Young has added significantly to the increasing number and diversity of books from which those interested in the financial management of nonprofit organizations may choose. Alas, another group of authors is calling the attention of students, professors, and practitioners alike to the complexity, varying perspectives, and approaches to financing nonprofits.

Oster, Massarsky, and Beinhacker (2004) focused on earned income and the strategies behind gaining revenues from mostly businesslike sources. Finkler (2005) looked at financial management largely by focusing on the health sector, but within his volume he introduced the reader to a number of the technical aspects of financing applicable to any nonprofit. Herzlinger and Nitterhouse (1994) focused on the accounting perspective and on understanding the accounting information that is a part of all financial planning and decision making. Cash flow analysis is the central topic of Dropkin and Hayden (2001). In my own volume (2000), I viewed financial management as at the core of managing and operating the entire nonprofit organization, which requires not only an understanding of finance but also of related issues, such as the way nonprofits organize to do business; plan; and manage costs, unrelated business income taxes, risks including that of being sued, and reorganization. Bryson's (2005) focus is on strategic planning, an important process in planning for and sustaining the objectives of nonprofit organizations.

In addition, there are many books just on fundraising. Young and his contributing authors take yet a different but useful approach focusing on types