

Using Actor-Network Theory to Enhance the Mediating Activities
of Grassroots Support Organizations

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father Thomas P. Dousa, to my mother, Miloslava K. Dousa, and to my brothers, Thomas M. Dousa and Dominic M. Dousa, who as a family foster an environment of true love and learning.

Abstract

This thesis explores how Actor-Network Theory (ANT) can be used to analyze the activities of Grassroots Support Organizations (GSOs) operating within the sphere of social justice development work. Specifically, the ANT concepts of *translation*, *actor as intermediary vs. mediator*, and *cartography of controversies* are used to delineate the work that GSOs perform. Data from case studies of four active GSOs are used to identify and illustrate three major mediating activities that GSOs perform in connecting top-level funders and grassroots groups. These activities are: *cultural liasonship*, *partner networking*, and *resource transmission*. The research delves specifically into the issues behind the creation and maintenance of development actor-networks consisting of top-level funders, grassroots organizations, and GSOs in which the GSOs play a connective role. Four primary disparity boundaries between top-level funders and grassroots organizations that GSOs must effectively bridge are identified and investigated. These are *compensation*, *organizational structure*, *access to technology*, and *privilege*. The influence of the development paradigms of participatory development, the human capabilities approach, human rights framework, and neoliberalism on actor-network negotiations is described. The paper suggests tools developed from ANT analysis that GSOs may use for reflexive analysis to increase internal capability regarding the performance mediating activities. These tools include actor-network mapping, resource flow mapping, and a cartography of controversies.

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Key to Abbreviations

ANT – Actor-Network Theory

CEO – Chief Operation Officer

GDP – Gross domestic Product

GSO – Grassroots Support Organization

HHR – Heartland Human Rights*

EAD – East African Data*

ICT – Information Communication Technology

MSO – Membership Support Organization

NGO – Non-governmental Organization

PGO – Primary Grassroots Organization

PI – Primary Investigator

UNDP – United Nation’s Development Programme

USAID -- The United States Agency for International Development

WAHEE - West African Health Education Experiences*

*pseudonym

Introduction

The rise of the non-governmental organization (NGO) as a partner to grassroots development and as a connector between grassroots organizations and national and global institutional powers has been a key trend in the world of development over the last decade and a half. During his opening keynote address at the United Nations' Millennium Forum delivered on May 22, 2000, Secretary-General Kofi Annan predicted that NGOs would become a "new superpower", stating "if it takes only one person in a room full of people to create a majority, then surely you will become the new superpower. I, for one, will work to ensure that our other partners in the international community listen to you very carefully" (Annan, 2000). The occasion for the speech was a summit of world leaders at the headquarters of the United Nations during which the General Assembly adopted the Millennium Declaration. This document was a road map establishing eight international development goals with the aim of achieving them by the year 2015.¹

Secretary-General Annan's (2000) address described the already strong role that NGOs were assuming in globalized development and discussed their role as leaders and partners, saying "I am asking you NGOs to be both leaders and partners: where necessary, to lead and inspire governments to live up to your ideals; where appropriate, to

¹ This list includes eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowering women; reducing child mortality rates; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing a global partnership for development (UN, 2000).

work with governments to achieve their goals.” The first part of his statement highlights the historic role of NGOs as institutional gadflies, monitors, critics, and advocates and the second portion refers to their newer role as participants in an interconnected development network that extends from governmental agencies and large private funders to grassroots groups.

Combining the roles of institutional critic and partner is not an easy task, as Richard Holloway (1989) observes in ‘Doing Development: Government, NGOs and the Rural Poor in Asia’. Holloway, an NGO activist himself, states that NGOs and governments need to come together to solve problems such as rural poverty that are too large for NGOs and grassroots communities to solve on their own. His experience in the field, however, has kept him clear-eyed as to the difficulties of such partnerships. He points out various instances where NGO-government partnerships in Indonesia failed due to the difference between development paradigms employed by the various actors and the failure to even agree on what was required for a ‘happy ending’. Kathleen O’Reilly’s (2011) current work on the professionalization of interactive service work of NGOs supported by government contracts in Rajasthan, India details how taking on a contractor relationship with the government is changing the way in which the staff of a particular NGO interacts with the community, the type of people who make up the staff, and, consequently, the identity of the NGO itself. A quote in the title of her paper, “We Are Not Contractors”, comes from Sunil, one of the joint directors of the NGO, in response to evidence that the NGO’s employees and clients saw the organization as having assumed the character of a government contractor, a definition that had a pejorative meaning implying a loss of self-direction (O’Reilly and Dhanju, 2010). The director was so

invested in his vision of the NGO's former identity as an independent social service provider that he denied what could easily be proven by the business contract the NGO had signed with the government. O'Reilly examined evidence that the shift to a contractor role had weakened the social justice mission of the NGO by shifting its focus to serving the needs of the donor more than those of the grassroots communities. The change also lowered the quality of relationships between the staff and villagers through the exodus of staff emotionally invested in community bonding and their subsequent replacement by lower skilled staff trained to fulfill contractual obligations in the most economically efficient manner possible.

The negotiation of partnerships within development networks and specifically the role of a special type of NGO, the Grassroots Support Organization (GSO), as a mediator between top-level funding groups and grassroots organizations are examined in this paper. A GSO is characterized here as a NGO that directly supports grassroots organizations active at a primary level in their community and employs both a social justice framework and a participatory development model. I draw on concepts from actor-network theory (ANT), a type of sociological analysis from the field of science and technological studies, to bring to light three primary mediating activities that GSOs need to excel at in order to become effective connectors between powerful central interests and grassroots actors. I explore the usefulness of ANT for analyzing the constitution of development actor-networks in a strategic manner with the goal of preserving the social justice identities employed by GSOs operating within a social justice framework. Four important disparities between top-level and grassroots actors are identified and the GSOs' role in bridging those gaps to create successful development actor-networks is examined.

Finally, I suggest tools developed from ANT analysis that GSOs may use for reflexive analysis to increase their internal capability regarding the mediating activities that they are performing.

The role of information and communications technology in the research

The role of information and communications technology (ICT) within this framework is a secondary concern in this analysis. The original subject of this research project was the role of ICT in the work of GSOs. During the iterative process of data collection (which took the form of active semi-structured interviews) and analysis, I used the process of grounded theory in conjunction with ANT to develop emerging themes. Following these themes, the scope of the research expanded to include larger issues in the formation of development actor-networks, how the activities of the GSOs defined their roles within the network, and what the gaps the GSOs filled. The original data collection tool was based on questions detailing ICT usage. In initial discussions with respondents, the conversation would jump past the boundary of the usage of technology and into larger descriptions of the relationships between the actors. For example a question on the importance of digital identity and the usage of web presence (which yielded data that digital representation of a GSO is very important to funders and not nearly so much to grassroots groups) would expand to discussions on the nature of relationships between funders and GSO versus grassroots groups and GSOs (funder relationships being mediated more by a bureaucratic identity and grassroots relationships, more by a personal identity). Questions on the usage patterns of cellphones would similarly expand to talk about relationship building and networking strategies. The interview protocol was

adaptive and previous findings influenced the addition of questions that specifically addressed emergent themes.

The descriptions of technology usage that emerged from the data set were prosaic and what most people who use and are familiar with common ICT could expect. According to the responses, ICT technology was primarily used according to the criterion of efficiency in information exchange. Generally two parties would readily agree on the use of an ICT because it was beneficial to both of them. The breakdowns in the negotiations regarding usage of particular forms of ICT between two actors were interesting because these events pointed towards an object of significance to one of the participants in a relationship. For example, not replying to an email could indicate that the investment in time and energy regarding a particular communication or overture was not important or had low priority. In some cases, shows of respect and commitment to a partnership had to be demonstrated by forsaking the convenience of email or a phone call and making the investment to travel and meet in person. Several respondents commented that our discussions that went beyond facts of ICT usage into analysis of identity, partner relationships, and what actor actions surrounding ICT usage revealed about these concepts were especially useful to them.

The story became more about the relationship between the organizational actors, but much of the data in this study reflects a strong presence of ICT as an involved actor.² ANT also looks toward controversies in negotiations between actors within the network to reveal the elements describing the actors, so it came to be an apposite tool with which

² ANT as a theoretical tool regards both human and non-human as actants, so the actor-network grouping under analysis included the technology as well as the development partners.

to view actor relations in this particular data set. The results of this research came from reviewing the fault lines within actor negotiations in the data and seeing what was consequential.

The Development Context for GSOs

Before embarking on an analysis of the actors within a development network, it is important to understand the main paradigms that make up the context for the development environment in which these networks of actors are formed. Development was once primarily evaluated by economic and health measures. Newer approaches to development that use human capabilities as a measure for evaluating outcomes promote a wider range of options to be used in actor negotiations regarding what constitutes a successful result. Under this newer paradigm, NGOs whose social justice work may not have directly measurable economic benefits become relevant players in development. In the context of the capabilities approach, human rights work can be seen as development work and thus opens up the development network to those actors operating from human rights and social justice frameworks. The paradigm of participatory development, which endeavors to engage local populations in development planning and implementation, is foundational to the existence of an actor-network that includes the subject of this research: GSOs as connectors between top-level actors and grassroots organizations. What follows is a brief synopsis of the development paradigms that are important to the existence of GSOs in their current context.

Participatory Development

Participatory development, which initially gained traction in the latter half of the 1970s and early 1980s in the work of Chambers (1983) and others, encourages the inclusion of target populations as informed participants in small-scale development with outside community institutions acting primarily as facilitators and funders. The notion that top-down perspectives were both disempowering and ineffective was advanced in the 1990s by social scientists such as Freire (1993,1994), Escobar (1995) and Scott (1998). The key remedy proposed was that development work needed to properly engage the community in which it was taking place (Arnove & Cristina, 1998; Edwards, M. & Hulme 1996). Major governmental and state supported funders such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and The World Bank are examples of influential top-level actors that have pointed to empowerment as a key priority of developmental policy. USAID explicitly expatiated on this approach in the document ‘Statement of Principles on Participatory Development’ which stated “democratizing the development process will be the cornerstone of our approach” (Atwood, 1993). The World Bank’s (2001) report ‘Attacking Poverty: Opportunity, Empowerment, and Security’ listed ‘facilitating empowerment’ as one of the three key strategies for reducing poverty. This led to a broad-based effort to scale up community-based development and to include it as an important element of service delivery programs (World Bank, 2003).

As a result of this paradigm shift, throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, direct interventions by top-level actors moved towards more holistic approaches that introduced participatory methods using other institutions and organizations as partners to organize the target populations and build their capacity for collective action in their communities’

interest (Narayan 2002). These mid-level actors have often taken the form of GSOs, who have taken up the explicit task of supporting and building grassroots groups' capabilities.

The Human Capabilities Approach

Towards the end of the 20th Century, the economist Amartya Sen's (1985, 1999) human capabilities approach posited new measures to use in evaluating baselines and outcomes, shifting the focus of development from pure economic and material well being to a more broad-based "capability" approach. The approach attempts to define a more holistic concept of what development means for a community outside of addressing poverty as absence of income or commodity shortfalls. Alkire & Black (1997) define Sen's capabilities as "the positive freedom to achieve valuable 'functionings', which range from basic functionings such as being nourished or having shelter to higher level functionings involving friendships, self-respect, and meaningful work." Martha Nussbaum, a philosopher, has extended the Sen's capabilities approach to an 'ethic of human development' (Gasper, 1997). The capability approach as developed by Nussbaum has at its core the Aristotelian idea of the 'good life' that requires a person to have 'distinctive powers' such as reason from which comes the ability to choose (Gasper, 1997). Development under the capabilities approach focuses on improving a society to increase an individual's ability to make adequate self-determined decisions. In her book, 'Creating Capabilities', Nussbaum (2011) brings up the example of an Indian woman, identified as Vasanti, who was constrained by gender inequalities in her society that afforded her less nutrition for physical development, less education for intellectual development, and less opportunity for gaining independent financial resources. The result of these inequalities reduces the ability of a person to make choices in her or his life,

which in turn significantly affects the quality of that life. Reducing inequalities in a society gives individuals operating within it to a more equal foundation for making self-determined choices. Organizations working directly in a community can play an important role in doing the work to reduce inequality. An important vehicle for progress in Vasanti's case was the Self-Employed Women's Organization (SEWA), a trade union that works with poor women. With their assistance, she was able to acquire a loan to free herself from family debt and become financially independent; get involved in educational programs that helped her get skills that move her towards greater social and economic independence as well as greater political expression; and become active in a community for working on social issues that impacted her quality of life, such as domestic violence. Development efforts from groups such as SEWA are being bolstered by partnership networks including both large scale institutional funders (such as the World Bank and the UN International Trade Centre) and international NGOs such as WEConnect, which focuses on networking grassroots women's work groups and women entrepreneurs with international corporation supply chains and women's trade groups in other states (Kumar, 2012).

Up to this point the dominant development paradigm has primarily been concerned with economic issues and increasing economic efficiencies for targeted communities. Broad economic indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP) and average income are used as the indicators of well being, a concept to which Nussbaum (2011, p48), employing Sen's work, responds that "development is a normative concept. It means or should mean, that things are getting better" but we cannot assume that our desired human norms will be reached through purely through fostering economic growth.

Indeed, aggregate measures such as GDP and derivatives such as GDP per capita have been historically criticized as failing to adequately capturing social welfare and progress (van den Bergh, 2009). GDP relies only on economic activity that is reported to the government. Unreported negative economic externalities affecting quality of life such environmental degradation and worker rights abuses do not show up (Schenk, n.d.). Considering the impacts of such externalities on social welfare, their omission from GDP pervert its function as a proxy for social welfare. GDP as a measure for social welfare also masks the influence of inequalities in societies and their attendant effects on social welfare. Stiglitz (2005) focuses in the inadequacy of the measure of average GDP per capita to capture the level of inequality in a country pointing out that ‘average GDP per capita in the US has been steadily rising whereas median (household) income has been falling over the last decades.’

In light of this, the human capability approach has been embraced by the development community and institutionalized by the United Nations in the Human Development Index measure. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been publishing Human Development Reports at the local, national, regional, and global level since 1990. The UNDP website cites³ Sen stating:

The message in these reports is simple: development is about giving people the opportunities to live lives they value, and about enabling them to become actors in their own destinies. The message is based on the “capability approach” of economist and Nobel Prize laureate Amartya Sen. Today, there is little doubt that the approach has had a considerable impact on both academics and policymakers alike.

³ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev/learnmore/title,18966,en.html> accessed June 14th, 2012

Part of this recent paradigm shift is a reduced role for the state actors in direct implementation and a much greater role for non-state actors in both participating in development work and serving as a conduit for the resources and goals of the top-level actors. The human capabilities approach is an important contribution to GSO work as it opens up what constitutes a successful result to definition and negotiation. Since the validity of the approach is recognized and lauded by the many top-level community actors, GSOs can use those opinions to bolster their objectives when negotiating with a funding actor. GSOs are not necessarily locked into playing the “numbers game” with funders to justify projects on quantity served or pure economic gains and instead can work with grassroots organizations to justify resource expenditure based on quality of life, community development, and freedom indicators that fall under the aegis of both civic and socio-economic human rights.

Grassroots Support Organizations

While a range of organizations may exist in a partnership chain from top-level funder to grassroots group, this study focuses on the experiences of NGOs that are alike in that they use a social justice framework -- which Nussbaum (2003) links directly to Sen’s human capabilities approach, a participatory development model, and work in supporting grassroots organizations active at primary levels of their community. The closest, most common terms used in academic literature to categorize such organizations include the titles Grassroots Support Organization (GSO) and Intermediary NGO (Carroll, 1992). Boglio Martínez (2008) defines GSOs “as development NGOs providing services and resources that enhance the capacity of impoverished communities and their organizations

to build sustainable alternatives to their challenging life conditions.”⁴ Carroll (1992), whose ‘Intermediary NGOs: The Supporting Link in Grassroots Development’ focuses on groups operating in Latin America, divides the intermediary organizations into the terms Grassroots Support Organizations (GSOs) and Membership Support Organizations (MSOs). A GSO is defined by Carroll (1992, p11) as “a civic developmental entity that provides services and allied support to local groups of disadvantaged rural or urban households and individuals. In its capacity as an intermediary institution, a GSO forges links between the beneficiaries and the often-remote levels of *government, donor, and financial institutions*. It may also provide services indirectly to other organizations that *support the poor or perform coordinating or networking functions* (emphasis added).”

The MSO is defined by Carroll (1992) as being very similar to the GSO, but with the stricture of representing and being accountable to its base membership. Local cooperatives or labor unions are examples of MSOs. Primary Grassroots Organizations (PGOs) are “the smallest aggregation of individuals or household that regularly engage in some joint development activity as an expression of collective interest” and operate at the grassroots level (Carroll (1992, p11). GSOs and MSOs usually have relationships and work with more than one PGO.

⁴ Boglio Martínez mentions other terms in social work and social science literature to discuss similar kinds of organizations: “intermediary,” “bridging,” “broker,” “facilitator,” “support,” “infrastructure,” “self-reliance promoting,” and “development NGO” (Arrosi et al., 1994; Balbis, 2001; Brown, 1991; Brown & Kalegaonkar, 2002; Carroll, 1992; Chavis et al., 1993; Fisher, 1998; Lee, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 2001; Sanyal, 2006; World Bank, 2006).

I use the term GSO to refer to the organizations that are the subject of the study because they each are involved in working with grassroots organizations and receive funding and other resources from other organizations that are meant to benefit the grassroots groups the GSOs work with. While there are strong resonances between the type of actions they take and the above definitions, each has undergone evolutions that may demand a closer parsing of each organization's individual identity. Organizations existing in development action networks often undergo evolutions as development paradigms shift and thus can be subject to transformations in definition and categorization as the nuances of their roles change. In the face of such fluidity, it makes more sense to give the relevant actors the primary voice and analyze the change in their own descriptive definitions rather than to try to impose a rigid typology.

Actor-Network Theory

To this end, I will be using actor-network theory (ANT) to aid in outlining the evolution of the function that GSOs play in development networks. ANT is a recent framework for social theory that originally came from the field of the epistemology of science. John Law (2009), one of the primary proponents of ANT, describes its current state as “a disparate family of material-semiotic tools, sensibilities, and methods of analysis that treat everything in the social and natural worlds as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located.” A simplified explanation of this statement is that ANT derives primary meanings for social explanations based on the interconnections of the objects and actors that make up a system as opposed to looking for self-contained essentialist meaning in the objects or actors themselves. Bruno Latour

(2005), a major proponent of ANT, states that the word 'theory' in the title is a misnomer. In sociological terms, ANT is a post-structuralist approach that is distinctly constructivist -- stating that definitions and meanings are created by the actions of humans and non-humans (and recreated as the constitutive actions are re-performed) in constantly evolving systems.

Using ANT to Analyze GSOs' Role in Development

A full detailed ANT analysis of the creation of the development networks engaging the GSOs within this study or aspects of their work is out of the scope of this paper. Typically a researcher performs an ANT analysis on a system utilizing an extremely close reading of one case study. This analysis utilizes concepts from ANT to examine multiple GSOs and their position within their respective development networks. ANT terms its method of observation of the evolution of a system as the "tracing of associations" (Latour, 2005), that is to say, the careful observation and description of the interactions between the actants without insertion of a mediating theory. Associations – relationships between actors in a network- are made visible when they are in the process of creation or realignment and thus susceptible to controversy (Latour, 2005, p79). Therefore, a system in evolution reveals itself while as a stabilized system is more inscrutable by ANT's terms.

Philosophically, ANT is the opposite of structuralism. Bruno Latour (2005), using his word-play, refers to ANT as "anti-social constructivism". ANT analysis rejects the use of a pre-existing formal sociological model as the framework for research. Structuralism, as practiced in the fields of linguistics, sociology, and anthropology,

focuses on the search for a deeper more enduring, global, and absolute truth that is expressed in various forms in everyday culture. For example Saussure (1974), in linguistics, privileged the ‘langue’, the abstract concept behind a textual expression, over ‘parole’, the expression itself as used in everyday speech. The researcher as observer and theoretician is privileged over the subjects of study (and general audiences) by having an understanding of the theoretical ‘langue’ that underlies the ‘parole’ that is observed. Constructivism holds that humans construct knowledge from experiential learning; through collaborative learning and knowledge sharing, a culture is created within a particular community. As Kersten Reich (2009) puts it, “constructivists do not look for copies or mirrorings of an outer reality in the human mind”, they see people as “observers, participants, and agents who actively generate and transform the patterns through which they construct the realities that fit them.” When one adopts a constructivist approach for network analysis such as ANT, one has the option of marshaling other theoretical models within an analysis; however, these models are not foundational to the analysis itself. As actors with agency, they may be pieces on the chessboard but not the board itself. ANT maintains a focus on the relationship between objective — that is to say, scientific — evidence and “the elaboration of networks employing the evidence” (Young et al., 2010). This study examines the functions and behaviors of organizations that are responding to changing paradigms in how development work is evaluated and funded. ANT is an apt tool to investigate the functions of GSOs in development networks since the changing paradigms, such the trend towards participatory development and the capabilities approach, are significant actors affecting the formation of development networks and the behavior of organizational actors themselves. Rather than starting with

a theoretical model of how a GSO functions and examining how each actor measures against them, the study attempts to elicit what common meanings emerge from the participants' self-observation of their actions as they adapt to relational changes.

In the context of social justice-oriented critical theory, ANT can be seen as a critique of privileged knowledge. ANT methodology, in contrast to structuralist research methods, explicitly privileges the actors over the research observer in terms of legitimacy of knowledge. ANT prefers that meaning and definition come from direct expressions of the actors over that of the interpretations of the researcher. In constructing an ANT narrative, the researcher is instructed to let the actors speak for themselves as much as possible and seek to preserve the actors' understandings of the actions and events they. The researcher's own bias toward his or her own understanding of a matter is acknowledged and expected; however, acknowledging this natural bias explicitly and setting the goal of privileging the subject's knowledge helps to deal with this problem. In this manner, ANT functions as a critique of the institutional power of formal sociological theories, attacking the social theories' bias towards privileging the analyst's language and constructs (Whittle and Spicer, 2008). In this study, the use of ANT to analyze the work of social justice-oriented organizations and the assemblages in which they participate in is appropriate since both the analytical and organizational frameworks place a premium on equalizing the voices and knowledge frameworks of the relevant actors within the situation.

ANT's methodological concern of privileging the research subject's knowledge in is also shared by the paradigm of participatory development. Part of the rise of GSOs

comes from the current understanding by top-level organizations that local knowledge should be privileged in development work, if the work is expected to be successful. This local knowledge is regarded as being centered in grassroots organizations that contain individuals from the community that have seen problems and have had the motivation to organize around providing solutions. The natural biases of an economically privileged agenda setter such as a government or foundation aid organization are similar to that of the sociological researcher that chooses to work in a particular domain. Both take the action of marshaling resources and directing them towards a particular area of concern that captures their attention. The bias of taking the self-determined first-step is an advantage strategically (one metaphor is the first-mover advantage in chess). Both ANT and participatory development attempt deal with the first-mover agenda setting bias by setting up methodologies to negate portions of it.⁵ However, it must be noted the root of that bias remains indelible.

ANT Constructs: Cartography of Controversies and Callon's Translation Narrative

An ANT narrative typically follows the creation of an actor-network system (alternately termed an 'assemblage' or 'object' in ANT parlance) as it approaches stabilization. This could be the adoption of a particular technology such as an electric vehicle (Callon, 1987) or the process of strategic planning by a public organization with a mission to promote geospatial information use within a multiplicity of public

⁵ It is interesting to ponder what relation the development of ANT in the academic world has with other concordant attempts by historically alpha actors to de-privileged themselves with the aim of serving a greater, more efficient, and/or truthful good.

organizations in a particular locale (Bryson et al., 2009). For this paper, I examine the GSO as a type of NGO actor that is defined as the result of negotiations of meanings between all the actants involved in the development actor-network system. These meanings result from the actions and action-potentials of various actants including: top-level organizations, grassroots actors, the human actors within the GSO and other organizations, the material ICT technology that is used between the groups, and the constituent worldviews employed by the various actors. A sample development Actor-Network diagram is available in Appendix B.

As mentioned above, ANT believes that the ‘social’ is cast to light when there is an evolution of a relation between actors, especially when a controversy arises. Tommaso Venturini (2007), a former teaching assistant for Latour, uses the metaphor of learning cooking to describe why controversies are important sites of learning. Given that ANT’s cartography of controversies is fundamentally constructivist, the learner must step into the world where meaning is created through the process of collective work. A constructive technique such as baking a cake can be learned from observation and experience. Venturini (2007, p6) states “To learn how to bake a cake, you will have to step into the kitchen and observe the cooking in action. Even so, if cooks work at full speed without explaining what they are doing, you will have a hard time understanding what’s going on. However, if cooks start disagreeing on quantities, disputing the order of operations, quarreling about the cooking time, there you can start to learn something.” The controversies are the points at which the actors begin debating and thus explicating the details of the underlying processes of the system.

A key method in ANT is the ‘cartography of controversies’, which is the mapping of the points of tension that arise between actants in a system. These tensions could be philosophical differences between classes of organizations (such as the nature and expectation of compensation of actors within a organization, as we’ll see later in the data analysis section); human actor responses to potential-agencies of non-human actors such as biases in technologies (an example of which is the bias towards asynchronous communication in the utilization of email); or in the act of designating a spokesperson to speak for a group, providing the public definition of that group (as we’ll see in a forthcoming example about the representation of a community member by a GSO in their marketing materials).

ANT’s cartography of controversies is a particularly apposite tool for studying GSOs as they are positioned/position themselves at critical tension and connection points between top-level organizations and grassroots organizations. These latter organizations tend to lie at the opposite poles on various gradients of disparity (see figure 2, p. 57). GSOs are positioned along the middle of these gradients and in their bridging role must negotiate around boundary issues both internally and externally. The details of these issues as understood by the subjects of this study will be explicated in the ‘Boundaries’ section.

Examination of ANT controversies also includes looking at social, political, economic, and technological factors that come into play as the actors actively negotiate the creation or evolution a system. In the case of a development network, an ANT system (or actor-network) consists of the actants and actions involved be a project such as, in the present study: the implementation of service-learning program in a school, the marshaling

of a constellation of actors to give testimony on instances of human rights violations, or implementing HIV education events within a community. The ANT narrative as set down by Callon (1986) consists of four primary phases or “Moments of Translation” during the formation of the network of actors that coalesces around a problem and forms into a stabilized system. These four phases: problematization, interessement, enrolment, and mobilization (see summary table on page 22), lead to the network becoming a stabilized, “black-boxed” macro-actor.⁶ “Black box” is a term from the field of technology for a stable unit that can be understood in terms of accepting a particular input and delivering a particular result without need to investigate or understand the internal workings.⁷

This particular ANT construct is problematic for the examination of GSO work as it assumes the dominance of one actor in achieving the role of spokesperson. Callon notes one of ethical problems of his reduction: “To speak for others is to first silence those in whose name we speak” (1987, p.216). GSOs employing the participatory development **paradigm would wish to avoid this outcome**. Callon’s statement, however is useful in that it casts into sharp relief one of the dilemmas of participatory development work: the process of unification and resolving of controversies towards a stabilized system (speaking with one voice) can have the effect of negating the voices of the constituent actors. Does the effort towards actor-network stabilization necessarily promote a tyranny of imposed meaning? Stabilization and agreement is necessary for the successful adoption of a particular technology, system of governance, or other formal structure of

⁶ In the literature, the terms have maintained their French language form from the original paper publication.

⁷ Latour’s(1999) term for the “black box” effect of understanding a complex system as a single entity is *punctualisation*.

relationships in an actor network, but the translation narrative of ANT shows the approach's technological leanings in placing the endpoint at the "black boxing".⁸

One of the difficulties of the spokesperson role that GSOs take on in their work deals with tension between the advocacy mission and the marketing of a GSO's work. The GSO can find itself in the situation where it believes that painting particular picture of the community it serves works better for its marketing efforts, but is exploitive of the beneficiaries of the work. One particularly striking example of this in the data was in a situation where one of the organizations profiled in the case studies embarked on the creation of a promotional video based on the outcome of a particular beneficiary called Kayla here. Kayla was interviewed regarding their participation in the program. The committee putting together the promotional material debated various framings of the Kayla's outcomes. In one of the framings, the video was structured to include third party narration and stress particular quotes that made the organization appear like it was the primary reason for Kayla's successful outcome. Kayla, however, saw things differently. She saw the organization as being an important actor in the support network she had, but not as the primary driving reason she succeeded nor as a sine qua non without which she would have failed. She had a more nuanced view of her situation and thought the organization's work was helpful but rightly saw herself as the primary reason she succeeded. Kayla was sensitive to and rejected the idea that she was a victim that had to be helped. Some members on the marketing committee including those in the leadership positions saw this as a point of consternation and believed strongly that a simpler

⁸ A similar notion is advanced in the development of object-oriented code programming in computer science and technological product design, When an end point is reached in the design process and the production process must begin, the design is baked into a particular product object that then exists until it is replaced by another that is the result of a subsequent translation process.

narrative that cast the organization in the role of champion was necessary to have an impactful campaign. In the end, everyone agreed that the principle of expressing Kayla’s honest estimation was most important and the material was produced in a manner where she had final approval and was satisfied with the outcome. The organization, however, didn’t heavily promote or utilize the video in marketing materials. This example illustrates how an organization, as the spokesperson for the system it put together, has to decide how to use its position in a way that honors the voices of its partners.⁹

Four Phases of Callon’s Translation Narrative

Phase	Description
problematization	The phase in which a primary actor frames the problem, identifies other relevant actors, and determines a strategy for involving them via an “obligatory passage point” (OPP). The OPP is a situation the primary actor creates through which other actors are involved in a manner that fulfills the satisfaction of the interests attributed to them by the primary actor, rendering the primary actor indispensable. In non-profit development work, the call for proposals by funders or the process of grant design application by the NGOs can become the site of the OPP. The primary actor needs to correctly identify other actor’s goals and create an opportunity that the actors will believe is the best way to realize their individual goals. GSOs that rely on funds from a top-level funder can be faced with the challenges of negotiating an OPP based on requirements created by the top-level funder such as in calls for grant proposals and contract work. A GSO wishing to maintain control of its self-determined mission needs to carefully examine who is the primary actor in the development network that is being formed and what that means for protecting its own identity and interests.
<i>interessement</i> (or interpositioning)	The negotiation process in which the actors are persuaded by the primary actor to accept and identify with their roles. The primary actor stabilizes the nascent network by continuing to support the role identification and interconnections of the other actors that were designed in the problematization stage. One method for doing this is weakening the actors connections to non-network actors and/or working to strengthen the interconnections in the forming network. The primary actor can proffer inducements in the form of “interessement devices” inscribed with particular interests of members in the network. These can take the form of decision-making subgroups, memberships, tools, and other resources that function in binding actors in the network and have the effect of strengthening the position of the primary actor (Akrich, Callon, & Latour, 2002; Latour, 1986). Latour (1992) refers to this process of forming technical artifacts to ensure the protection the primary actors interests as “inscription”.

⁹ A well know example the marketing success and ethical pitfalls of oversimplification can be found in the controversy surrounding the ‘Kony 2012’ video produced by Invisible Children.

enrolment	The phase in which actors are formally locked into their roles in the network. The final negotiation with each actor occurs, determining their ability and desire to fulfill the intended objectives that were presented in the OPP. A formal contract signing or the submission and acceptance of a grant for a program are examples of enrolment between groups. ¹⁰
mobilization	According to him the translation process can be seen as winnowing down the voice of a group to one primary spokesperson through a reduction of intermediaries. The mobilization phase is the final part of the process in which the primary actor takes up representation of the actor-network (Callon & Latour, 1981). In non-profit work this results phase is evident into the promotional activities of the entity that is presenting work to a public audience and thus framing public perceptions.

Within ANT, re-performance of actions by actors in a network is seen as essential for maintaining a stable system and giving currency to sociological meaning (Latour, 2005). In terms of sustainability, the translation process is always insecure, revolts by actors against their roles can lead to failure of the system (Law, 2007). ANT proposes that a system of relationships requires continual restatement in order to maintain cohesion. The social relations – associations -- must be repeatedly “performed” or there is the risk of dissolution.¹¹ ANT does not suggest a model of sustainability outside of Latour’s contention that the social world is naturally constantly in flux and under re-negotiation. Callon’s narrative however implies success or failure endpoints in a development narrative where a system is regarded as stable or breaks down due to disagreement. During the initial development of ANT concepts, Callon was primarily interested in the manner in which the sociology of science and technological processes

¹⁰ The acceptance of a human to the limits of a particular technology device is an example of an enrolment activity in a micro-negotiation between a human and non-human actor.

¹¹ A systems failure was the object of study in Callon’s research on of the preservation of scallops of St Brieuc Bay (1986). In the framing of Callon’s analysis, marine scientists had enrolled the scallops and the fisherman into a system designed to promote a rise in the population of the scallops through the use of technological devices (larvae collectors) that fostered and protected scallop development during a critical larval phase. The cause of the systems failure was the fishermen’s eventual breaching of an agreement not to trawl in a protected area that contained the larvae collectors. Part of the problem was seen as the inability of the scientists to maintain communication with the fisherman in order to reiterate the goals of the system and keep them performing their necessary role, in this case one of abstinence.

works. Generally the cases studies involved a unitary primary actor in the form of a scientist group that would align interests to advance a unique applied research problem or technological innovation (McQueen et al. 2007). Based on ANT's genesis in doing post-mortems on fairly unique and complex science and technology narratives, one of the potential problems that ANT has as an analytic tool for improving social justice based development work may be that it is insufficiently developed for dealing with the resolution of complexities in that field. However, analysis of GSO development work may be fertile ground for driving development in ANT towards the goal because the repetitions nature of actor-network constitution within the domain is suitable with ANT's concept of continue re-enactment.

As stated above ANT holds that actor-networks that form meaning require constant re-performance of the relationships within the network to maintain the created meaning (Latour, 2005). Shifts in meaning are detected by the variations of performance that result in a negotiation or potentially a controversy between actors. Unlike the adoption of new technologies, for development networks the re-performance of actor-networks in similar manner is common. For example, a GSO generally does the performance of enrolling partners into a network for implementing a development project repeatedly. Grants must be applied for repeatedly, programs tied to schools operate on a regular basis year to year. In the data from the case studies collected for this research, respondents agreed that repetition of programs with the same or similar actors was the case. It was noted organizations would evolve in the direction of repeating successful assemblages or models of performance. Given ANTs ability to follow re-negotiations in

evolving systems, this repetition in actor-network constitution by GSOs may provide fertile ground to develop ANT-based for predictive analysis.

Functional Roles: Intermediary Versus Mediator

Two important ANT concepts that are used in this paper are the **intermediary** and the **mediator**. An intermediary is an actor whose function is to pass another actors agency uninterrupted and unmodified, such as a postal employee delivering a letter. Latour states that an intermediary “transports meaning or force without transformation: defining its inputs is enough to define its outputs” (2005, p 39). Latour makes the point that an intermediary can be counted as a single entity within a network, even if it is constituted of many parts. Pairing this with Callon’s definition transformation process, the primary actor in creating a system can create an intermediary that transmits the primary actor’s intent. A mediator, however, is an actor or actant that changes the nature of a communication or action in a significant manner. Latour states that mediators “transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry”. A mediator is a producer of complexity “no matter how simple it appears”. This paper makes the claim that a GSO that doesn’t function as a mediator is not effective in reducing problems such as paternalism and the biases of privilege and goes on to identify three primary activities in which a GSO has the potential to be an effective mediator.

Problems of GSO as Intermediary

In development work, the concept of paternalism is “characterized as a top- down unidirectional relationship where one party establishes the framework and issues strictures for the development of a second party” (Murthi, 2007). A GSO must be careful

not to become an intermediary in a development actor-network that is controlled by a primary actor who is a top-level funder. In doing so the GSO abdicates its historic role of being an advocate for the concerns of grassroots community that it serves. When a GSO is enrolled as a contractor and is reliant primarily on funds from a top-level funder, the danger exists that the GSO could be enrolled as a scrutinized intermediary who becomes a carrier of the will of the funder rather than its historic role as champion of the grassroots community. A good parallel example can be found with the private social service organizations that are contracted by states to implement the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and its associated workfare programs. Recent research (Soss et al., 2012) has shown a clear pattern of paternalism in this sector that not only affects the population receiving the benefits, but also denudes the privatized service organizations themselves of self-determination and voice in both problem definition (the ANT problematization stage) and the ability to adapt service to the true needs of the community. The role of neoliberalism in justifying these policies (Soss et al. 2009) is important to note, since neoliberalism has had a coincident influence in the sphere of development work during this period with top-level funders such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in implementing development programs with developing nations (Kleinbach, 1999).

In cases where a GSO assumes a contractor relationship with a funding organization, the possibility of becoming a pure intermediary for the funder's goals is a concern. If a GSO makes a steady habit of working in a contractor type relationship with funders and becomes reliant on that as a funding base, then it needs to be wary of the subtle changes that successive cycles of the actor enrollment process may move it away

from its original goals. Changes in funder relationships and organizational structures that aren't aligned with a GSO's social justice mission can impact the make up of the organizations staff leading to attrition and the loss of valuable personnel with deep commitments to those values. Such an occurrence happened with the NGO that was the subject of O'Reilly's (2011) research. One organization in this study experienced a similar change in staff when it shifted its primary work from direct practice to community network building. Many excellent staff members that were deeply committed to the community support dimension of the work that was being done, wanted to stay in a direct practice model because that was a model that placed them right the community they were serving. A large contingent of them eventually left leaving a smaller organization as the programs associated with contracts and grants that required direct practice were allowed to expire. Mindful of the influence that chasing after trendy grants can have on an organizational compass, the organization is trying to be careful and selective in choosing funding as it goes forward. A program director from the organization stated "We're trying more and more, as we go forward and develop programming (with grantors)...to have those things align with our goals as an organization. So our goals are in the forefront rather than a grantor's. So, we're trying not to go after funding that really doesn't meet our goals" but admits that, "but that is not always the case" as sometimes you have to take what is offered.

Methodology

The research data was gathered using three primary methods: the active semi-structured interview, the elite interview, and the embedded researcher. All interviews were conducted as active semi-structured interviews, which were based on a set protocol of topics and questions that were deployed in a dynamic responsive manner. The subject was informed of the research topic and their rights within the research process. S/he was told that the interview was intended to flow conversationally and that s/he could follow any tangents or ask any questions s/he wished. The data collection, analysis, storage, and publication work for this study was done with respect to the guidelines set forth in the University of Minnesota-approved protocol for the protection of the human subjects participating in this study published in the document ‘Protecting Human Subjects Guide’.¹²

Active, Semi-structured and Elite Interviewing

In the active interview the respondent is viewed as a narrator who has a stock of knowledge rather than as a ‘vessel of answers’ (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). The stock of knowledge is “simultaneously substitutive, reflexive, and emergent” (Schütz, 1967). The construction of knowledge is seen as coming from an equal participation between the interviewer and the interviewee, as opposed to the interview as a “pipeline through which information was transmitted from a passive subject to an omniscient researcher” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). Interviewees that participated in this research process described the interviews afterwards as being reflexive, “a helpful opportunity for reflection on my work”, and an opportunity for synthesis, “I’ve never had to think about

¹² At: <http://www.research.umn.edu/irb/download/Protecting%20Human%20Subjects%20Guide.pdf>

...(the subject) in this way before. I had to think about it and come up with the new answers right then.”

The elite interview method was employed for an extended primary interview or series of interviews with primary actors in each organization who had particular detailed knowledge due to a central role in mediating the organizations work. An elite is not necessarily defined by high power, privilege, or status; an individual can be considered to be in an elite role depending on their ‘strategic positions within a social network’ and functioning “as important connectors and bridges between social structures” that are being researched (Harvey, 2010; Burt, 1992). This particular study was structured to include one top-level leader from each organization within the interview group. The specific top-level titles and roles covered in the elite interview group for this study include a CEO, two founders, and an Executive Director.

When conducting elite interviews, the problem of narrator bias is a significant concern (Berry, 2002). To combat this, multiple sources were taken within each organization to prevent against the biasing the data towards the personal biases of any one individual. As Hochschild (2009) states “The interviewer can carefully triangulate among respondents; without revealing any confidences or names of previous subjects, one can sometimes use information gleaned from a previous interview to question or push a current subject a little more deeply.” The pattern of interviewing was reflexive. Information from previous questions impacted the direction of discussions with participants. Analysis of interviews led to the inclusion of new questions to both cross-reference and refine particular emergent themes.

Analytical Methods

Interviewees were encouraged to share not only factual descriptions of situations but also their own interpretations and reactions to formulations of the interviewer. The interviews were transcribed and coded for emergent themes. These include the notion of what a resource is, methods for forming relationships and what particular technologies were used for over the course of a relationship, and the types of negotiations that take place between actors in various situations such as joining a project, defining the steps of a project, and implementing a project. After completion of the interviews, transcripts were made, and the data was analyzed using a grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) approach using comparison and contrasting of the texts and noting emergent themes. An ANT sensibility and technique was applied by looking into actors' telling of controversies in actor-network negotiations as points of potential interest.

In the data analysis portion of this paper, I use selected vignettes to illustrate my findings. Each description from one account is cross-referenced by either a person working in the same-organization or working in a similar role in one of the other organizations. For example, a point made about effects of bureaucratic identity on partnership building, such as an organization having a 501(c)(3) status, made by a person in a top leadership position in one organization is cross-referenced with the account of another person in the same position in another organization. Additional intra-organizational verification of accounts from multiple sources is noted when available.

Twelve interviews garnered from members of four organizations were the basis for the data set. Each interview ranged from one to three hours. One person in a foundational top-level leadership position was chosen from each organization, the

remaining interviews were with mid-level members who played active functional roles in project work. Additional data was gathered from organization members and partners outside of the interview set when I attended organization meetings and group events. A full descriptive list of the interviewees is in Appendix A.

Embedded researcher

I had a relationship with three of the four primary organizations (referred to here under the pseudonyms: East African Data, EnviroCivics, and Heartland Human Rights¹³) that included an extended period of participation within the organization. In the case of East African Data, I joined the research team as an intern and participated in fieldwork in East Africa during the summer of 2010. In the case of the Heartland Human Rights, I was active as an intern for one and half years, observing the methods and work of the coalition by traveling to two annual regional meetings, as well as participating in a Web site upgrade with the home office. I have a current variable part-time employment relationship with EnviroCivics that goes back to the end of 2009. In that role I participated in field observations and documentation of staff and partner work, observed partner trainings, traveled to annual staff and partner meetings, and conducted interviews with PGO partners as part of work-related activities. While there was direct no direct work for West African Health Education Experiences, I visited their headquarters at their invitation, attended a presentation on their work, and attended a fundraiser to observe the interactions of the state-side team and their local partners.

¹³ All the interview participants in the research spoke on the record; however, I have proactively taken this step to prevent this thesis, which will be publically available on the Internet, from becoming part of the digital identity of the organization through search engine indexing.

Being embedded within an organization benefits a qualitative researcher by allowing a shared context of experiential understanding of the domains being investigated in the interviewer-interviewee relationship that forms the unit of knowledge production in the active interview process. Another key benefit of embedded research for the researcher is the ability to gain an ethnographic understanding of an individual organization's environment and culture as well as the general external environment in which organizations of its type operate. Embedment in multiple organizations affords the researcher the benefit of different experiential bases from which to compare and contrast. From a longitudinal aspect, bearing witness to the evolution of organizations in real time from within allows the researcher a richly detail historical understanding from which to direct lines of inquiry. This is particularly helpful in an ANT analysis that involves investigating the dynamic formation of particular systems over time (Bergquist et al., 2008).

The role of embedded researcher takes many of its cues from the realm of participatory action research, which was a reaction to extractive research. Extractive research is defined as the situation in which “experts” from a top-level government or academic organization enter a community, study the subjects as others, and take away collected data to format into papers, reports and theses that are circulated as resources for the top-level communities (Wilmsen, 2006). Participatory action research differs from conventional research in that the aim is to produce knowledge that is useful to the community from which it is derived and to position researchers as “active agents of change in the communities with which they are working. In this role, they are facilitators and catalysts, not directors, of transformation” (Ehrhart, 2002). The position of embedded

researcher is becoming more common in a greater variety of fields such as medicine (Reiter-Theil, 2004), mineral science (Brace, 2007), and anthropology (Lewis and Russell, 2011). In this role, the researcher is expected to produce results relevant for all the parties engaged in the network that research is taking place in. In my case, I performed information technology related tasks such as Web site coding, Web site administration, email administration, and social media account maintenance for the three organizations in which I was embedded.

Case Study Examples

I selected the four primary subjects of this study for several reasons. First, each of these organizations fit the primary qualification of working in supporting grassroots organizations that are active at the primary levels of their community. Secondly, each employs a social justice framework and uses a participatory development model. Because the organizations were all grounded in these similar ethics, it was possible to view parallels and differences in their methods of engaging these ethics through their work. Part of the tension between economic and capability measures of development, is that the former is biased towards economic efficiency and the latter gives weight to items that might incur additional costs to a society. The accounts from each of organizations gave evidence of dealing with this tension between availability of resources, economy, and the costs of doing the work with ideological purity. Using the ANT cartography of controversies technique, exploring these tensions yielded information about the definition of mediating activities such as resource transmission and outlined aspects of the disparity boundaries between top-level funders and grassroots organizations.

Thirdly, the sites of the grassroots community partnerships in the study sample had geographic diversity. Two of the organizations operate regionally in the United States with occasional ties to international actors and the other two operate primarily in African countries, with strong ties to actors in the Midwest region. The decision to research GSOs working both domestic and international grassroots populations was intentional so as to offer a wider range in values to compare in development narrative variables such as language, bureaucratic framework, and technological infrastructure capacities. Furthermore, the gross majority of the studies I reviewed in my literature review on the subject of NGOs working in development networks focused exclusively on a particular geographic areas (such as Latin America or Southeast Asia) or specific states. A critique exists within the domains of development and human rights that there sometimes exists an unconscious mindset that different standards apply in evaluating the domestic and international spheres beyond what objectivity would dictate (Moyo, 2009, Baaz, 2005). As the Advocates of Human Rights state on their website: “In the United States, violations of human rights are something many consider to be an issue that is only faced by people in foreign countries - not by people here at home.” I wanted to start breaking down some of the artificial divides between the domestic and international domains and do an analysis that treated data from each equally from an analytical point of view. Obviously, I took note of the attribute and took care to balance the number of organizations working in each domain, but I did not single out or divide by that attribute in my analysis. ANT’s focus on ‘descriptive’ data grounded in the narratives of the actors themselves offered the opportunity to side step imposing the distinction in a categorical fashion. A brief description of each organization follows.

EnviroCivics

EnviroCivics is a non-profit working in environmental civic education. Their mission statement can be paraphrased as “EnviroCivics engages young people as citizens who improve the environment and their communities.” The organization promulgates a model of environmental education seated in place-based learning. Placed-based education is generally project-based, hands-on, and rooted in the real world in which the participants live. The EnviroCivics Method, the organization’s primary model for structuring the learning process, consists of six-steps that student groups follow to identify an environmental problem in their community, performing scientific analysis to examine the issue, and take civic action as a response to their findings. EnviroCivics partners with local actors (such as K-12 schools, nature centers, businesses, governmental agencies, and universities), who implement EnviroCivics programs in their communities. In 2010, EnviroCivics made a specific organizational shift to explicitly commit itself to working primarily in low-income communities. Primary activities staff members engage in include program trainings, grant writing, partner development, organizing youth summit events, program evaluation, and some direct practice in program implementation.

EnviroCivics works with universities, such as a consortium of the State Universities of Tennessee, in placing instruction on the implementing of the EnviroCivics Method into the schools’ environmental education curricula. EnviroCivics has a significant long-standing partnership with a major manufacturing corporation in running the Rivers Health Education Program program, which pairs up environmental engineers from participating corporate facilities with teachers using the EnviroCivics method in class water monitoring projects.

EnviroCivics staff members are located in disparate areas of the United States. In some cases, a staff member's location is not necessarily important to the nature of their work and there is frequent travel required for most of the individuals that work directly with partners. ICT technology and the concept of the virtual office is a critical factor in determining the shape of the organization as it is today. At one time EnviroCivics was engaged primarily in direct practice and now focuses mainly on building and supporting the community networks that implement EnviroCivics programs.

Heartland Human Rights

Heartland Human Rights (HHR) consists of fifty-six organizations covering a nine-state region of the United States' heartland joined to "promote and protect" human rights within their area. The coalition was formed in 1995 from a core group of fifteen groups that included "academic institutions, advocacy and service organizations, and legal and clinical associations". The coalition has two primary annual member meetings and is led by a six-person steering committee. The coalition currently has four main areas of focus: Economic Justice, Non-Discrimination, Freedom from Torture and Cruelty, and Immigrant Rights. Groups of partners work closely together on projects of such as the closing of a Supermax prison, where prisoners are held in long term solitary confinement, meaning individuals are left alone in their cells for at least 23 hours per day often leading to mental health problems and suicides.¹⁴

The day-to-day organizational work of the HHR is primarily done by a staff of two coordinators, who work from a small office on the University campus in the

¹⁴ On June 19, 2012, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn announced the closing of the Tamms Correctional Center.

department in which Meredith, who is a founder and current member of the HHR steering committee, is a practicing academic. Generally the primary meetings are held in Chicago. Most of the primary activities of the staff are mediated by ICT technology. Activities include information sharing, promoting events, grant writing, funding, partner networking, participation in civic forums, and human rights campaign strategizing.

East African Data

East African Data (EAD) is a East African NGO founded in 2006. EAD uses research to measure the impact of development projects in rural communities and presents the findings to the key stakeholders in each rural community. By creating local forums for presenting the research along with service provision from partner NGOs, EAD builds learning networks that connect these rural communities and the relevant stakeholders in the private, public and charitable organizations at local, national and international levels. The data that EAD provides to villages, NGOs, and research institutions integrates “quantitative and qualitative methods that measure outcomes related to socio-economics, public health, nutrition and diet, anthropometric measures, institutional analyses, HIV/AIDS, natural resource use, gender differences, education, livestock and agricultural production, conservation and food security to help alleviate poverty and sustain natural resources, villages and wildlife in rural” areas of East Africa. The activities of the EAD research staff include: conducting surveys and focus groups, event planning, research analysis, and partner networking. The EAD research team is composed of young East African scientists who are guided by “by principal investigators who are international and national experts from major Universities” who oversee the research design and analysis.

West African Health Education Experiences

West African Health Education Experiences (WAHEE) is a Minnesotan NGO that operates in five districts in a West African state. The organization recruits student volunteers from academic programs centered on medical issues from the United States to go to Africa and work with West African volunteers, students, and medical staff in two types of programs, the West African Youth Scholars (WAYS) and a Research Associate Program (RAP). WAYS is a community-based learning program that allows West African students in participating schools to survey their community for a medical problem of concern, research the issue, and come up with a proposal for action on the issue. The learning objectives of this program are critical thinking, civic learning, and leadership skills. The Western student volunteers serve as guides in this program. RAP is modeled after Western-style research associate programs in hospitals in which students work with medical staff to collect and analyze data collected from patient care. During the RAP term, volunteers are embedded in a West African medical facility and work with the local medical staff. This young organization is currently primarily funded by the fees paid by the non-African volunteers and donations, but is looking to complement these inputs with grants. WAHEE prepares western student volunteers for immersion in the programs through discussions during pre-trip meetings. The students study international health disparities before leaving and afterwards attend group sessions to reflect on their experiences. WAHEE is committed to power sharing; having native West Africans in the primary leadership posts of the West African-side of the organization and being physically embedded in the communities that it serves.

Mediating Activities

The primary GSO organizational processes that emerged as mediating activities of the GSO within the actor-network are cultural liaisonship, partner networking, and resource transmission. To come to this typology, I marked and categorized sub-activities and actors from the respondents' narratives. Under ANT guidelines, elements of the actor-network that emerged as frequent actors or functions in the respondents' narratives or as points of controversy in negotiations between actors were labeled and grouped under my three main activity labels. **Cultural liaisonship** includes activities such as spending time embedded in a community; learning/sharing the language of a community, creating strong ties and power-equal relationships with community leaders; recruiting skilled individuals from a community's primary cultural groups into the organization; inclusivity work; and actions to help to communicate the concerns, priorities, and goals of the community to the funding and governmental organizations that are involved in working with the community. A GSO that develops cultural fluency in both the world of the funder and grassroots communities has the best chance of being an effective mediating bridge between those worlds. For a grassroots organization, a partnership with a GSO that is knowledgeable about navigating and interacting with the top-level bureaucratic community and the social spheres in which those actors are embedded is a key benefit for building organizational capacities. **Partner networking** includes activities such as ally and partner mapping (the process of identifying stakeholders and potential partners), maintaining communication with local beneficiaries and partners, linking partners, and creating a forum for the preceding activities either virtually or physically. The skills required for negotiating the formation of these relationships involves gaining and

demonstrating cultural knowledge, cost-benefit analysis skills regarding transaction costs, and the ability to demonstrate commitment. To retain the integrity with its advocacy role, a GSO must be skilled at being a primary actor in constituting the actor-network that connects the grassroots with the top-layer strata. Weaknesses in this area can lead to the GSO either being ineffectual or becoming an intermediary or ‘arm’ or a stronger actor.

Resource transmission includes any method of delivering a good to a community or between actors. Examples include disbursing funds through grants, delivering information, or providing services. A GSO may generate the resources itself or function as a conduit for resources provided by a funding organization or partner NGO. Collection and packaging of data in the form of case studies, stories, or quantitative measures for resource providers in the funding stream also are also example of resource transmission. GSOs in this study identified their networking activity as a resource in itself. Other significant resources identified by ANT analysis of negotiations between actors in actor-network construction from the case studies are time, data, funds, access to labor, and connection to resource providers.

I arranged the GSO activities into a pyramid diagram that indicates the conceptual relationship between them (figure 1). Cultural liaisonship and partner networking are on the bottom level of the pyramid on an equal level because they operate both foundationally and synergistically. Attributes of cultural liaisonship, such as a GSO’s embeddedness in a community (whether physical or virtual), have a reinforcing effect on partner networking. Increased partner networking can also increase exposure to the community and build cultural fluency and trust, which better the GSO’s cultural liaison skills. Skills in these two activities can be seen as foundational to making a GSO an

effective resource transmitter between top-level funders and grassroots organizations. Resource transmission is at the top of the pyramid because it is the primary activity that a development network seeks to enable. Whether the resource is defined as knowledge, money, access, or capability; there is something that the actors in the network wish to imbue the grassroots community in. The other activities function primarily to serve the goal of some sort of resource transmission.

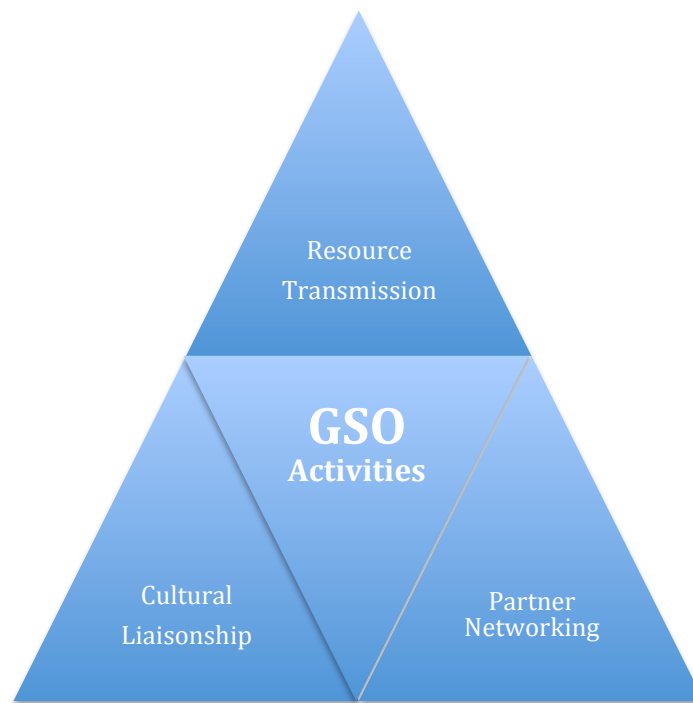


Figure 1: GSO mediating activities pyramid

GSO Activities

Resource Transmission: the act of distributing a resource to an actor regardless of the origin of the source i.e. the GSO could generate the source, add value to a source, or simply directly transmit a resource from one actor to another.

Cultural Liaisonship: the act of an actor understanding in all the relevant cultures that are present in an actor-network in providing help with cross-cultural boundary problems.

Partner Networking: the act of connecting partners in a network or providing strategic guidance in formation of relationships between potential partners.

Cultural Liaisonship

One important practice for cultural liaisonship is being embedded significantly within a community. For example, Samuel of WAHEE consciously differentiated his organization from most of the other NGOs working in the West African city where WAHEE is based by placing WAHEE's headquarters in a house within the community being served rather than in the upper class enclave where many of the other bigger NGOs had their offices. He spoke about getting to know the community by walking the distance between the hospital he volunteered at and his home daily, while the white land cruisers of more well-funded NGOs drove anonymously by. A frequent question Native West Africans would often ask him was what these NGOs were up to as they had no idea and Samuel was the only 'outsider' they had sustained contact with. The West African residents would comment on the difference in WAHEE's structure and other NGOs, stating that they didn't feel the other NGOs understood what really was important to the community because at most they would drive in for a couple hours, ask some questions and then drive off. WAHEE's visibility and embeddedness in the community led to the community being aware of and understanding WAHEE's organizational identity and mission. This trust was important so that the community would encourage the students from the community to participate in WAHEE's WAYS program, which is in essence a service learning program. David mentions that since the Western volunteers lived in the community, they became more quickly acculturated and thus functioned as better learning guides in the classroom. David said the community appreciated seeing the volunteers' out in the community living the same sort of life as them: "we had to go fetch our water carrying five-gallon containers and would stand in line like everyone else."

Samuel's western-education and upbringing combined with his eager and respectful cultural exploration of his paternal family roots in the West African country of his paternal relatives made him an ideal cultural liaison between the western academic groups, western NGOs, and West African institutions. Samuel made the choice to start his immersion in the West African development community by volunteering in a service program run by the West African state rather than coming in with an outside organization. This led to him making a friendship with Amadou, a West African schoolteacher, who ended up being a friend, partner, and eventually the country director for WAHEE. He was able to craft strong ties and power-equal relationships with community leaders by working bottom up from within. He let the observations of his initial immersion in West African culture synthesize with his experiences being a research associate in western emergency rooms; all the while vetting and evolving his ideas through discussions with his new West African contacts.

Samuel involved local knowledge and identified relevant actors very early within the problematization and interesement stages of an ANT translation narrative detailing WAHEE's formation. By letting the network evolve from bottom up through inclusive participation, he, a single undergraduate student, was able to secure the involvement of a significant number of West African groups and institutions including the highest levels of the government's health ministry and regional hospitals. The programs he developed, including the RA program and WAYS, emerged from gaps that were identified by the community and discussions between Samuel and community actors over a significant period of time.

Cultural liaisonship is extremely synergetic with partner networking, Samuels' effectiveness as a network builder was founded on his ability 'speak' a trusted actor in both worlds. He commanded respect with West Africans through his cultural learning, participation in their community and respect for the community. His fluency in communicating with and inspiring lower-level western actors in other NGOs, who were frustrated at their own organizations lack of penetration in the community, made him the quintessential primary actor in constructing the actor-networks that WAHEE is at the center of.

For a geographically disparate community like EnviroCivics, being present in the community can take different forms. Within Dallas, a base city for EnviroCivics having a large concentration of EnviroCivics staff, Erykah takes care of an educational community network that is local to the historically African-American neighborhood where the EnviroCivics offices are. She will often make the rounds, often visiting her partners face-to-face rather than mediating the relationship through electronic means. For others staff members such as Jolene, who supervises the management of geographically dispersed educational community networks in the upper Midwest, participation in the community means two face-to-face visits a year followed by email and phone conversations to keep the work going.

Establishing effective cultural liaisonship skills in an organization can occur through various means. One is to recruit from the local community. Erykah was originally a teacher in the local school district in neighborhood where she works now. Exposure to the methods of service learning made here a believer in the process and

eventually she found herself recommended for and recruited for a EnviroCivics position by a former principal of the school that she had once taught at. Her roots in the community and experience as a teacher helped create a bond with other partners in the educational community that EnviroCivics was working with. Erykah mentions how even when she is not officially working, she may run into a community partner in locations such as the grocery store and ends up having a work related discussion (to the chagrin of her children). She was very much a part of the community before she became part of the GSO organization and her methods of work reflect this.

A non-geographically proximate partner like Jolene, however must make the trusted connections in a community required for effective cultural liaisonship in different manner. She does this by being very committed to making an effective first impression face-to-face and being very intentional in both the scheduling and content of her electronic messaging. Jolene mentions importance of a strong initial face-to-face encounter stating: “The more quality the face-to-face meeting is, the greater quality the virtual relationship is.” Jolene travels to partner meetings about every other week. In dealing with the problem of the bias of virtual communications towards short messages, she mentions that she puts a great deal of time into a message whether email or text; avoiding “text-ese” or any other shortcuts that have the possibility of being misinterpreted or misunderstood. Quality and consistency is what she feels maintains a connection over distance, as well as learning and understanding the ebb and flow of a partner’s time during the school year. She describes the cycle: “It the beginning of a school year, responsiveness is much higher and as the school year progresses it tends to wane.... In August , September, everyone is staring their program and we hear from them

a lot. Around the holidays, around Thanksgiving and Christmas, people get busy and you don't hear from them as much. Then communication ramps back up as teachers start a new year and they are like 'we need to get back in touch, do all this stuff'. Then as they get toward testing and the end of the year when everybody is fried, it is like pulling teeth to talk to anybody.” Understanding time constraints and communication cycles within an actor-network create a sense of being part of the community.

Bart of EnviroCivics also works with geographically disparate communities and follows a similar pattern engagement. He also mentions that face-to-face meeting are vital to establishing good virtual relationships stating: “It is difficult to establish trust or confidence in someone if you don't meet them personally.” He goes on to say that a face-to-face encounter is a source of “rich information” about a person's personality that helps in interpreting their “tone in an email.”

Another significant GSO practice of cultural liaisonship is the recruitment of and inclusion of members of all cultural groups that are present in the network being designed, into the GSO itself. GSO them can become enclaves in which cultural debate and synthesis can take place. For example, in working on the issue of worker exploitation in meat-packing plants which frequently involved the vulnerable population of illegal immigrants, HHR employed Maria, a human rights worker of Central American heritage to work on the project. She was able to effectively make the trusted connections in the community by using her language and cultural skills. She was an effective cultural mediator in her ability to collect and translate data and also structure the dialogue in a manner consistent with the UN human rights framework that HHR used. Her

participation as a staff within the organization provided a familiarity of Central American culture to the rest of the staff as well as the ability to have that cultural view closely present at decision points. Her ability to speak the language of the community and connect on a cultural level with the grassroots actors gave her the ability to be a significantly more trusted liaison than a culturally different actor. Since the population that HHR was trying to serve in this project was hidden as a result of their illegal status, the ability to create a trusted safe connection was paramount in enrolling their participation.

EAD functions an effective cultural liaison in a development research actor-network because its staff consists primarily of East African and western scientists and working together. To create the EAD team, the founders brought together a mixture of young East African scientists, business, and field staff, and western data analysts and academic advisors and co-leaders. The primary resource or output being generated is data on village health and productivity that is collected via survey. It is of key importance that the data being collected is factual and not corrupted by miscommunication or misunderstanding. Finding and developing key East African survey team leaders who can both direct daily survey team work and collaborate with a PI and data manager to ensure that proper translation is done initially and that proper methodology is followed in the field is what allows EAD to be effective in getting good data; especially in the deeper rural areas of the population. There is an effectively stratification or arrangement in communication based on the cultural fluency of each actor. Those primarily interacting with the East African respondents were all East African, those interacting with the

western funding organizations and enrolling the primary investigator were western academics.

Isobel, the data manager for a recent baseline survey project completed by EAD in the spring of 2012 describes the research team as it was constituted: “George Barnard, the primary investigator, is a professor of Economics and Agriculture at” an American University. “And he did a similar study on cotton production in” another East African country “and he was serving as the PI for this study as well, because he was also doing in taking a year of sabbatical and spending it in the capital city of the East African country where EAD was based. He became involved with EAD when Howard (a professor at” another American university “and a founder of EAD) met him in the Mall one evening and found out his common interests so when the time came for the Fitzsimmons project they contacted him and asked him if he wanted to be the PI.” The teams doing the survey work were created by the staff East African team leaders: “there was one team leader and three researchers for each team, so there were in total 24 data collectors plus one driver for each team. The three researchers per team were consultants, they got a per diem, technically they were not staff but rather consultants.” “So it was a pretty highly educated group, and I think it was because they were recruited online. The only people involved in the recruitment process were the team leaders. They interviewed each candidate in Kiswahili and a portion of English.”

The translation process for the questionnaire was done with the data manager and team leaders before a two-week pilot phase. During the pilot phase, Isobel, went out with the six team leaders in the field and participated in evening debriefings after the leaders

collected answers during the day. Problematic questions were discussed and modified at that time. The PI was consulted via email. Isobel met with the PI face-to-face one time at the start of the project when they were both in the capital city and relied on email mostly after that. During the active project period, She worked from the EAD headquarters and mediated all the questions and issues for the PI. The team leaders and Isobel mediated most of the communications regarding issues in the field that came from various team members. The organization seemed to discover and follow rules of efficiency in cultural mediation. Those most fluent in the needed skills of language or argot would be those that served as the linkage for communication directed into a particular area.

Through his embeddedness, Samuel gained a granular understanding of the customs and cultural language of the community. For example he learned about the ICT situation of the community he serves in West Africa and what actions are required to communicate effectively with all the various stratifications of ICT access in the student population of the YSSL program. Samuel also chose to respect and adopt certain cultural usage patterns rather than complain about them. For example, he mentions that he can't expect to use email in a daily fashion to communicate with the WAHEE country director Amadou, primarily because Amadou typically does not check his email more than once a week. This usage pattern arose, he believes, from the need to go to Internet cafes to gain access to a computer. Since most people without computers at home don't pay for time everyday, communications are structured with longer intervals between responses as a norm. Samuel mentions that instead of seeing this as a point of frustration, he sees it as working towards the goal of making Amadou the chief decision maker for the WAHEE organization in West Africa. Samuel believes, less communication will foster less

reliance on him for decision-making power and thus counter act a bias he sees in West Africa towards privileging Western actors.

Bart of EnviroCivics makes a similar statement regarding the situation when he is working with a teacher in a low-income school. In some school situations in low-income schools, there is a policy against the use of certain electronic devices (as a method of enforcing discipline), the teacher is not allowed to use a phone or a computer in the classroom and thus an email must be answered after hours on the teacher's private time. Bart must adjust his expectations and tailor his communication approach in a manner that most respects the teacher's time and availability. This can include, not getting angry about lack of contact, or trying different and repeated methods of contact.

In ANT terms, the 'problems' or controversies that Samuel and Bart encountered when trying to activate an actor-network or assemblage that consisted of themselves, a particular technology, and the partner into a functional system that fulfilled particular communication goals were the sites where a particular social meaning can be investigated. Both primary actors, Samuel and Bart, had to investigate, think about (and internally negotiate with) all the variables defining the communication system before coming to an understanding and making reflexive adjustments that allowed the system to work.

Partner Networking

Partner networking tasks emerged as some of the most frequently activities described in actor narratives from each of the organizations. HHR's organizational structure as a coalition makes it a site for partner networking. The two HHR coordinators

described partner networking in narratives such as: bringing partners together to give testimony in civic forums, creating events for discussing focal issues at membership convenings and meetings, and matching members seeking help with an issue with a partner who has the skills to help them. EnviroCivics expressly shifted from being a organization involved in direct practice to one that did community building by networking and training local partners in the communities where it worked. The organization codified the networking activity by creating jobs around those functions such as ‘Director of Community Partnerships’ and creating tools for staff such as community inventories to identify potential partners. Samuel and David of WAHEE each describe in their narratives that because of their shoestring budget, what gives their organization salience is their ability to making partnerships between existing NGOs who are not as embedded in the community or whose primary mission is not community engagement and enlist them as partners in their programs working with young West African students. As noted above, cultural liaisonship is extremely synergetic with partner networking, since a person’s effectiveness as a network builder is founded on the ability ‘speak’ as a trusted actor with a broad range of potential partners who may be separated by disparity or culture.

The relationship between a GSO and a grassroots organization is generally more personal and less technocratic than one between a funding agency and another actor. Technologically and organizationally relationships between top-level organizations and GSOs is mediated by formal protocols, asynchronous communication, and with an institutional relationship taking priority over a personal relationship. The relationship between a grantor and grantee in a bureaucratic relationship functions in the same manner

regardless of the location of the parties. Emily of EAD, in discussing social media and communications, mentioned that she would never personally 'friend' a funder and that a formal professional demeanor mediates all communications with funders. Every other account that dealt with this question corroborated the guideline that funder relationships were kept strictly professional and formal whereas giving access to an individual social media channel or 'friending' might be done between an individual GSO actor and a grassroots partner.

In the case study accounts, the relationships between actors from grassroots organizations and ones from GSOs privileged organic face-to-face conversations over formal bureaucratic procedure. As stated in the accounts in the previous section, a face-to-face meeting was considered pivotal to the formation of a working relationship. Technology was used afterwards to coordinate; but the foundation of trust is predicated on the face-to-face encounter. Regarding this importance of a face-to-face meeting to provide a foundation for future trusted communication, Jolene states: "I think that humans just basically need a connection point, and I feel that until you've met someone you feel like you don't really know them and so there's just an inability to trust the unknown."

Establishing a regular presence in the communities where potential network enrollees reside is important. This could be at formal networking opportunities such as conventions, where EnviroCivics staff often meets potential partners. It could be at informal cultural mixing areas such as the Christian church where Emily of EAD collects information about various NGO activities or a particular beach in the West African city where Samuel knows he can meet NGO employees from the organizations that have

offices that are segregated from the poorer communities. Having people within the organization that are fluent in all the cultures that need to be connected with is important because they have knowledge of where meeting areas are (virtually or physical) and what are the best communicative tools and approaches to use.

Resource Transmission

A key feature of GSO work is transmission of resources including material goods, funds, information, or other services. The GSO can generate the resources itself, function as a conduit for resources from a funding partner, or provide support for linking a grassroots organization with the funding entity. GSO's combination of cultural liaisonship and partner networking skills is one reason why GSOs have become a part of a system that connects local grassroots organizations with international and national funding and resources streams. In their mediating role, GSO's have the opportunity to find ways to ensure equity between all the networked parties in the distribution of a resource.

For example, in East Africa, the local communities lauded EAD for returning to villages to make presentations of data from a comprehensive comparative survey of rural villages. In this case, the resource was comparative community data collected by survey and subjected to statistical analysis. The data included valuable information on food security and dietary diversity; household income and assets; HIV knowledge scores; children's health; agricultural production and livestock health; access to water; quality of schools and health services; and the number and quality of NGOs and village committees in each village. Village leaders would often comment with appreciation that the meetings

that EAD set up to deliver the results of their surveys were the first time that an NGO had ever returned to share the information that had been extracted from their community.

The typical extractive resource transmission narrative for a survey team involves the research group collecting the data from a community, performing analysis, and turning it over for further analysis and publication to top-level academic and professional groups. The resource flows go upstream as the data is taken from the community and given to top-level interests to as a commodity for their business. The benefits to the community would be expected to come in a diffuse manner, if at all, if the results of the research can inform policy of development plans for the survey region. The top-level actors are rewarded by through career advancement and income stream retention from the grants that pay their salaries. EAD as a part of the village survey project expanded this narrative to include a return to the villages to present the data and provide a forum for the community leaders and the research team to collaborate on investigating solutions to community problems such as HIV. The resource transmitted became both the data, the opportunity to acquire and practice organizational technology (methods of analysis such as SWOT analysis and graph reading), and the bolstering of community network building between the local actors.

The network constructed by a GSO can become a valuable resource itself. WAHEE builds much of the resource transmission through the process of network building and actor-network creation. For example, the program funds generally all come from the western volunteers (typically medical and pre-med students) that sign up with the program. The resource-privileged members of the team thus provide both funding and organizational structure such as the research associate training and problem solving

methods of the young scholars program. The volunteers are getting strong resume building, career advancing, and cultural learning experiences in return. By avoiding top-level funders during the initial phase of their development, WAHEE has been able to operate very strongly as a primary actor in the translation narrative the actor-network it forms. By enrolling young research NGO workers from the lower levels of western organizations already in the area as partners in WAHEE programs, WAHEE can leverage their experience and presence in the community without incurring additional costs.

Wanda of HHR also describes the network itself as one of the primary resources HHR provides. She cites a case involving police abuse in a major metropolis as an instance where HHR's network structure was instrumental in successfully bringing together the actors necessary to bring the matter to international attention that forced action on the issue by the local city's recalcitrant political powers.

Disparity Boundaries

GSOs are situated and operate at tension points along gradients of inequality from the privileged resource-rich segments of society where many actors working in high-level positions in governments and charitable foundations reside and the historically underprivileged and resource-poor segments that are targeted by development work. These tension points consist of the difference between what each of the actors at the opposite places on the spectrum considers normative. A development actor acculturated to a particular area of society can be prone to assumptions about the resources available, methods used, and the social expectations behind communications when engaged with

partners that exist in areas where those norms are different. GSOs' functions as network connectors, resource transmitters, and cultural liaisons are each reliant on its ability to effectively cross the boundaries that may divide the parties they wish to assemble into an actor-network. The significant boundary dimensions that emerged from the case studies include differences in: compensation, organizational structure, access to technology, and privilege. Such boundaries (Quick & Feldman, 2011) are the fault lines from which controversies in the actor-network translation processes often emerge. Most of these dimensions look to be positively correlated with each other. For example greater compensation is found in the more privileged sections of society, and is better access to resources and organizational structure. The following figure displays the positioning of GSOs in the middle ground.



Figure 2: Development actors and disparity gradients

Compensation

Compensation for an actor's work tends to be greater, the closer that the actor is to a centrally powerful institution and the further s/he is from pure grassroots action. For example, a person operating within the network Washington beltway organizations is more likely to have a higher degree of compensation and expectation of compensation for work related activities than a person working with a smaller NGO. Respondents noted

that corporate or federal governmental actors are more likely to have and use expense accounts, use organizational vehicles, and have greater compensation for similar roles within their organizations. On the obverse side, grassroots organizations working in under-privileged areas are more likely to be functioning on a volunteer or lower-compensation basis with fewer amenities. In negotiating the constitution of actor-networks, the GSO must find common ground with either side and come up with role proposals that meet the expectations of both the funding party and the grassroots actors.

An example of failing to align with a funder can be when the GSO actor doesn't think in large enough budgetary terms for a funder to take them seriously. One respondent, who is in a leadership position within her organization, said that she had received criticism from the board or directors at not thinking 'big' enough in terms of the proposals which she put together. She mentioned that upon reflection her some of her grant proposals reflected a very frugal cost structure that perhaps did not sufficiently cover enough of the overhead costs of the organization. Having worked in the communities where she saw most activists doing so much with so little made her cautious of what may seem like overspending. She mentioned that her predecessor, who had served a brief term, had displayed a willingness to expense items such as a coffee machine for the office or dinners and coffee meeting expenses that would have never entered her mind. But she conceded that in her experience, she saw that the people that were able to grow their organizations and get more funding were the ones that didn't mind "just taking an extra zero to the end of their budget request." "And that in terms of seeking funding, that the method might be the most effective".

The spare attitude towards money and budgeting becomes larger as the scale of organizations becomes more volunteer grassroots. A program director gave the example of “So in ... (a particular city), every organization we have dealt with is a volunteer organization, so how you talk about money there is a totally different conversation than when you are in the non-profit world where at least they understand, you're trying to pay for the office and you've got taxes and state registrations...you've got all these invisible cost that are simply doing business, so we get a similar who the hell are you response from them that we sort of have with big organizations, big non-profits or corporations, that like, you spend money on stuff that's just insane. How dare you ask for that much money?”

Operating on a vastly different compensation scale can cause a disconnection between an NGO and a community. As mentioned in an example above, in the community where WAHEE was working and living, people would ask about what the other organizations actually did. The perception was that there were “a lot of white SUVs with acronyms driving around” but their purpose in the community was a mystery; unlike say an ambulance, police car, delivery vehicle, ice cream wagon, or taco truck. The disparity between the compensation scale of privileged actors and the grassroots communities can lead to the situation that even when they are “on site”, privileged actors are located in resource-privileged enclaves that are separate from the communities that they serve.

Compensation and Sustainability

Sustainability in programs is a key goal for both the grassroots actors and the funding organizations. However, GSOs are the ones that create the investment of

relationships with a community and the ethical commitment that comes with it. When funders provide funds for only a specific amount of time, there is a real dilemma about what to do to maintain programs in communities in which they have begun. As an example, Lana mentions that a particular program was started in Charleston, SC with a particular grant that had a re-up at two-years. The grant covers the costs for an EnviroCivics person to travel to the region and to run trainings and help with events. Rather than taking some of the funds to cover overhead costs, EnviroCivics applies them all to the cost of running the program in Charlottesville. EnviroCivics is already discussing what to do when the grant money runs out. To EnviroCivics, the idea of leaving the community if there is no money seems like a breach of trust with the grassroots actors.

Jolene of EnviroCivics mentions that often a primary hurdle with establishing partnerships with grassroots actors in underprivileged communities is exactly the fear that the GSO will not have the adequate commitment to stay when the going get tough and the money gets tight. If the GSO leaves when the money leaves, the grassroots organization will have spent time establishing a program structure involving GSO resources that will then be gone and will have to start over. If the establishment of the program is comes from the impetus of the top-level and GSO actors, then retreat becomes a form of betrayal because the grassroots actors suffer loss of the opportunity costs of having worked on a different project or creating another program.

Finally, top-level actors and institutions typically understand self-compensation as a sine qua non factor in participation. Government and foundation officers do not work in an official capacity without compensation. GSO actors however find themselves in the

bind of making decisions about requiring compensation and investing ‘sweat’ equity to keep a program afloat. Often times GSO actors have had to convince grassroots partners of the benefits of investing time in building relationship and starting a program. Face to face meeting have been organized, personal trust relationships have been formed and it becomes emotionally difficult to quit. When the community is doing extra work on a volunteer basis and has invested in a partnership with a GSO, it can become difficult for a GSO to decide when to leave because there just isn’t enough compensation to do the work.

Organizational Structure

Corporate and governmental actors generally utilize a greater degree of organizational structure in the form of bureaucracy and internal policy. Actors closer to the top level strata in development networks generally must follow explicit protocols, formal rules of decision-making, and are involved with a greater degree of internal reporting when doing their work (Daft, 2006). Grassroots organizations, with flatter hierarchies and vastly smaller staffing structures operate with generally less formal organizational structure structures. Those that are in place are generally there because they are the minimum required to do the work and comply with the demands of resource giving organizations.

The decision to adopt a particular status such as 501(c)(3) for American tax-exempt non-profit organizations can have different effects on how an organization is formed and how a network is constituted. Many funders require an organization receiving funds to have this status and to be able to report on budgets in a manner that fulfills the reporting needs of the funder. This status is also required for organizations to be able to

receive tax-deductible charitable contributions from individual donors. However many grassroots organizations, especially those operating in under-resourced communities, do not have that status because it requires additional research and work to obtain.

EnviroCivics staff, with that organization's recent commitment to working with underprivileged populations, has discovered the difficulty of being able to involve partners that don't have the requisite bureaucratic infrastructure in place to fulfill the requirements for grant and funding opportunities from the typical funder.

Several members of EnviroCivics discussed a partnership that they wished to pursue in an under privileged neighborhood in a particular city. The level of organizational structure was practically none existent within the grassroots group, primarily because the group committed all its resources to running its programs and funding them through their community churches and volunteer work. The grassroots actors became interested in EnviroCivics, but the organizational requirements became an obstacle towards participating in EnviroCivics's programs. For example, EnviroCivics's grants required a tax-status exemption number, which the grassroots actors did not have. Often times a grassroots 'group' in a community would be a single highly motivated actor that wore virtually all the hats is running the programs on top of an existing job. The investment in learning about, implementing, and maintaining a baseline level of organizational structure is often too much of a cost for grassroots groups, especially those primarily relying on the work single actors, working in the most under-resourced communities.

HHR operates without 501(c)(3) status for reasons including the avoiding the overhead of maintaining that status requires and also the desire to not compete with the

member organizations that make up the coalition. HHR tries to calibrate its formal organization with the needs of its partners and staff. Because it is strongly allied with the university and a particular academic program, those entities can operate as fiscal agents or proxies in providing and seeking funding for HHR. Wanda describes the circumstances of HHR's funding: "When the coalition first stated getting funding, it was pre-economic meltdown, where all the foundations lost a lot of money. And so the foundations felt good about the money they had and there was a real interest in funding human rights at home type project. ... So it didn't feel like a direct competition (with member organization for existing money), because there was a new fund, a human rights fund that sprung up, from a bunch of funders pooling their money together, specifically for dealing with human rights issues domestically (the focus of the coalition) and they came about just when we were just beginning to seek funding so kind of everyone was in there (seeking funding) ... it wasn't like member x was getting funds from a source from a number of years, it was a new fund. ... Now the situation is much different and the foundations are tightening up and it has gotten a lot more competitive."

The coalition agreed to forego seeking 501(c)(3) status at this year's meeting in Chicago with the rationale primarily being non-competition. Other reasons for keeping organizational structure more informal are to save on bureaucratic costs and to allow the organization to adapt to changing circumstances. Currently, HHR funding provides for one full time coordination position and one half-time. Loss of funding would eliminate a vitally important element, as the full time coordination position is responsible for the grunt work in putting together the actor-networks for particular campaigns.

Without the work of Beth, the work of bringing in international partners such as Amnesty

International(AI) to testify at the hearings for the closure of the Supermax prison would not have been nearly as easy. The Supermax Closure Campaign, a small all-volunteer organization local to the state, would have had difficulty enrolling a partner like AI without the help of the HHR and the coordinating staff. Many of the successes of the HHR are reliant on a skilled and dedicated coordinator working independently to make sure that the networking process occurs efficiently. However, as discussed at the meeting, without an overly formal bureaucracy, the HHR could in theory continue to exist as an unfunded network of human rights organizations.

The three primary functions of a GSO listed above are all necessary to bridging disparities in organizational structure between actors in a development network. Part of GSO's function as cultural liaisons includes the ability to deal with different types organizational cultures from the highly structured to the more ad hoc, being able to create trusted relationships with each, and being able to create effective interactions between the two. As a connector fulfilling a partner networking function between top-level funders and grassroots actors, a GSO needs to also be able to structure itself in the most effective way to align with the interests of the actors that it intends to work with in a development network. The trusted relationships a GSO cultivates with all the actors in a network are necessary for its ability to both serve as an advocate for the grassroots organization through both instruction on and assistance with bureaucratically necessities for interfacing with top-level funding sources and be an educational resource for top-level funders that allow it suggest the best ways to create and structure relationships with particular grassroots actors to maximize the effectiveness of development actor-networks.

This ability to translate between and educate actors in a network is one of the self-generated resources that a GSO can transmit.

Access to Technology

Access to Technology is generally higher in corporate and governmentally funded organizations where an actor is more likely to be provided with or compensated for a smart phone and a computer to use. GSO actors reported that grassroots organization partners especially those relying on volunteers generally did not have as much consistent access to technology; had to rely on the use of personally owned devices and shared equipment; and often were not guaranteed access through an organizational mandate to resource individuals with devices.

ICT, itself as an actor, comes with inherent biases towards the concerns of people in advantaged groups. Access to new technologies is associated with multiple membership in advantaged statuses such as high-income, white-collar employment, high educational level, urban residence, and membership in particular racial and gender groups (DiMaggio and Hargittai, 2001, p5). Not every early adopter is a member of all these advantaged groups, but the members of multiply privileged groups are more likely to have access to the newest technologies, with the access spreading toward those with fewer privileges as the technology matures and penetrates society deeper.

Sharing status characteristics increases the chance of belonging to a particular social group. Homophily is a strong indicator toward the likelihood of the formation of social relations between two individuals -- the “birds of a feather” phenomena (Marsden, 1987; McPherson, 2001). A particular individual that links several groups sharing one

advantaged trait, such as high-income, with one group (of which he or she is a part of) and another disadvantaged trait, such as belonging to a minority ethnicity, with another group, can serve an ambassador of technology, giving the disadvantaged group members exposure to and information use about a particular piece of technology prompting adoption (DiMaggio and Hargittai, 2001, p6). Societal inequalities in technological access are reduced as this process moves forward. This 'link' individual is fulfilling the role of a cultural liaison.

ICT technology contains biases towards certain types of work and modes of communications. For example email and other web technologies are biased towards discourse from a distance rather than face-to-face (Rushkoff, 2010). Certain applications of ICT and usage patterns may be biased towards ubiquitous and constant access. For example social media feeds generally are biased towards more recent messages and status updates. Heavy reliance on email in a discourse may presuppose a daily or hourly routine of checking. Heavy use of extended texting is easier on a smart phone with a touch keyboard than a cellphone with a numeric keypad. Extended talk times that run down the battery of a phone, assume the ease of being able to recharge the phone. Constant availability of electricity is a given in the United States, but is far more scarce in an East African village and may require the use of a gas or solar generator that is not always available and comes at a price.

A GSO actor working across culture and privilege must take these biases into account when designing project plans with funding organizations and communities. An agent arriving from a developed nation often carries their work habits along with him or

herself. Emily of EAD described working with a funding organization that insisted on using patterns of technological use that, though in theory were efficient and would cut project costs, wouldn't necessarily work because of both cultural expectations and because the efficiency only accrued to the funder and offloaded risk onto the community of engagement. In the example Emily described, the funder insisted on the use of phones as an initial point of contact for villages in setting up events. The funder only wanted to pay for one trip out to each village on the day of implementation. A conversation that served to introduce the service organization, discuss logistics, and engage the village official to promote the event was supposed to be handled by phone. Emily had to strongly advocate for repeated visits to the village, so that introductions could be handled face-to-face and bond of commitment shown to the community. She knew from experience that a phone call would not adequately engage the village official into taking the proposed action by the GSO seriously because there was no show of commitment. A phone call requires minimal investment by the GSO actor, but promises no real commitment to action. The GSO would be asking the village official to take the plan seriously and take time to do promotional work without an effective sign that the GSO would actually come through and deliver when the day of the event arrived.

Privilege

Privilege is a primary boundary issue in GSO work. Privilege is defined as the unearned advantages that accrue to a group in a society that often are unacknowledged by the advantaged group. It can be an expression of institutional or individual power. Critical race theory uses the term 'white privilege' to describe the advantages that white people have over people of color in a racially stratified society (Neville et. al., 2001).

Peggy McIntosh's (1990) 'White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack' is an excellent list of reflective example statements describing this privilege such as: "If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area, which I can afford and in which I would want to live.", "I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.", and "I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed." Male privilege, as McIntosh (1990) describes in the literature of gender and women's studies, refers to a similar power differential that ranges from subtle learned behaviors that benefit males to outright declared powers that are given to men and denied to women, such as the law forbidding women to drive in Saudi Arabia. Class privilege describes the biases towards members of upper classes over the lower classes, such as the caste system in India or the aristocratic system in Great Britain.

The majority of actors in this GSO study group described themselves as coming from more privileged communities in their societies than the communities that their organizations were serving. All of them were operating from at least a middle class economic level and had a college degree with a majority having or in the process of acquiring a graduate degree. Each respondent was aware of their privilege in the societies and communities in which they were operating and had chosen to work in an organization that had explicitly stated working with underprivileged populations as a goal. Each GSO profiled here uses social justice framework, which becomes a key actant in the constitution of its system of operations and had a method of confronting the issue of privilege in the constitution of their organization. The ability to integrate the social justice framework and confront privilege appeared to have an impact on each organization's

ability to effectively function. The case in which all members of an organization did not share a background in and accept a social justice framework was the one where tensions erupted and the effective carrying out of the organization's mission was impacted. The following example describes this situation.

EnviroCivics made a decision as an organization to focus their work on marginalized low-income communities, which often were communities of color. To prepare them, first the leadership undertook an inclusivity training, which then was given to the staff and partners at a semi-annual meeting. The topic is part of every semi-annual meeting as point of continuing focus. Self-evaluation by EnviroCivics respondents termed the initial efforts to discuss inclusivity in the wider organization as “unsuccessful” and as causing contention within the largely racially homogenous white group. At one 2010 annual meeting, partners who encountered inclusivity training for the first time did not fully understand or appreciate the academic language definitions of racism and were offended by being presupposed as racist. A different approach was successfully used in the following year's meeting, by enlisting a skilled mediator that took a softer approach that started with acknowledgement of the difficulty in approaching the subject. The organization realizes that the process is going to take a lot more time than anticipated and that the topic needs to be handled carefully as many non-academics are either confused or offended by discussion primarily because of differences between their various colloquial understandings of concepts of racism and what it means to be racist and the academic meanings behind the language of privilege.

EAD enjoyed more success with spanning boundaries of privilege in their work. One critical decision was to treat all parties involved in the survey data project as equally deserving of receiving the data in a useable form. Presenting the data back in the villages to community leaders was an important step towards reducing the privilege of western organizations operating in the area over the local village leadership in terms of access to data. Secondly, EAD made the decision to draw the bulk of the research team and staff from young East African scientists and professionals, as opposed to hiring American expats. Western students, such as myself were included as opportunities presented themselves, but not strenuously recruited. By making the overwhelming majority of the staff East African, drawing from many tribal backgrounds in the staffing, and giving the team leaders a large degree of leadership responsibility, the EAD organization internally promotes and integrates an East African cultural approach to communicating and implementing academic Western research methods. Debrief meetings and organization-wide discussions are forums for frank and open discussion of issues dealing with the work and informing it with an East African cultural approach.

WAHEE is a fairly new organization with an actively hands-on founder Samuel who operates very strongly from a social justice framework as well as sharing heritage with the community his organization is working with -- his father is from West Africa, with family currently residing in the same country Samuel is working in. In addition to providing an opportunity to do medical volunteer work, Samuel's initial trip was originally conceived to also reunite him with his extended family on his grandmother's eightieth birthday celebration. Samuel is very much influenced by Paul Farmer's book "Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor" and has

committed himself to structuring the WAHEE organization to have participatory decision making at every level. The West African side of the operations has a West African staff and leader, which Samuel mentions becomes a point of contention with some partners in West African. Samuel find that people in authority often wish to speak to him rather than the official country director and that he has to tell them, “Look, I’m not the decision maker on that issue, you have to talk to Amadou about that.” Because the organization was the result of a single young charismatic individual’s determination in marshaling resources to actualize a singular vision, the organization hews very closely to Samuel’s worldview, which strongly favors social justice and participatory approaches. The framework calls for the organization to cut Samuel’s direct control over operations. He envisions the organization in West African as eventually sustaining itself without him and him taking the organization building/capacity building model to other countries to start programs there.

HHR is an organization with deep roots in the academic and legal institutions of the Midwest and a clearly designed focus utilizing the international human rights law framework. The social justice framework is foundational to all the participating organizations and discussions did not challenge precepts of this framework. Members meetings were structured to provide equal voice to all participants. Any disagreements were typically in debating tactical strategies in performing human rights work, not about the conceptions behind the work. However, the organization is aware that the social-ties networking model that was used to enroll members into the coalition enacted a natural bias towards members of academics and legal networks. In the present day, the membership of the organization is still weighted toward those groups; however, the

coordinators on staff are aware of this and have a focus on recruiting organizations to make the representation better reflect the true distribution in the population. The mechanism for enrollment is expected to be travel based networking by one of the coordinators and natural ties formed through project work.

Establishing an understanding of the social justice framework and the tenets of critical race theory within the organization is an important foundational step for GSOs to take in order to be able to perform the functions of cultural liaisonship, partner networking, and resource transmission in a manner that effectively bridges the boundary of privilege. This is because social justice framework and critical race theory clearly delineate the boundary issues of privilege and provide the practitioner with the tools to express the problems being encountered, the knowledge of where to expect problems, and options on how to deal with those problems. In the cases reviewed in this study, the closer the adoption of a social justice framework was formation of the GSO, the easier it was to accept the framework into the organizational identity and to establish practices from the start that worked from this foundation. Furthermore understanding the human capabilities approach and participatory development enables GSO to work with funders to create and structure programs and their attendant evaluations in a manner that supports a social justice foundation.

Implications: Applying ANT to Enhance GSOs' Contributions

GSOs have an opportunity to play a vital linkage role between top-level funding organizations and those at the grassroots level. Understanding the nuances in their

placement within an actor-network can help them work more efficiently and effectively as a connector and catalyst. Self-awareness and honest self-assessment of a GSO's abilities in cultural liaisonship, network building, and resource transmission is important to ensuring its effectiveness as a mediating actor. ANT provides a good lens for understanding the benefits that an empowered GSO brings to a relationship between funding organizations and grassroots organizations.

The first concept that is useful is the distinction between being an intermediary and being a mediator. A GSO that can visualize itself as a mediator in the network has a good chance of being able to influence the results of the development system it is part of. More than one actor within a development network will vie for the mantle of primary actor. Generally, this tension exists between the funding organization and the GSO. The funding organization has the resources available and a set of rules surrounding the acquisition and distribution of those resources. The goal of a GSO should be to become more than an intermediary, it should seek to be a constructive mediator in the transmission of these resources. A GSO that forms a strong bond with grassroots organizations can then serve as a strong advocate and ally in the context of negotiating the rules of what constitutes a successful outcome with funding organizations. Historically, funding organizations have relied on quantitative measures such as the number of clients served to evaluate outcomes. In some cases, the grassroots community in question may derive real value from a quality development program that doesn't necessarily look good on paper on the basis of quantitative criteria alone. Knowledge of the human capabilities approach and the ability to argue for its deployment as an

evaluative measure in actor-network negotiations is a valuable skill for a GSO to have in such instances.

Resource Transmission Mapping

A GSO can become better aware of what effect it is having on its community by being aware of its role as a resource transmitter and expanding the definitions to what a resource is to encompass those cited in this text. Charting resource flows within an actor-network and observing where the benefits go is a good strategic step for GSOs to take to ensure that the grassroots community has a balanced return on the export of time and energy the community is placing into a development network. A key point to recognize is that since top-level funders and GSOs are typically given good compensation to do their work, the act of working on a development or advocacy project is a reflexive resource-transmitting activity for themselves whether the project is successful or not. That is to say, they get paid no matter the outcome. A grassroots community, however, is typically asked to make an expenditure of time and energy and is not guaranteed a result. Charting a guaranteed resource flow result from the top-level funders to the grassroots community, whether it is in money, data, training, or access to other resource connections, is necessary for ensuring equity in the resource flows.

Many of the respondents focused on time as a key critical resource that needs to be considered in negotiating any sort of transaction with a network partner. Finding the most efficient manner of communicating with, and not overburdening, partners is important to successfully enrolling them into a network. For successful outcomes, understanding time constraints and providing adequate compensation and reward for time investments is a key point to consider in negotiations. The investment of time in

understanding the cultures and environments of network partners (as well as the idiosyncrasies of individual actors) and including the question of how to structure communications and use ICT in regular discussions is advantageous for maintaining a successful actor-network.

Technology as an Actor in a Network

The concept of viewing items of technology, whether organizational, material, or otherwise, as actants with agency-potentials that promote a viewpoint, is another ANT concept that deserves consideration by GSOs. Successfully enrolling a particular technology with all the actors is often a necessary step to accomplishing the goals of the actor-network. Thinking of a technology as an independent actor may lead to out-of-the-box insights into finding the right constellations of material and human actors for a particular system. The process of breaking down a communication system into human and non-human components and negotiating costs so that they are distributed equitably among participants makes for more sustainable actor-networks. Overreliance on forms of material and organizational technologies that are efficient for only the privileged actors at a cost to grassroots organizations creates problems in successfully doing ethical grassroots support work over time.

Network Strategizing

Explicitly identifying and mapping out all the possible actors in domain during the problematization step of the ANT translation process is an important strategy for doing effective partner networking in GSO work. ANT's expansion of actors to include technologies as possible enrollees is strategically significant. What technologies, material

or organizational do a GSO's potential partners share? What worldviews or frameworks can be used as negotiation points? For example, Beth mentioned that certain partners in the campaign to close Tamms Supermax prison, focused on the financial argument that the state could not afford to keep it open rather than the human rights abuses that took place there. The governor of Illinois publicly explored the issue based primarily on economic grounds. Political science theory generally holds that lenience on crime-related issues has no net benefit for a politician that is seen as responsible for public safety as any negative consequence is generally better remembered publicly than a positive act (Weaver, 1987). Maintaining the presence of the human rights framework in the official narrative while enrolling an actor that could make the economic argument to give the governor a shield to defend his decision against his opponents makes logical sense in terms of actor-network negotiation when one formulates the particular worldview as an actant that can to be enrolled to make linkages with other actors possible. In this case those actants are the framework of economics, economists, and the governor.

Finding points of commonality can open up a negotiation and charting the controversies that come from previous negotiations can lead to new understandings that make a new alliance possible. Viewing a model or technology, such as the framework of economics, as an actor rather than as an attribute of another actor can open up the possibility of using the model as an actor side by side with another seemingly incompatible one, such as the framework of human rights.

A version of actor-network mapping exists in the practice of Tactical Mapping, a strategy developed by Douglas A. Johnson and the New Tactics for Human Rights group,

who are associated with the Center for the Victims of Torture.¹⁵ Tactical mapping is an organizational technology that consists of visually placing all the actors that can be related to a particular human rights issue into a space where the interconnections can be seen in aggregate. The network can then be analyzed to determine what connections need to be mobilized, disrupted, or strengthened to reach a goal in restructuring the system so as to prevent a human rights abuse. The ‘Spectrum of Allies’ tool can be used in conjunction with the map to locate the actors with respect to the user’s organization on a 5-zone scale using the categories of strong allies, weak allies, neutral parties, weak opponents, and strong opponents (New Tactics in Human Rights, n.d.). The act of moving actors between zones, for example moving a weak opponent to neutrality, can then be analyzed for its effect on the system as a whole. Johnson (2004) originally began looking at network analysis because of the fact that most anti-torture action was occurring on an international level and the effect became very diffuse at the most granular level that consisted of the torturer and the torture victim.

Johnson (2009) writes:

Beginning with the relationship between the torturer and the victim, a group of ten experts on torture diagrammed other relationships in which that fundamental perversion is embedded and which enable the torture to occur... (the) initial map developed using this process diagrammed over 400 relationships, from the highly local to those in the international community... We posited that every relationship on the diagram was a possible place to begin an intervention to interrupt or control the torturer/victim dyad. With the help of the diagram, we mapped the relationships targeted by various tactics and then the logical chain of relationships that they must influence in order to interrupt the dyad (hence the name, the “tactical map”).

¹⁵ More information at: <http://www.newtactics.org/tactical-mapping>

The visualization of the mapping process led to the insight that the system was highly complex and there was no one bottleneck or single point that would stop the practice of torture in a given community from a single action alone. Multiple points of the system that supported the practice of torture in a country needed to be attacked to keep the system from “self-repairing”.

Much as the New Tactics group uses the map to chart out an overall strategy for putting together a system of actors that work toward a particular goal, GSOs that hope to function with a clarity along the lines of their mission need to survey the full range of the social and material ecology that surrounds their target issues. Choosing appropriate actors to enroll in the actor-network may become clearer with a broadly based view. ANT’s process of charting controversies in a network is a promising addition towards exposing the meanings behind the actors’ stances. Engaging this process regularly may yield new insights to the investigator for better re-constitutions of existing actor-networks. This could be done as a periodic review process that looks at points of contention in actor relations in previous cycles of repeating programs.

Lastly, the actor-network translation process, as Callon visualizes it, is an interesting model to be aware of for GSOs, though not to emulate as the goal of a social justice organization is not to silence partners. Callon’s model assumes a primary actor who subsumes the voice of the actor-network and becomes the public spokesperson. This could be seen as antithetical to a participatory decision-making processes. The model points out that the actor-network constitution process can occur in a manner that mutes the voices of the enrollees. As Callon (1986) puts it, “to speak for others is to first silence

those in whose name we speak.” Indeed, one of the major responsibilities of a GSO as an advocate for a community is to accurately give voice on whose behalf it is acting. Given ANT’s focus on de-privileging authority, it would be interesting to see research that suggested a translation model that includes a mechanism for preserving the integrity of particular actors’ voices.

Concluding Thoughts

My goals for this paper were twofold. First, I hoped to use ANT analysis to deepen the understanding of what capabilities are inherent in GSOs by looking at their placement within development actor-networks and to postulate how reflexive analysis could be used to strengthen those capabilities. Secondly, I hoped that this exploration would inspire readers, especially GSO practitioners grounded in social justice, to investigate using ANT and Actor-Network analysis for reflexive analysis and come up with their own conclusions. The ‘de-privileging’ or equalizing aspects of ANT encourage me to believe that a de-jargonized version of the analysis process could be fashioned into an effective tool for reflexive analysis in non-academically based organizations. The exhortation to carefully preserve the meanings and constructions of the actor carry the benefits of potentially expanding skills in listening and understanding. The process of mapping out the relationships in a development actor-network and examining the negotiation of the constitutive relationships can serve to deepen a GSO’s understanding of its situation.

Technology writer Douglas Rushkoff (2010) used the phrase ‘Program or Be Programmed’ to get across the idea that if people didn’t study and understand how

technology worked, the biases of technology would exert control over their lives and change them in ways they do not anticipate. Similarly, if GSOs do not do the reflexive analysis to understand the environment in which their new development opportunities are occurring, the biases of the institutional structures providing those opportunities will hold greater sway and the GSOs may find themselves being changed by the system in ways that they didn't expect.

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Appendix A – Interview Subject List

Note: All the names of the individuals and organizations are pseudonyms.

East African Data

Emily – Executive Director

Penda – Field Team Leader

Isobel – Data Manager

EnviroCivics

Lana, CEO/President

Erykah, Senior Program Manager

Bart, Program Manager

Jolene, Director of Partnerships

Heartland Human Rights

Meredith, Founder, Steering Committee Member

Wanda, Coordinator

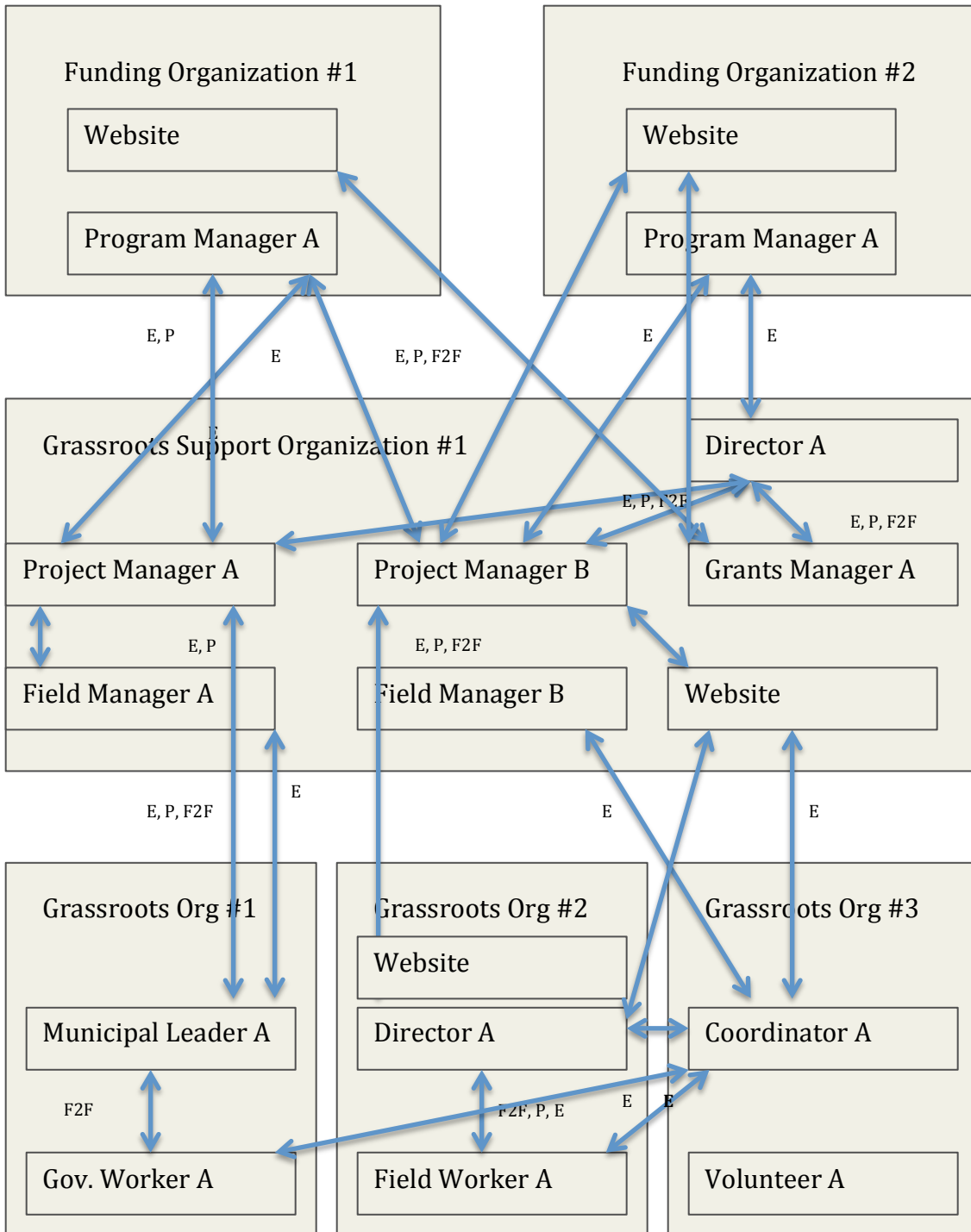
Beth, Coordinator

West African Health Education Experiences

Samuel – Executive Director & Founder

David – Director of Programs

Appendix B – Sample Actor-Network Diagram



Communications Codes -- E: Email, P: Phone, F2F: Face to Face