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Final Project:
Participatory Strategies for Non-Governmental
Organizations



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Abstract

The world is increasingly globalizing. What this exactly means is widely debated, but one thing that is for sure is there has been a proliferation of international institutions and global governance to address global issues in recent times. Non-Governmental Organizations play an intricate part in global governance and they are the focus of this study. Specifically, this paper analyzes the role of Non-Governmental Organizations as way to increase the democratic legitimacy of global governance through the democratic legitimization of the organizations themselves. Moreover, this paper concentrates on the part of participation of individuals as a way to increase democratic legitimacy of Non-Governmental Organizations. One case is chosen in particular, Oxfam International and from analysis of observed participatory strategies, a set of best practices is then derived. These best practices are meant to be in general terms, so that any Non-Governmental Organization seeking to enhance its democratic legitimacy can adopt these practices and tailor them to their own organization's functions.

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1. Introduction to a Globalizing World: Global Governance

“Globalization”, the buzz word that is increasingly being used to describe a number of world trends and phenomena in recent times has been debated and researched by scholars and others alike for many years now. It has been used to depict so many different aspects of the world today that there is even disagreement between scholars as how to exactly define what “globalization” means and encompasses (Scholte, 2005). For example, Nye (2001: 1) puts forth one definition, stating that “Globalization [is] defined as networks of interdependence at worldwide distances”. At the same time, other scholars recognize globalization as the increase in telecommunication abilities around the world, some use it to describe the increasing of purely economic interdependence of countries, and others use it to describe the spreading and melding of world cultures. Not only that, but some consider globalization to be some combination of all of the above. These are just a few examples of how the term “globalization” is viewed and studied, and of course there are many more. But, one thing that seems to be unequivocal in mainstream academia and other expert sources is, that a globalization phenomenon exists, no matter what one views globalization to be. I offer as proof that governments around the world are taking steps to address the consequences and problems created by globalization at the national and global level. The debate of whether globalization is only a perceived or real phenomenon is another subject for study in its self; the important point for this study is that governments are addressing globalization regardless.

The evidence that national governments recognize globalization can be seen in the steady progression of global governmental institutions and systems in use over the years. Not only has there been an increase in the number of organizations and actors in global politics, the size and scope of their authority has increased as well. But, this has been a necessary evil for national governments and has been arguably more or less their intention. The main motivations for these developments are relatively easy to spot.

The age of globalization has ushered in “problems of universal scope, poverty, hunger, health, education and environment,” or at least a greater recognition thereof (Dahl, 1999: 22). But, these problems have all existed long before anyone knew of globalization and have been addressed by national governments for years, so what makes them so much more problematic than before? The answer is one word: scope. These problems cut across traditional country borders, the accepted limit of a national government’s ability to act on those problems. What this means is that any true and meaningful attempt to address the same problems that existed before will require cooperation from those outside of the national government. One favorite example to demonstrate this point is that of environmental policy. A country can do everything in its power to create environmental policy within its borders to achieve a specific environmental outcome, but if those around them have drastically different environmental policies, their ability to achieve that desired outcome is diminished. As Dahl (1994: 26) said, “the boundaries of a country, even one as large as the United States, have become much smaller than the boundaries of the decisions that significantly affect the fundamental interests of its citizens”. In other words, in the world today, there is a real need for national governments to cooperate on problems to achieve appropriate resolutions. Therefore, one explanation of the greater global governance we see today is, that “the rising need for enlarged and deepened international cooperation in the age of globalization led to the establishment of new international institutions” (Zürn, 2004: 261). One other reason why we see the global governing arrangements that we do is, that “size and complexity [of

problems] make delegation essential,” and thus there is an “increasing use of international organizations, institutions and processes to deal with matters that are beyond the effective capacities of the government of a single country” (Dahl, 1999: 21-22). In summation, national governments, in the age of globalization, need to cooperate and delegate to solve the problems they are faced with today out of necessity. Correspondingly, a complex system of global governance has been set up and is ever expanding, both in respect to actors involved and the problems they are asked to deal with.

So, it would appear that national governments have been effective in their adaptation to the world we live in now and have found ways to adequately solve their problems through global institutions, right? Unfortunately, this is not necessarily the case. The governing arrangements in place today create many worries for those concerned about where the every day citizen falls into the whole scheme of global governance, and if this current arrangement is even acceptable in today’s democratic societies.

1.1 On the State of Governance

Before we can more deeply discuss the democratic shortfalls experienced by global governing arrangements, we must first present some ideas about governance, what we mean by that term, how it relates to this study and how recent shifts in governance greatly affect traditional forms of democratic accountability and legitimacy. Governance is not a new term by any means and has been used for a long time in public and academic circles but, the meaning of the word has changed over time. As Stoker puts it, “The traditional use of ‘governance’ and its dictionary entry define it as a synonym for government. Yet in the growing work on governance there is a redirection in its use and import” (1998:17). What this implies is that there is a distinction being made by scholars and others who employ the terms of government and governance. The definition of government is less contested than that of governance, and the most commonly used definition, the Anglo-American one, “refer[s] to the formal institutions of the state and their monopoly of legitimate coercive power” (Stoker, 1998: 17). Defining governance on the other hand is more difficult, and as Rhodes (1996: 652) notes, “even the most cursory inspection reveals that ‘governance’ has several distinct meanings”. Rhodes continues on to identify six different meanings of the word governance: “as the minimal state, as corporate governance, as ‘good governance’, as a socio-cybernetic system, as self-organizing networks, and as the new public management” (1996: 653). Good governance is a topic that I will return to in a moment, but we must first finish our discussion on governance. Adding to Rhodes’ observations of many “governance” definitions and uses, Kees van Kersbergen & Frans van Waarden (2004) discuss several definitions of governance from a multidisciplinary approach. In their multidisciplinary approach they identify many differing core concentrations of governance definitions. But, even though they state that all views on governance have different aspects that they concentrate on, at the same time they are overlapping some ways. For example, one similarity they found between competing definitions of governance is that, “‘governance’ is a broader category than ‘government’. Much of it takes place without direct state involvement” (van Kersbergen & van Waarden, 2004:146-147). I believe this is especially true when you consider the current state of governance, which we will come to in a moment.

But first, I want to provide some concrete definitions of governance, so that you may take note of the variances between them. One good definition of governance is given by

Pollitt & Bouckaert describing it as, “the processes and institutions, both formal and informal, that guide and restrain the collective activities of a group” (2004: 11). The important thing to note about this definition is that it is consistent with the earlier point about governance not necessarily involving the state. Many types of organizations, both public and private can guide and restrain the collective activities of a group, especially when we consider global governing arrangements. This will be significant later when we are discussing reasons for democratizing governing arrangements. Another particularly good definition is given when van Kersbergen & van Waarden (2004: 145) quote Rosenau (2000) defining governance “as ‘systems of rule, as the purposive activities of any collectivity, that sustain mechanisms designed to ensure its safety, prosperity, coherence, stability, and continuance’”. It is also important to note that they also state that “These mechanisms, usually the core business of governments, are increasingly found in international collectivities” (van Kersbergen & van Waarden, 2004: 145). This statement alludes to the shift in governance that we will discuss next. Another definition provided by Bevir, Rhodes & Weller state, “We use governance as our preferred shorthand phrase for encapsulating the changing form and role of the state...focus[ing] on the broader notion of governance as the changing boundary between state and civil society” (2003: 13). This definition again refers to a “shift” in governance as the previous one does. Another scholar writes that “many academics and international practitioners employ ‘governance’ to connote a complex set of structures and processes, both public and private” (Weiss, 2000: 795). Another definition of governance, as quoted by Weiss (2000: 797), is one used by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and it states, “The concept of governance denotes the use of political authority and exercise of control in a society in relation to the management of its resources for social and economic development”. What is important to notice in regards to this definition is that it does not define who can hold political authority and who can exercise control of resources, meaning that governance can be by traditional governments or other entities. This is certainly not meant to be a comprehensive list of definitions of governance, and really I have not even gone beyond the tip of the iceberg in governance definitions. For our purpose here, it is important to identify the underlying concepts that permeate all definitions of governance.

One general theme connecting these definitions, like discussed before, is that governance is larger than government. Other observed underlying links between governance definitions include, “a baseline agreement that governance refers to the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred” (Stoker, 1998: 17). Also, as Rhodes states, “governance signifies a change in the meaning of government, referring to a *new* process of governing; or a *changed* condition of ordered rule; or the *new* method by which society is governed” (Rhodes, 1996: 652-53). So, the common theme of governance that I am interested in for this study is the fact that the way governance is being thought about, discussed and defined is evolving, expanding and shifting. This especially becomes important when we talk about global governance and the implications for shifts in governance.

Several scholars have discussed shifts in governance in recent times in many different ways, affecting many different levels of government and governance. Van Kersbergen and van Waarden describe these shifts in many ways stating, “such shifts in governance have occurred in the private, semi-private and public spheres, and at (and in-between) the local, regional, national, transnational and global levels” (2004: 143). They continue to describe they ways in which we see shifts as vertical shifts, meaning among other

things, “upward shifts from nation-states to international public institutions with supranational characteristics such as the EU, the WTO (World Trade Organization) or NAFTA (North American Free Trade Association),” and horizontal shifts, meaning among other things, “shifts from public to private organizations” (van Kersbergen & van Waarden, 2004: 152, 154). These are important things to take notice of because it means that “governance” is no longer being conducted in the same manner as before. Governance is now being conducted by more international institutions, semi-private organizations and private organizations. Indeed, other scholars have noticed this shift also, and, Bekkers, et. al. (2007) note that more and more we are seeing a shift from what they call government to governance. This is very serious when you talk about democratic legitimacy because, “This shift from government towards governance implies that: Government is not an entity but a conglomerate of actors; Government is not the only actor that attempts to influence societal developments and; Government interventions are interventions in policy networks, in which power, resource dependency, and strategic behavior are vital elements” (Bekkers, et. al., 2007: 1). This is essentially another description of these governing shifts we have been experiencing recently. What this means is that “the shifts in public and private governance have one major consequence in common: traditional institutions of checks and balances on power and accountability could become obsolete, or at the very least less effective” (van Kersbergen & van Waarden, 2004: 155). Other scholars have also discussed the problems associated with these governing shifts asserting “the essence of governance is its focus on governing mechanisms which do not rest on recourse to the authority and sanctions of government” (Stoker, 1998: 17). In other words, many institutions are engaging in governance, yet they are not set up with the same legitimate authority and accountability mechanisms that governments have built in. Thus, you start a conversation about “democratic deficits”, why they exist and how to remedy them. At the same time scholars have been discussing the shifts in governance, you see also an increase in discussions concerning these democratic deficits.

Not only are these described shifts in governance important when talking about democratic legitimacy of governance, but they are also important when we try to reconcile with the concept of “good governance”. Good governance is a term that has become widely popular to describe, the usage of “political, administrative and economic values of legitimacy and efficiency and, in the words of one theorist, therefore ‘marries the new public management to the advocacy of liberal democracy’” (van Kersbergen & van Waarden, 2004: 145). Implementation of good governance practices aim to promote in governing institutions “more efficient management, more strategic and equitable resource allocation and service provision, and other such efficiency improvements that lend themselves to improved development outcomes and impacts. It also ensures the ethical and effective implementation of its core functions” (Independent Evaluation Group World Bank, 2007: 71). Many organizations, like the OECD and World Bank, have studied good governance extensively to try and discern best practices for good governance (van Kersbergen & van Waarden, 2004). The OECD and the World Bank have set the standards for good governance in the world, and they have identified “seven generally accepted principles of good governance: legitimacy, accountability, responsibility, fairness, transparency, efficiency, and probity (Independent Evaluation Group World Bank, 2007: 75). More specifically, legitimacy references proper exercise of authority; accountability references identifiable chains of command that can be held accountable; responsibility references responsiveness to and recognition of the role of stakeholders; fairness references any person’s ability to have equal opportunities to participate in or receive benefits from an organization or program; transparency

references how open and available internal processes and documents are to the general public; efficiency references cost-effectiveness of actions; and probity references leadership conducting themselves ethically and professionally (Independent Evaluation Group World Bank, 2007: 76-78). When one is thinking about good governance in conjunction with the shift in governance it means that we must be striving to uncover new practices for good governance amidst shifting governance. This study could be considered to be doing just that. These good governance standards are important when one is studying solutions to democratic deficits, as this study does. In Chapter 6 these good governance standards will be revisited in formulating conclusions about participatory strategies for NGOs. But, before we can get to the heart of this study, the concept of “democratic deficits” deserves some more attention.

1.2 A Global System of Democratic Deficits

Many people that have studied or observed the global governance system observe that it suffers from what is called a “democratic deficit”. In simple terms, the phrase “democratic deficit” refers to a lack of democratic mechanisms in a governance system, so that its decisions and actions may be considered legitimate. This implies that there is some sort of democratic threshold that governance systems must meet in order to be considered legitimate. Of course, determining what exactly this threshold is proves difficult. But, by isolating particular aspects of governance systems that are considered to be lacking democratic mechanisms and putting in place mechanisms to improve these aspects, we can take steps to move governance steps beyond this threshold. This deficit pervades multiple levels and facets of global governance. Zürn provides a particularly good summary of the various democratic deficits that global governance may suffer from. He writes:

“Acknowledged democratic deficits include the lack of identifiable decision-makers who are directly accountable for wrong decisions made at the international level, as well as the inscrutability of international decision-making processes and thus the advantage the executive decision-makers have over others in terms of information. Furthermore, particularly the prime actors in international politics, such as multinational business and the superpowers, are at best only accountable to a fraction of the people affected by their activities” (Zürn, 2004: 260).

Not only are there many scholars who believe these democratic deficits exist, but also this problem is starting to be brought to our attention on the global stage. For example, “anti-globalization protesters complain that international institutions are illegitimate because they are undemocratic” (Nye, 2001: 1). It appears that the main problem these protesters have with global governance is that normal everyday citizens do not have a say in policy-making at the global level, and that there are no democratic “checks and balances” on the global political system. Normal everyday citizens do not have a way to voice their opinions about global governance, nor do they have access to any meaningful way to seek redress for mistakes made in global governance. Knowing this, “it is little wonder that people who believe they possess a democratic entitlement to participate in decisions that affect their lives are now starting to demand their say in the international system” (Faulk & Strauss, 2001: 213). The real problem with the democratic deficit is that it affects the legitimacy of the policy choices that are made at the global level. As with any system of governance where one group (A) is imposing their will over another group (B), the main thing that will cause the group (B) to accept

the imposition of the other group's (A) will is a perception that they have the legitimate authority to do so. As Faulk & Strauss (2001: 216) state, "those people who find their policy preferences rejected are unlikely to accept the system's determination as legitimate, and the democratic deficit will remain a problem". It is clear that there at least exists a perception that global governing institutions lack legitimacy and suffers from a democratic deficit, as can be seen by anti-globalization protests. As for what particular deficit (as described by Zürn) is most detrimental to the system's legitimacy is unclear, but "for globalization's supporters...finding some way to address its perceived democratic deficit should become a high priority" (Nye, 2001: 1). The concept of legitimacy, and particularly democratic legitimacy, will be explored in a later section of this paper, as they are very important concepts to understand fully for this study.

As should be evident by reading the preceding paragraphs, if one was trying to study the problem of democratic deficits and how to alleviate them, as is this study does (to an extent), there are many ways to approach these deficit problems and there will be many ways to approach solutions as well. Therefore, to narrow the study down, I will mainly concentrate on the last mentioned deficit: prime actors in global politics are only accountable to a fraction of the people affected by their activities. This particular deficit contemplates the trade-off present at the core of global governance, "the ability of the citizens to exercise democratic control over the decisions of the polity versus the capacity of the system to respond satisfactorily to the collective preferences of its citizens" (Dahl, 1994: 28). But, as will become clear, this trade-off can be lessened and we can have citizen participation (albeit not in the same form or extent we see in domestic politics) and the capacity to address citizen preferences, if democratic priorities are properly managed. The specifics of the deficit problem and why it is such a problem will be addressed and elaborated in a further section. It should also be mentioned that even though this study is concentrating on the one democratic deficit, these described deficits are not exclusive of each other, but are overlapping at points. Therefore, strides made to alleviate one kind of deficit may directly affect the other deficits, possibly alleviating them as well.

In addition, even only giving attention to this "citizen participation democratic deficit" is a broad subject by itself. To further narrow down this topic into something that can meaningfully studied and explored in the context of one paper, I have chosen to focus on the role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and their relation to this particular democratic deficit. NGOs represent an interesting case within global governance. They exemplify a unique chance to inject more legitimacy into global governance arrangements through many ways, specifically helping to improve the "citizen participation democratic deficit" (how this is possible will be discussed in the next section). Furthermore, NGOs tend to be overlooked and/or neglected when scholars embark on democratic deficit studies. Before we can talk about NGOs as being one solution to one deficit in global governance, it is first necessary to explore what the background of NGOs are and what their current role is within governing arrangements at the international level.

1.3 Towards formulating a Research Question

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are not new actors in politics and governance by any means. They have existed for a while, both at the domestic and international level, proliferating as time goes on. More traditionally, Non-Governmental Organizations are usually included in a larger category of actors, civil society. As Scholte (2004: 214)

explains, “civil society might be conceived as a political space where voluntary associations seek, from outside political parties, to shape the rules that govern one or the other aspect of social life. Civil society groups bring citizens together non-coercively in deliberate attempts to mould the formal laws and informal norms that regulate social interaction”. As we will see, it is this separation from formal international political institutions that give them a great opportunity to help legitimize the political arrangements themselves. It is also one possible reason why civil society and NGOs are less studied when it comes to the issue of democratic deficits. But, knowing that this distance exists between NGOs and formal global governing institutions, what exactly is their role in the creation of global policies that affect citizens around the world? This is a question that must be addressed before a study on NGOs in global governance can commence. But first, some more words should be said about civil society and its role in global governance.

In addition to the definition of civil society provided above, Faulk & Strauss (2001: 214) have a similar definition in which they state:

“Civil society, made up of nonprofit organizations and voluntary associations dedicated to civic, cultural, humanitarian, and social causes, has begun to act as an independent international force. The largest and most prominent of these organizations include Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Oxfam, and the International Committee of the Red Cross; in addition, the U.N. now lists more than 3,000 civil society groups”.

What is gained from citing this additional definition of civil society is that it makes it clearer that non-governmental organizations make up a very large portion, if not all civil society organizations and civil society is largely comprised of non-governmental organizations. The range of civil society organizations is large. For example they can include various community organizations, faith-based groups, labor unions, and professional bodies to name a few (Scholte, 2004). All of which could be considered to be non-governmental organizations. To be more precise, civil society is the space in which non-governmental organizations operate and when one speaks of civil society organizations, one is most likely speaking of NGOs. The role of civil society in global governance then will also be very similar to the role of NGOs in global governance. Some potential ways civil society is involved in global governance are identified by Clark, Friedman & Hochstetler, and they write, “A well-developed civil society potentially influences government in two ways. It enhances political responsiveness by aggregating and expressing the wishes of the public through a wealth of nongovernmental forms of association, and it safeguards public freedom by limiting the government's ability to impose arbitrary rule by force” (1998: 2). Civil society has indeed been successful in influencing governance as can be seen by their actions to “effectively promot[e] treaties to limit global warming, establish an international criminal court, and outlaw antipersonnel land mines” (Faulk & Strauss, 2001: 214). This demonstrates that civil society does indeed have a part in shaping the direction of policy at the global level, whether that part is simply bringing, “helpful information and insights to policy processes, including data and perspectives that are missing in official circles,” or something requiring their deeper involvement (Scholte, 2004: 216-217). The bottom line being that they do interact with the public sphere and have a role shaping what is done in the public sphere. Furthermore, we are able to see our first impression of how civil society organizations in general are able to impact democratic deficits experienced at the global level. Through their actions in the public sphere, “civil society organizations have elicited

this greater [global] accountability in four main ways: by increasing the public transparency of global governance operations; by monitoring and reviewing global policies; by seeking redress for mistakes and harms attributable to global regulatory bodies; and by advancing the creation of formal accountability mechanisms for global governance” (Scholte, 2004: 217). Additionally as other scholars put it, “civil society can expose these organizations to public scrutiny and can force them to engage with certain issues they would have otherwise ignored” (Nanz & Steffek, 2004: 324). These points are especially important when we remember that a large amount of civil society organizations are non-governmental organizations. But, these ideas presented on how civil society organizations can impact global democratic deficits are not the only way to do this. The other part lies in making civil society organizations more representative of the “global public” and enhancing their own democratic legitimacy. Indeed, it has been said that, “just like the global governance agencies that they may critique, civil society groups have an obligation to answer to stakeholders for their actions and omissions” (Scholte, 2004: 230). This right here is the general focus of this study: *How do we make non-governmental organizations (NGOs) more democratically legitimate in order to impact citizen – participation democratic deficits suffered by global governance?* As will be explained later, of the several ways to increase democratic legitimacy of NGOs, this study will analyze participatory strategies used by the organizations to involve everyday citizens in their activities. Thus, the specific question this study poses is: ***How can the participation of everyday citizens in the activities of NGOs be improved?*** In order to fully answer this question I will pose several sub-questions to assist in this task:

1. *Based on the in-depth study of one NGO, what are the best-practices in use to involve everyday citizens in their activities? What are the core aspects of these practices?*
2. *Based on the in-depth study of one NGO, what are the worst practices in use to involve everyday citizens in their activities? What are the core problems associated with these practices?*
3. *What other factors must be addressed in order for the conclusions and recommendations derived from best and worst practices to be used to benefit other NGOs?*

By answering these three sub-questions, we will be able to deliver some deep insight on the state of participatory strategies for NGOs and how to improve them so that more everyday citizens might be involved in their activities. The academic and practical aims for this study are two-fold:

1. Related to the ideas of the democratic deficits in global governance, this study aims to conduct an empirical analysis of participatory strategies used by NGOs and how to improve them. Academically, there are few *empirical* studies looking to NGOs and citizen participation as a way to alleviate democratic deficits in global governance. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2 (specifically section 2.3), this study aims to contribute to the academic studies and body of literature regarding proposed solutions to democratic deficits in a way that few other scholars do.
2. This study also has a practical aim as well: That this study will be used to actually improve NGO participatory strategies for involving everyday citizens in their activities. The aim is to help do this in some way, whether it promotes a sharing and learning environment for NGOs, starts new dialogues about

participatory strategies or simply just brings more attention to the subject. Of course I would like this study to be actually used by NGOs to improve their participatory strategies, but I am also realistic in that this will most likely not happen. There is a practical aim to impact these participatory strategies.

One last point must be made about civil society before we move on to explore non-governmental organizations more in depth. The existence of a fully-developed global civil society remains a debated subject, and Clark, Friedman & Hochstetler argue that, “the explosion in the number of actors is a minimal condition for the rise of global civil society, but deeper changes should be evident in the quality of nongovernmental access and proximity to global forms of governance” (1998: 3). Thus, despite the achievements of NGOs and civil society in global governance, the unequivocal existence of a global civil society has not arrived. Furthermore, directly above I have talked about the interaction of civil society with the public sphere. The public sphere is an important concept to understand and “the public sphere encompasses social movements and media communications, and can reach into corporations, states and intergovernmental organizations. It is an informal, communicative realm that can be contrasted with the constitutional exercise of authority (though it can, of course, influence the latter)” (Dryzek, 2006: 103). It is the space (as discussed earlier) between governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. It is the space that must exist in order for the two to interact. Some scholars debate the existence of the global public sphere, which is necessary for non-governmental organization to have some impact at the global level. But, what I would like to suggest is that, “a global public sphere will hardly be as all-encompassing and unitary as national ones” (Nanz & Steffek, 2004: 333). Meaning that while the global public sphere is different from that existing domestically; it still exists, albeit in another way. This implies the existence of a global or universal public, which many scholars see a problem with mainly that it simply cannot exist: it is impossible. I recognize this and agree with Wapner (2002: 204) when he suggests that “the geographical scope of [NGOs’] constituenc[ies] [are] broader” as the important part of public involvement at the global level. With this in mind, the role of NGOs in global governance is a lot broader than just influencing the direction of governance. Next, we will explore this in more detail as well as some background on non-governmental organizations.

1.4 What About Non-Governmental Organizations?

The term NGO was first coined by Sophy Sanger to describe “the advent of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1919 which provided clear opportunities for the participation of ‘Non-Government Delegates and advisers chosen in agreement with the industrial organisations, if such organisations exist, which are the most representative of employers or workpeople, as the case may be, in their respective countries’” (Charnovitz, 2005: 2). From this first use of the phrase Non-Governmental Organization, the idea that they are “representative” of people and/or issues they claim to stand for has remained a central component. This idea will be vital in increasing democratic legitimacy in non-governmental organizations. As referenced above, civil society organizations, including NGOs have an important influential role in global governance, but their role is much more concrete than many think. For example, one particularly important international organization, the United Nations, has made a specific place for NGOs in its activities. As Steve Charnovitz notes (2005: 3-4), “Article 71 of the U.N. Charter states that ‘The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are

concerned with matters within its competence...,” and, “when it implemented this provision in 1950, the U.N. Economic and Social Council established a set of principles among which was that the consulted organization ‘shall be of recognized standing and shall represent a substantial portion of the organized persons within the particular field in which it operates’”. Moreover, as this demonstrates, “increasingly, NGOs are formally represented at international meetings, often with specific rights and purposes” (Grant & Keohane, 2005: 37-38). But, the role of NGOs in global governance goes much further than just consultation with international organizations like the U.N.

It has been written that in addition to most global governance agencies having mechanisms to engage with civil society, they have “increased their release of information to civil society circles...arranged briefings and other events specifically for civil society organizations...[and] some have set up civil society advisory bodies and have formalized civil society involvement in their policy-making processes” (Scholte, 2004: 215). What this tells us is that global governing institutions are engaging with NGOs and other civil society organizations so much so that some are even involved in policy-making processes that are traditionally reserved for more powerful, more democratically-accountable organizations in which their power has been granted by a national government. Not only do NGOs have a presence in policy-making circles, some are also quite influential in policy creation. Earlier, we talked about some of the accomplishments of civil society in global governance, but to further the example, “at environmental negotiations, Greenpeace and other powerful NGOs pull more influence than do many states” (Spiro, 2002: 166). Some NGOs also play a service-provider role in conjunction with their roles as consultants and policy-makers. Public service provision, whether it is education, economic aid or health care, when you provide a service it must be in accordance with public values, like equity. Service provision conducted by national governments is ensured to be done in this manner, and if not, citizens have a way to seek redress for mistakes through democratic mechanisms (in most cases). But, this is not necessarily so when it comes to non-governmental organizations. There is no formal requirement anywhere that would make NGOs provide services in accordance with public values. These last few statements have been bold and startling especially when one considers “the fact that NGOs are typically the result of entrepreneurial initiatives by activists mean[ing] that they do not result from a process of delegation. As a result, there is no organization that endowed them with powers formally responsible for holding them to account” (Grant & Keohane, 2005: 37-38). Most formal global governing institutions and international organizations result from some form of “delegation of power” by national governments, but as this quote points out, NGOs do not, which is where we start to question the democratic legitimacy of NGOs and their involvement with global governance. All in all, NGOs most definitely play a role in global governing, sometimes informal and sometimes formal. This is important when we are talking about democratic deficits because NGOs, given the role that they play in global governance, they are as much part of the problem as other players as well. And as will be explored later, when an actor has a role in governance, there are certain democratic standards that give legitimacy for those actors to engage in governance.

It must be noted however, that some do doubt the role that NGOs play in global governance. For example, Grant & Keohane (2005: 38) state, “in general, the weakness of NGOs – their dependence on reputation and funding and their lack of coercive force or huge material resources – makes the lack of formal accountability mechanisms for them less likely to lead to serious abuses of power than is the case for states”. While this is an important point to bring up, and is certainly true, there is no denying their

involvement in global governance. But, as Steve Charnovitz (2005: 27) argues, “there is considerable agreement among commentators that NGOs do exercise power of sorts and that NGO activity in global governance need to be more accountable because the possibility of abuse exists”. To further add to this, by making each piece/actor of the system more democratically legitimate and accountable, it can only help the global governance system overall, no matter how small or large their role may be. As a final point, as Spiro (2002) warns, by downplaying the NGO role in global governance and not recognizing the need for them to be held accountable could be more detrimental to the system.

Even though I have alluded to the fact that NGOs themselves experience democratic deficit problems, NGOs also represent unique opportunities to alleviate the deficit the whole system suffers as well. Nanz & Steffek (2004: 323) point out in two ways how their consultative role can increase democratic legitimacy: “First, civil society organizations can give voice to citizens’ concerns and channel them into the deliberative process of international organizations. Second, they can make the internal decision-making processes of international organizations more transparent to the wider public and formulate technical issues in accessible terms”. If non-governmental organizations are able to do these things effectively, then it would definitely contribute to the improvement, though not the elimination, of democratic deficits. Additionally, not only do NGOs have the opportunity to give “voice” to citizens, they also have the potential to provide “channels through which citizens – in principle from any country, culture or social sector – can seek the correction of mistakes in global governance” (Scholte, 2004: 200). The key portion of this last sentence is “from any country, culture or social sector”. Returning to our idea that NGOs are organizations that claim to represent certain portions of the public, or as many do claim, “from any country, culture or social sector”, to be legitimate they must actually practice involving such people. This will also be important to remember for this study when trying to improve citizen participation in NGOs. As you might be able to conclude, if NGOs have significant citizen participation themselves, they could be extremely useful in holding international decision-makers accountable and scrutinize their decisions, and thus making international organizations overall more accountable to the people affected by their activities. This directly addresses the democratic deficits described earlier by Zürn (2004). As already stated, it is one aim of this paper to look at NGOs specifically and determine how, by making NGOs themselves more democratically accountable and legitimate through increased public participation, they can contribute to lessen the overall democratic deficits that global governance experiences. In the upcoming section, it will be explained and elaborated what problem the democratic deficit presents, both in the context of global governance and of NGOs, what solutions have been presented and what solution this paper will explore in depth.

2. A Democratic Deficit: Who Cares?

The last section was meant to be a brief introduction to democratic deficits (I will sometimes refer to them simply as “deficits” for purposes of brevity) in the context of global political systems and NGOs. We have seen that there are deficits in three areas: the ability to identify decision-makers to hold accountable, the insulation and inscrutability of international decision-making processes, and the ability of people affected by such decisions to hold institutions/decision-makers accountable, the last one being of the utmost concern for this study. But, when we are speaking of international institutions in general, and more specifically those that have considerable policy-making power (e.g. UN, WTO, IMF, etc.), some will point out that these deficits do not really make a difference, because their power was delegated to them by (in most cases) democratically elected governments. Therefore, the democratic legitimacy of these institutions is not a problem because they received their power “democratically”. I will also concede that governments do have some oversight of what goes on after delegation. But, myself as well as others see a problem with this, in that “delegation might be so extensive as to move a political system beyond the democratic threshold” (Dahl, 1999: 21). Indeed, the activities of these organizations are extensive, the policy areas that they are delegated are large, and the ability of citizens and governments alike to oversee and influence these organizations are diminished by extensive delegation. As briefly discussed above, evidence of this problem is ironically seen in the case of NGOs due to the fact that, “NGOs were all created either without any act of authorization at all or without having been authorized to act by any set of entities even remotely representative of the world population as a whole” (Grant & Keohane, 2005: 33). Yet, as we also saw above, NGOs have quite a significant role in international organizations and global governance, not only as influence, but as service providers too. In many cases, large NGOs will be delegated power and money to oversee the delivery of services in some programs. This extensive delegation makes it very hard for the democratically elected national governments to continue their oversight and legitimize the process. It makes one wonder, how such an extensive delegation of power can be legitimate.

2.1 Legitimacy

But why is it important to have legitimacy when it comes to global governance and its activities? Simply said, legitimacy is needed when one is going to exert power over another. In a democracy, legitimacy is derived from the involvement of the people. As the most familiar and widespread use of the word democracy, we understand it to be “consisting of rule by the people, or rather the demos, with a government of the state that is responsible and accountable to the demos, a sovereign authority that decides important political matters” (Dahl, 1999: 20). Thus, we can see how people are the cornerstone of democracy and the way to legitimacy in this form of government. In other words, “in a democratic system, minorities acquiesce to the will of the majority when they feel they are generally full-fledged participants in the larger community” (Nye, 2001: 4). Otherwise, without the concept of legitimacy, why should anyone obey laws and governments? The only reason that we do is because we believe they have a legitimate reason to make laws and take other actions that constrain our behavior. Specifically in the context of governance, Zürn (2004: 260) states:

“There are two sides to the concept of ‘legitimacy’. From a normative perspective it refers to the validity of political decisions and political orders and their claim to legitimacy. From a descriptive perspective, in contrast, the focus is

on the societal acceptance of political decisions and political orders as well as the belief of the subjects of rule in legitimacy”.

Both the normative and descriptive perspectives are important for our purposes. At the heart of the democratic deficit discussion, we are concerned with the validity of decisions and societal acceptance of those decisions. Now, there are many ways one can gain legitimacy, but the most widely accepted means of obtaining legitimacy is through use of democratic mechanisms. When one thinks of democratic legitimacy mechanisms, usually the first thing that comes to mind is elections: the main mode for “aggregating individual interests or preferences” (Knight & Johnson, 1994: 277). But, for many, holding elections does not simply embody democratic legitimacy in its self. For example, some argue that, “aggregation needs to be supplemented and perhaps entirely supplanted by institutional arrangements that embody and enhance democratic deliberation... [because] the primary concern here seems to be that electoral outcomes are susceptible to influence by various arbitrary, exogenous social, cultural, or economic asymmetries” (Knight & Johnson, 1994: 277-278). This study will take these arguments into account, and the concept of democratic legitimacy through deliberation is central to it. Additionally, many scholars have concluded that “democratic elections are not viable mechanisms for accountability at the global level” (Grant & Keohane, 2005: 33). What this means is, that effective participatory strategies at the global level will have to be innovative, taking into account various democratic involvement techniques excluding elections. Furthermore, those democratic mechanisms, to be most effective will concentrate on the cornerstone of democracy (as discussed above), the people and more specifically, the individual.

There are other scholars that categorize democratic legitimacy slightly differently as input-oriented legitimacy, throughput-oriented legitimacy and output-oriented legitimacy (Bekkers et. al., 2007). All three concepts are important when looking at legitimacy of NGO actions and how to make them more legitimate. They can be described as follows:

- “1. Input-oriented legitimacy emphasizes the normative idea of ‘government by the people’. In terms of norms, this refers to the quality of representation, the opportunities that are available for citizens to participate in the political process and the openness of the agenda-setting process;
2. Throughput-oriented legitimacy focuses on the quality of the decision-making process. Relevant criteria include the quality of participation by citizens and the quality of ‘checks and balances’;
3. Output-oriented legitimacy emphasizes the normative idea of ‘government for the people’. The criteria for assessing governance practices on this aspect include the effectiveness and responsiveness of policies and accountability” (Bekkers, et. al., 2007: 6).

To have the most comprehensive approach towards democratic legitimacy, an organization or governance system must address all three aspects of legitimacy: input-oriented, throughput-oriented and out-put oriented. Neglecting one or all three categories of democratic legitimacy is what can lead to democratic deficits and a loss of confidence in the governing system. Democratic legitimacy is a very important concept to understand for this study and for deriving solutions to the deficit problems. Therefore, we will return to this subject again in an upcoming section. But, first it is necessary to set forth exactly how NGOs experience deficit problems themselves and what solutions have been proposed thus far.

2.2 Those Hypocritical NGOs!

It is not uncommon for NGOs to publicly voice out criticisms of international organizations' democratic shortcomings. But, the reality is they suffer from the same democratic deficits as well. The fundamental ways that NGOs suffer deficits are the same three ways described above, only they apply differently because NGOs are a different type of organization than the typical international organizations. For one, they are private (although, as discussed above, not always privately funded). Some democratic legitimacy problems are highlighted by this following description of NGOs: "at best, the organizations have tended to have no more than loose oversight by a board (often composed largely of friends, who are in some cases paid), periodic elections of officers (with low rates of participation and sometimes dubious procedures), reports of activities (that few people read) and summary financial (which often conceal as much as they reveal)" (Scholte, 2004: 230-231). What Scholte is explaining is how NGOs lack democratic mechanisms to lend them legitimacy. Another description of the democratic shortfalls an NGO can experience is described by Grant & Keohane when they said, "international NGOs are not legitimated by ties to a defined public. In practice, few NGOs have well —defined procedures for accountability to anyone other than financial contributors and members — quite a small set of people" (2005: 37). Surely NGOs' policies and global governance actions affect more people than just financial contributors and members, thus illustrating how they suffer from the citizen participation and accountability democratic deficits. Further demonstrating this point, Slim notes, "the question of voice is perhaps the most contested area of NGO accountability and legitimacy" (2002: 6). These quotes help to describe some of the democratic difficulties that NGOs can experience.

Some will point out that NGOs do have members that they claim to represent, and that there may not be meaningful "elections" of organization officers, but they have the power to vote with their "pocketbooks", and that, "although the constraints upon NGOs are different from those on states, they are nonetheless effective" (Wapner, 2002: 23). This may be so, but the actual demographics of their memberships and who they claim to represent are often drastically different. Returning to our earlier point about "representation" and its centrality to NGOs, and the various other points about how NGOs conduct themselves and their composition, clearly there is room for improvement. To further exemplify this point, observations of human rights groups in Africa indicate that "they appear almost by design to exclude the participation of the people whose welfare they claim to advance" (Slim, 2002: 2). In addition, the members they do have "are passive, with a material commitment that may not exceed nominal annual dues" (Spiro, 2002: 163). What appears to be lacking, in general, is more meaningful and representative participation, especially when they claim otherwise.

But, why should NGOs want or feel compelled to address these deficits? Not only should organizations feel this way in order to preserve their reputation when they scrutinize other organizations and claim to represent groups of people/issues, but in addition, "their objectives, motives and organizational form are of no concern *per se*, except where these affect public policy" (Johns, 2000: 3). As described earlier, NGOs most certainly affect public policy, meaning there is an obligation present to enhance democratic legitimacy. In other words, private organizations operating privately have fewer reasons to democratize, but when they operate in the public sphere with public funds affecting public policy, it is a concern. Additionally, when NGOs put their

reputation at stake by fraudulently claiming to represent certain people when they cannot participate in their organization, they put their legitimacy at stake. This is not only due to the fact that, like we said earlier, people and representation are at the cornerstone of democracy and legitimacy for NGOs, but also since “qualities such as credibility, reputation, trust and integrity are critical to an organization’s legitimacy” (Slim, 2002: 10). This upcoming section will address more in detail why NGOs should be compelled to address their deficits as well as the rest of the global governing arrangements.

2.3 Compelling Reasons for More Democracy

It is very important for this study to establish why it is crucial for global governing institutions, including NGOs, to take their democratic legitimacy criticisms seriously and try to abate them. Many people might argue that the status quo is operating just fine, in the sense that global institutions are not the same (in many respects) as domestic governments, and therefore should not be held to the same democratic standards (Slim, 2002). But, there is evidence that some are growing discontent with these arrangements, as can be seen by an emergent anti-globalism/globalization movement as referenced earlier. More than anything, these organizations should be obliged to act simply based on their coercive qualities. For international organizations, coercive qualities can be seen in policy-making activities and service provision. For NGOs, their coercive qualities are more or less the same policy-making activities and service provision, only by different means than international organizations. In other words, they are engaging in governance, the definitions of which we have discussed earlier. NGOs both “guide and constrain collective activities of a group” and “sustain mechanisms designed to ensure its safety, prosperity, coherence, stability, and continuance” to specifically reference those definitions. When organizations take part in governance to coercively create laws or distribute services constraining the activities of individuals, they must have the legitimate authority to do so. And as already discussed briefly, most organizations (including governmental) get their legitimate authority to govern through democratic means. Additionally, the role that NGOs play in global governance has only increased over time, and thus we do see evidence here for the various “shifts” in governance and the loss of traditional legitimacy and accountability mechanisms I described earlier. This increase role makes the NGOs’ position within global governance that much more entrenched and intricate in the whole process. Therefore, there is definitely an imperative present for both international organizations and NGOs alike to correct democratic deficits.

The other side to this is the fact that those whose actions are constrained by the behaviors of these organizations should have a way to seek redress if abuse of coercive authority occurs. In the context of international organizations, abuse of coercive authority could entail taking a wrongful policy action. In the context of NGOs, this could be wasting public money on programs that are ineffective or distributing supplies unequally between those who need it. In domestic governments there are plenty of outlets to seek redress for these sorts of abuses. For example, in democratic domestic governments, when their officials make a mistake, “rulers owe affected citizens apologies, explanations, compensations and possible resignations. When the damage of misguided governance is particularly severe, the public in a democracy may remove the responsible persons from office or even shut down the agency in question” (Scholte, 2004: 211). This is not to say that these sorts of things happen every time a mistake is made in domestic governance, the point is that when and if it happens, there are more opportunities for “affected citizens” to address such mistakes and “correct” them. Also,

earlier I mentioned how some argue that global organizations' democratic legitimacy comes from the authority delegated by democratic governments. To further communicate how (if you are still convinced they are democratic because of delegation) these organizations need more democratic mechanisms, "relationships between national governments and global governance agencies have mainly flowed through unelected technocrats who lack any direct connection with citizens" (Scholte, 2004: 212). With the size and scope of global governance continuing to grow, these democratic concerns should be of utmost importance. It should now be clear what exactly the problem is with democratic deficits in global governance, and why global governing institutions (including NGOs) should be compelled to act to try and alleviate these problems.

2.3 Proposed Solutions to an Increasing Problem

Knowing that global governance is showing no signs of retreating any time soon, and the fact that the scope of their activities doesn't seem to be diminishing, what are the proposed solutions by scholars? From a survey of relevant literature, it is fairly evident that scholars are split into two "camps" when it comes to solutions for democratic deficits suffered by global governance: the pessimists and the optimists. The pessimists, as can be inferred by the way it sounds, either do not see a reason for addressing these deficits in favor of some other solution, or they do not see any way that will improve the situation. For example, Dahl (1999: 23) states that, "even in democratic countries where democracy has existed for some time so that a strong democratic political culture exists, the citizens there even lack the ability to influence key decisions". But for this author, even though this might be the case, does not mean that we can't provide ways for citizens to participate and have their say. Perhaps if the means for ordinary citizens to influence global government were increased, then citizens' interest in that influence might increase. This is most certainly idealistic, but as already said, these global governing institutions are here to stay, so for myself, until we see a move away from the current system we must at least attempt to improve it. The truth is, without the opportunity for citizens to influence global governance, we can speculate, but we do not know exactly what would happen if these opportunities were provided. Additionally, even though citizen behavior at the domestic level could be a very good indicator of citizen behavior at the global level, for me this is not a convincing argument why we shouldn't at least try to provide those opportunities.

The pessimist viewpoint is not only contained to ideas about improving the legitimacy of the overall global governance system, but there are also those who apply these ideas to the role of NGOs specifically. Some argue that NGOs have no place in global, or for that matter any other form of governance. Gary Johns (2000: 12) is one of those who argue this, and he asserts that "the idea that any NGO should insist on standing, that is, the right to be heard in a government forum, is nonsense". There is no misinterpreting this comment; he simply does not like the NGO presence in governance, as do some other scholars. In this line of thought, a way to improve the current governance arrangements would be "a return to the old world in which states aggregately held most associational power" (Sprio, 2002: 162). Again, I would regard this type of solution to be infeasible because it would be extremely difficult to reverse the current trend of global governance and NGO proliferation that is operating in the reverse direction. As long as the current global arrangements do not retreat, we must explore how to correct these deficits. Therefore, the "optimist" camp provides more realistic solutions on how to do this, considering the reality of global governance and the reality of the role of NGOs.

Of course, the solution this study will concentrate on is NGOs to alleviate the democratic deficits, but there are other solutions put forth by scholars that do not address NGOs specifically, but are equally as intriguing. One of the most influential of these optimistic solutions is the idea of Cosmopolitan Democracy. This idea “favors an international system more densely populated by institutions that both secure order and are democratically accountable in a direct fashion” (Dryzek, 2006: 101). More specifically, this “project looks forward ultimately to an international legal system enforcing democratically determined laws, a global parliament to hold all other global institutions to account, and international control of a military that would in the long run yield demilitarization” (Dryzek, 2006: 102). Certainly this sort of arrangement would be a most familiar set-up for democratic institutions and would cure, in many ways, the democratic deficits mentioned earlier. But, as some argue, this is a highly idealistic and unrealistic solution at the current point in time for a variety of reasons. This does not mean that Cosmopolitan Democracy should be cast aside; it for sure can be viewed as an ultimate end goal for global governance at some point. Nevertheless, the need to inject more democratic legitimacy in the global system remains a more immediate need, and thus, we must search for more immediate solutions.

The more immediate solutions lie with the Non-Governmental Organizations. The framework for understanding how NGOs can act as one solution to democratic deficits can be seen specifically under the idea of transnational discursive democracy. This idea “rests on the notion that discourses and their interactions are consequential in producing international outcomes through their influence upon and constitution of actors” (Dryzek, 2006: 102). This concept heavily focuses on the power of competition of ideas to produce the discourse that guides policy making. The hope is that by “facilitating the emergence of transnational political communities and transnational communication channels,” will in turn, “improve the [overall] institutional scope for direct democratization” (Zürn, 2004: 287). Needless to say, these transnational political communities and communication channels greatly involve NGOs, as we touched upon earlier when discussing civil society and the public sphere. It has been described by Dryzek (2006: 116) why transnational discursive democracy is a better solution than cosmopolitan democracy when he said, “In principle, the discursive emphasis has always been more feasible than the cosmopolitan project because the latter requires two steps: first, the establishment of stronger system-level institutions; and, second, their democratization... Transnational discursive democracy, in contrast, requires only one step: the democratization of existing discourse-related sources of order”. It is certainly much easier to achieve the preconditions for transnational discursive democracy than for cosmopolitan democracy. It is through NGOs that there lies great opportunity to increase direct democracy-like mechanisms in global governance, democratization of existing discourse-related sources of order, and give greater public control to global governance (Scholte, 2004). In addition, this solution is one that is feasible as “a fairly immediately available way forward, inasmuch as it requires no major constitutional reorganization of global regulatory arrangements” (Scholte, 2004: 233). This will be the solution that this paper focuses on, and as Nanz & Steffek (2004: 315) argue:

“any bestowal of democratic legitimacy on global governance must ultimately depend on the creation of an appropriate public sphere, i.e., an institutionalized arena for (deliberative) political participation beyond the limits of national boundaries. Moreover, we argue that actors from organized civil society play an important role in the creation of a public sphere. They have the potential to act as a discursive interface between international organizations and a global citizenry”.

In order for this to happen and be effective, the NGOs must become more democratically legitimate themselves. Their ability to produce meaningful discourse and deliberation of ideas means that they must be able to encompass as many ideas from those concerned about the issue they represent, and incorporate those ideas into discourse coming from the NGO. The idea of transnational discursive democracy is an important concept to understand for this study, and we will take a deeper look at it in the next chapter.

Although I have said that most scholars, when they study solutions to democratic deficits in global governance they mostly concentrate on international organizations, there are some scholars that look to the role of NGOs as one possible solution. These scholars recognize also that in order for this solution to be feasible and effective, the NGOs must become more democratic themselves. As a consequence, there are many proposed ways to increase the democratic legitimacy of NGOs. As already stated in the description of the problem of democratic deficits, one of the biggest areas in need of improvement for NGOs is “just like the global governance agencies that they may critique, civil society groups have an obligation to answer to stakeholders for their actions and omissions” (Scholte, 2004: 230). So what are some mechanisms for making NGOs “answer” more to their stakeholders?

One proposed solution entails fully and formally incorporating NGOs into international institutional architectures (Spiro, 2002). This way, “formal NGO participation in international decisionmaking would have the effect of outing NGO power and advancing a transparency objective. It would also hold NGOs, as repeat players, accountable to institutional bargains” (Spiro, 2002: 162). While this might force some NGOs to be more accountable to their stakeholders in a way, it is one of the less feasible options because it involves a “constitutional reorganization” of sorts, thus moving away from one of the perceived benefits of using NGOs as a solution, immediacy. It would take time to formally restructure institutions to include NGOs. In addition, such restructuring could meet strong resistance from the established institutional structure. There are other proposed solutions to democratize NGOs that will allow us to retain the more immediate solution that NGOs provide. For example, some suggest applying a more business-like model for stakeholder accountability. This would require NGOs to focus more on the outputs and outcomes of their programs. But, there is a problem with this, “accounting for the impact or outcome of NGO work can be uncertain, [and] is usually contested and can border on pure speculation at times as NGOs try to track cause and effect between their actions and the personal, social, economic, environmental and political change around their projects” (Slim, 2002: 17). Therefore, this proposed solution, while it would be a more immediate way to provide more stakeholder accountability and thus democratic legitimacy, would not be as effective because of the difficulties associated with measuring outcomes. Similarly, another solution looks to what is called the fund-raising and administration ratio that is currently used in some contexts to legitimize the NGOs. The fund-raising and administration ratio measures how much of funds raised are going to the actual causes of the NGO and how much is going to administrative costs. Obviously, the more funds that go to the NGO’s projects the more perceived legitimacy. Although this ratio “has become the peculiar benchmark of organizational probity and efficiency in the voluntary sector...this ratio has always attracted far greater scrutiny than the actual effect of the expenditure on poor people” (Slim, 2002: 3). However, this seems like a haphazard way to hold NGOs accountable because it only looks at one aspect of how they run their organization: money. To really stimulate

democratic legitimacy for NGOs there needs to be a much more comprehensive approach to accountability and legitimacy. Also, this ratio is being used already to justify democratic legitimacy, but they are clearly still lacking in legitimacy because they are still receiving legitimacy criticism, so another solution is needed. Lastly, there is the proposed solution of increased national governmental regulation of NGOs. This would not require “constitutional” restructuring, but would possibly require passing new laws in domestic governments. But, this solution will not be effective as Steve Charnovitz notes “governmental regulation tends to be territorial but this does not match up well with the domain of NGO action which can be global or with the membership and participants in an NGO which can be transnational” (2005: 33). Thus, again, we find ourselves searching for a better solution to increase democratic legitimacy in NGOs.

The best solution involving the democratization of NGOs, in this author’s opinion, is to provide meaningful outlets for stakeholder participation and exchange of ideas. This solution involves making sure that all stakeholders have the opportunities and means to participate. It is this idea that this study really concentrates on. What opportunities exist for stakeholders to participate and how can these be improved? What are the most effective ways to include stakeholders currently in use by NGOs? These questions are especially intriguing when one considers that there have been many proposed solutions to the deficit problems, but fewer empirical studies aimed at gauging what kinds of democratically-enhancing activities are actually going on in global governance. This is particularly true with the case of NGOs. This author has yet to find an empirical study on what the NGOs are actually doing to increase participation in their organizations, the depth of that participation (donating money vs. providing feedback on programs), and the successes/failures of these various attempts. Therefore, to return to my sub-questions posed in Chapter 1, I will analyze one international NGO that is regarded as one of the most accountable in global politics in these respects, to obtain a set of “best practices”, “worst practices” and recommendations for other NGOs to follow in order to increase their democratic legitimacy and citizen participation. I will also analyze to what extent the opportunities to participate are *meaningful*. Before this study can be conducted, it is necessary to lay out the theoretical framework behind this idea and how it will increase the democratic legitimacy of NGOs, and ultimately to identify what variables impact stakeholder participation.

3. Democratizing the NGOs

In order to see exactly how the NGO solution can help the democratic deficits in global governance, we must first explore democratic legitimacy and how it is obtained. It has already been laid out why there needs to be more legitimacy in global governance, and it has also been mentioned that legitimacy can be derived from many sources. But, for our purpose concerning the legitimacy of governing arrangements, we are interested in democratic legitimacy because, it “is a political ideal that applies principally to the arrangements for making binding collective decisions” (Nanz & Steffek, 2004: 317). In addition, “democracy is regarded as intrinsically enhancing the legitimacy of government or governance because it ensures the (procedural) conditions for a high quality of the decision-making process, with respect to both regulatory choices and equality of access of affected citizens (or their representatives) in this process” (Nanz & Steffek, 2004: 333). There is a clear need for democratic legitimacy in global governance since both international institutions and NGOs make “binding collective decisions”. For NGOs, an example of a binding collective decision could be as simple as the sorts of policies and campaigns they decide to pursue. People are most certainly affected when NGOs make the binding decision to pursue one program or campaign over another. Therefore to be democratically legitimate, the affected parties must be able to have a say in the decision-making process. NGOs themselves have the potential to increase the amount of people that have a say in global governance by reaching out to affected parties and *truly* representing their interests and opinions. So, in order for this increase in participation to occur overall, the NGOs must also be democratically legitimate. They must provide the opportunity for affected parties to participate in the NGO decision-making process and have mechanisms for their input to influence those decisions.

It should be mentioned that the view on democratic legitimacy taken in this study is not absolute, but more of a continuum, not just the democratic and non-democratic (Dahl, 1999). The selection of the NGO for this study will be aimed to pick a NGO towards the “more democratically legitimate” end of this continuum. The reasoning behind this is to be able to adequately see, like said before, the best ways that are currently being used to identify affected parties, get them involved and include them in the decisions that NGOs make on their behalf. Therefore, in addition, the scope of affected parties can be quite large depending on the NGO. They can range from Western middle class people who donate money, to other organizations that work with NGOs, all the way to the recipients of services that NGOs provide (e.g. refugee relief aid).

3.1 Deliberative Democracy and Discourse

As Moravcsik (2004: 338) states, if these ideas are “not to be an exercise in utopian thinking, then international institutions should not be compared to ideal democratic systems”. This is why the proposed NGO solution is viable, while it is non-traditional in ideal democratic systems. One goal of this study is to find ways, suitable for the international scope, to move the global governance system towards the “democratic” end of the spectrum. Thus, while the NGO-solution is a non-traditional approach to increasing democratic legitimacy, it is most definitely rooted in democratic theory. In particular, the idea that including more individuals and other parties in decision-making processes will make the outcome more democratically legitimate is derived from the deliberative theory of democracy. More specifically,

“the deliberative conception of democracy views political institutions as a means not just to assure equal opportunities for participation and representation or to offset existing biases, but as a means to improve the political capacity of the citizenry. The argument here is that political institutions must not only provide opportunities for participation, but must be designed to encourage and promote meaningful and effective participation. They must help to create active, informed, tolerant, and engaged citizens – or, at least, shape such participation among the political representatives” (Moravcsik, 2004:342).

The core of this study is based on these ideas of deliberative democracy. The global political system does not have such a political institution to encourage and promote meaningful and effective participation. The closest we come to any form of citizen participation is through the delegation of power from domestic governments and the NGOs. By expanding the participatory scope of NGOs, in the deliberative sense, it is possible to move the whole global governance system towards being more democratic. The participatory scope can be expanded in several ways, for example by incorporating more individuals or providing more opportunities for participation. In the same way that deliberation can enhance NGO democratic legitimacy, “this theory claims that democratic legitimation can be generated by means of deliberation between a variety of social actors (e.g. government officials from different national communities, scientific experts, NGOs, etc.)” (Nanz & Steffek, 2004: 315). Thus, the end result of increasing the participatory scope means that more ideas are competing at the NGO level and that there is certainly potential for “spillover effects” at the global level. Similarly, “enhancing transparency and generating public debate on global governance is only a necessary but not a sufficient precondition for its democratization” (Nanz & Steffek, 2004: 323). What this means is that the role NGOs can play in enhancing transparency and generating public debate will help to make the global system more democratic, but will not democratize it completely. I recognize that this proposed solution will help the problem of democratic deficits, but will not eliminate them completely. In a way, as a necessary condition to democratization, it could pave the way for increased democratization in other ways for international organizations.

Before we continue discussing our deliberative democracy theory and how it will be able to increase legitimacy in global governance and NGOs, we must first briefly address some other theories of democratic legitimacy. As Moravcsik (2004: 338) states, “Most contributions to ongoing discussion of the democratic legitimacy of international organizations draw on one or more of four traditions: libertarian, pluralist, social democratic and deliberative”. As you know, this study is concerned with the deliberative tradition, but these others deserve a quick description. The libertarian view on democratic legitimacy is concerned with the protection of individual liberties from the power of the government, bringing to mind the American conception of democracy (Moravcsik, 2004). The pluralist view on democratic legitimacy is most interested in ways for the public to directly hold accountable decision-makers (e.g. elections) and social democratic traditions are worried about concepts like equity (Moravcsik, 2004). From reading these descriptions of other democratic traditions, one might be able to tell that they do overlap for our purposes. For example, for democratic legitimacy in global governance we are concerned with protecting “global citizens” from arbitrary and tyrannical global use of power as well as with ways for people to directly hold accountable decision-makers, drawing on the libertarian and pluralist traditions. But, the solution we are studying in this paper, participatory strategies for NGOs, and how

improving these strategies will lead to more democratic legitimacy is most closely related to the deliberative theory of democracy.

Some might argue that NGO influence is minimal in international organizations, and that any democratic improvement in NGOs will only minimally effect global institutions. To that, I would argue that by putting forth different ideas might not have immediate effects on policy, but rather they are contributing to a discourse. As Dryzek said, “politics is often about the slow boring of hard boards” (2006: 107). It does take time to change the direction of discourse, but we have seen it happen time and time again. We have already demonstrated this point earlier when we discussed the impacts civil society has had on global governance through things like the establishment of the International Criminal Court. The discourse on any given matter is instrumental to any ideas we might have about that matter. To provide a definition, “A discourse is a shared set of concepts, categories, and ideas that provides its adherents with a framework for making sense of situations, and which embodies judgments, assumptions, capabilities, dispositions, and intentions. It provides basic terms for analysis, debate, agreement, and disagreement” (Dryzek, 2006: 104). So, in addition to NGOs being able to influence international organizations’ policies, they have an influence on discourse as well. This is possible through “systematic change (that is change in the discursive field ordering the international system) can then come about as a result of reflexive action by some critical mass of actors” (Dryzek, 2006: 115). The “some critical mass of actors” we are concerned with are NGOs. Through discussion and competition of ideas, we learn more about a given subject and we can then begin to change the opinions of more people, finally bringing about a real perceivable change in the overall discourse on a given subject. Being able to change the discourse on a given subject can be very powerful in bringing certain interests to the forefront of policy making circles. One such example of the power of changing discourse is when “Litfin (1994) explains the Montreal Protocol for the protection of the ozone layer in terms of a shift to a discourse of precaution, which received impetus from the rhetorical force of the idea of an ‘ozone hole’ over Antarctica” (Dryzek, 2006: 105). Deliberation with as many parties as possible is seen as one accepted way to gain legitimacy for one’s decisions. For the case of NGOs, increasing the size and scope of this sort of action will help to intrinsically increase the legitimacy of their actions, as well as other global institutions. As we already said, the way to do this is to increase the size of the participatory base, which is why we are interested in the best practices to do so. As Hugo Slim states, “an organization’s most tangible form of legitimacy probably comes in the form of direct support from the people it seeks to help, its members, its supporters and its admirers” (2002: 9). This is the heart of this study.

Now, we can explore the specific design of this research. In order to be able to identify what opportunities are available for participation in NGOs, and subsequently analyze the meaningfulness and success of those opportunities, it first must be discussed what factors influence participation.

4. The Specifics of Research Design

The goal of this study is to answer the question of: How can the participation of everyday citizens in the activities of NGOs be improved? In answering this question, there are several factors that affect participation of stakeholders beyond the opportunities that exist to participate that must be taken into account. It is important to identify these other factors in order to be able to control for them to analyze the participation opportunities themselves specifically and to answer the sub-questions posed in this study. Scholte (2004: 219) provides a comprehensive list of factors that “need to be addressed if civil society associations are more fully to realize their potentials as promoters of democratic accountability in global governance. These challenges concern resources, networking, official attitudes, the mass media, political culture and the democratic accountability of the civil society organizations themselves”. From this statement, it can be discerned that, first, NGOs must have substantial monetary means in order to provide effective participation opportunities and reach important stakeholders. Financial backing is very important to several aspects of participatory mechanisms; there is most certainly a correlation between financial resources and the NGO’s ability to have a variety of participatory mechanisms. It costs money to run transnational campaigns, to run a website or even distribute literature, so adequate financial resources are a must. In addition, the media plays an important role in determining the ability of NGOs to “advertise” their message, as well as their ability to make it known they have participation opportunities for stakeholders. How NGOs are able to receive media attention is also important to have for effective participation to occur. Also, the ability of NGOs to network with other international organizations and cooperate with other NGOs will affect their ability to provide participation opportunities as well. The better an NGO is able to work effectively with other organizations could increase their ability to involve more people in their organizations for a variety of reasons. Official attitudes and political cultures will also have affects on the abilities of NGOs to provide participation opportunities. Based on the given attitude/culture towards “acquisition, allocation and exercise of power,” it can enhance or restrict those opportunities (Scholte, 2004: 228). These are all important factors that do invariably affect the participation of stakeholders in non-governmental organizations.

4.1 How to Analyze Participation

The last factor affecting participation, Scholte’s reference to democratic accountability of civil society organizations themselves, is the factor that this study is interested in analyzing. So, all the other factors must be considered when making a determination about successful participation strategies. This and the next section will discuss what I will look at and analyze in order to actually be able to answer the following two of sub-questions that will in turn help us to answer the overall research question of this study:

- *Based on the in-depth study of one NGO, what are the best-practices in use to involve everyday citizens in their activities? What are the core aspects of these practices?*
- *Based on the in-depth study of one NGO, what are the worst practices in use to involve everyday citizens in their activities? What are the core problems associated with these practices?*

What's more, it must be mentioned, when looking for opportunities of "stakeholder" participation, I am most interested in individuals from the widespread public as stakeholders (by "widespread public" I mean individuals from any country and from any economic strata). It is true that NGOs may have many different types of stakeholders that all have their place in participation, but I am primarily only interested in individuals since they are the key to increasing democratic legitimacy. This is recognized by more than one scholar stating that, the "source of legitimacy for an NGO begins with the individual who uses it as an instrument of voluntary association," (Charnovitz, 2005: 13). Individual opinion has more or less received no attention from global governance and as of yet, there are no formal mechanisms to include them in this process. Therefore, the individual represents a unique actor in NGOs and global governance, and an intriguing point of analysis in participatory strategies of NGOs. Consequentially, it can be said that this study focuses on internal accountability and participation, rather than external, which "addresses the responsiveness of organizations to larger systems of which they are a part of" (Spiro, 2002: 163). A study concentrating on external mechanisms would address the NGO's position in the constellation of global governance with other organizations as a way to increase legitimacy. Some of the external accountability mechanisms include, fiscal accountability to funding agencies, peer accountability through counterpart organization evaluations and public reputational accountability (Grant & Keohane, 2005). While these are important sources of accountability for NGOs and therefore democratic legitimacy, for reasons stated in earlier sections our focus is on the everyday citizen.

Accountability will be an important aspect of this study and some more must be said about it. One definition of accountability is presented by Grant & Keohane (2005: 29) when they state, "accountability...implies that some actors have the right to hold other actors to a set of standards, to judge whether they have fulfilled their responsibilities in light of these standards, and to impose sanctions if they determine that these responsibilities have not been met". The other important concept regarding accountability has to do with determining which actors that are justified to "hold other actors to a set of standard". Again, Grant & Keohane have developed a useful framework for determining this as well when they describe that "in the participation model, the performance of power-wielders is evaluated by those who are affected by their actions. In the delegation model, by contrast, performance is evaluated by those entrusting them with powers" (2005: 31). Under this distinction, we are more interested in what they call the participation model, legitimizing the everyday citizen's right to be involved in NGO actions. The delegation model would be more important if we were concerned with the external accountability of NGOs, but we are not.

In case selection I must consider all of the mentioned relevant factors. In the case chosen, it will have substantial assets and good networking capabilities already in place. The reason for choosing the type of organization that is previously well established is because this study is interested in "best practices" for citizen participation. If an organization struggles financially or with networking, it must first have those capabilities before it can consider broadening its participatory scope with new and better practices, in other words they are prerequisites of sorts. Also, NGOs that already have such capabilities will also be able to implement new participatory strategies of its choosing, not limited by these factors. Financial means and networking capacities are rather easy to control for, but, how does one control for things like the media and political culture? The answer is that you can't. But, this does not present a problem from the vantage point of this author because all NGOs must operate within these same environmental

constraints. All NGOs face the same media problems, the same attitudinal and cultural problems. It follows that “best practices” and recommendations for improvements for participatory strategies obtained from this study could possibly include ways to approach these other environmental participatory constraints that are more or less the same across the board for NGOs.

Selection of the appropriate case for this study will also be an NGO that is classified as an International Non-Governmental Organization, or an INGO. This is opposed to an NGO based solely within one country. The purpose of selecting this type of NGO is because it is most likely that these organizations are already well established in networking circles and financially, since they already have a much broader reach. This is not to say that NGOs operating within one country are not well established, but INGOs serve our purposes better in the sense that these are the organizations that are more engaged in global governance and international organizations. It is these INGOs that provide the best opportunity to effect the democratic legitimacy of the overall global system. In addition, any INGO that isn't well established in networking and financially will most likely not be able to sustain itself for a long period of time. Thus, it also follows that the selected case must have been in operation for quite some time already as well. A period of ten years will be used as a benchmark to measure their longevity of existence.

One other final factor must also be addressed. Some people might argue that NGOs do not see the need to democratize, and therefore I would not be able to obtain “best practices” for increased participation because the NGOs themselves do not see it as a priority, other than to raise more money. But, this can also be controlled for. While this might be true for some NGOs, there are indeed NGOs out there that see the value in increasing their participatory levels for reasons other than increasing their financial viability. For example, there have been Codes of Conduct for NGOs created, Humanitarian Accountability Projects, and the creation of other NGOs to scrutinize the legitimacy of other NGO actions (Slim, 2002). The case selected for this study will have to already recognize that there is a greater role to public participation in their organization. In this author's opinion, the best way to gauge this recognition is to pick an NGO that has signed the INGO Accountability Charter. The Charter expresses the commitment of the signatory organizations to, among other things, “enhance transparency and accountability both internally and externally; encourage communication with stakeholders; and improve our performance and effectiveness as organizations” (INGO Accountability Charter, 2005: 1). It is these organizations that see the value in increasing participation (as well as other accountability mechanisms) and will most likely be experimenting with different and new ways to do so. Thus, they give us the best chance to discern new “best practices” for increasing participation and democratic legitimacy overall.

4.2 Methods for Measuring Participation

There is one more step before an appropriate case can be selected and begin analysis: determining how I will measure participation opportunities to know what the best practices and worst practices are, and also how I will collect information on participation opportunities. I have identified four important indicators that are necessary to analyze in order to get a full picture of the level of participation and what practices lead to increased participation: information, input, action and membership. These four indicators represent the ways in which NGOs can take different strategies that directly affect levels

of participation. Thus, by analyzing these indicators altogether, this study will be able to identify the best/worst practices and strategies to increase participation. All four of these measurement indicators will be thoroughly explored below. Indeed, other scholars have created similar ways to measure accountability of NGOs. More specifically, Slim (2002) identifies reporting, involving and responding as the three important elements of NGO accountability. I believe the terms information, input and action more accurately describe the ways I will be looking at participation strategies. For example, reporting carries with it a connotation of simply providing information on NGO actions taken. Whereas information encompasses much more and does not limit the study to only information reported after the fact. The distinction of how we look at democratic legitimacy before and after decisions are taken is an important distinction to make.

I must state that most scholarly articles addressing these sorts of issues usually always refer only to “accountability” mechanisms. While this is certainly an important part of NGO participation, this is only one piece of what this study is interested in. More specifically, one definition of accountability states that it “always operate[s] after the fact: exposing actions to view, judging and sanctioning them” (Grant & Keohane, 2005: 29). Undoubtedly, the ability of individuals to seek redress for incorrect actions, discuss decisions after the fact and provide opinions about those decisions are important portions of this study. Nevertheless, I am also interested in the *continuous* opportunities for individuals to express their opinion and participate in the NGO decision-making process, both before and after decisions are taken. Thus, sometimes I will use the term participation strategies, or some variation thereof to describe all legitimacy enhancing mechanisms, including accountability.

Also, as mentioned previously, this study will concentrate on internal participation mechanisms and not external. This is important to note because it helps us to limit the scope of this study, as there are many ways to improve the democratic legitimacy of NGOs through external mechanisms. We have already discussed some of the types of external accountability mechanisms, like fiscal accountability. These are also important means to enhance democratic legitimacy for NGOs, but for reasons previously stated I will concentrate on the role of the individual and internal participation strategies.

The first important indicator that will be analyzed in order to measure the effectiveness participation mechanisms is information. Information must be provided to individuals on NGOs actions, policies, procedures, etc. if they are to be able to form meaningful opinions of such. The purpose behind this is to “furnish citizens for acquiring an understanding of means and ends, of one’s interests and the expected consequences of policies for interests, not only oneself but for all other relevant persons as well” (Dahl, 1994: 31). It follows that measuring the information indicator will concentrate on the scope of information provided, how often it is provided and how many different mediums are used to disseminate such information (e.g. internet, mail, etc.) to determine accessibility. But, not only are these aspects of information provision important but, the information itself also needs to be understandable to all affected people (Scholte, 2004). Understandability can be measured by the extent to which the NGO makes released information “free of technical terms, obscure acronyms, professional jargon and other specialized vocabulary that can both confuse and alienate the general public” (Scholte, 2004: 219). Therefore, analysis of information provision will take into consideration concerns of understandability as well. Analyzing information will allow us to scrutinize a portion of their input-oriented legitimacy that was described earlier.

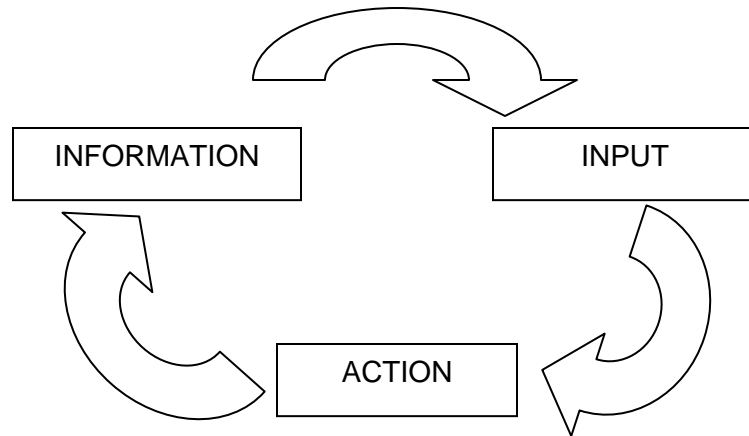
The next measurement indicator is input. Measuring input involves the analyzing the different ways NGOs allow individuals to voice their opinions (surveys, online chat forums, meetings, etc.). Not only will I look at the different means by which the NGO allows people to provide input and feedback, but also on what activities they are allowed to comment on, how diverse the opportunities to give input are and how often opportunities for input are given. In addition, not only must the NGO “remain open to citizen input and take on board newly-emerging issues,” but it must also include “those of marginalized groups” (Nanz & Steffek, 2004: 323). So, an effective analysis of input will also look at the demographics of who is actually participating and if there are substantial opportunities for all kinds of people from anywhere, with any means, to give their input. In summation, the input indicator will gauge the number and demographics of participants, the means of participating and how open they are (Grant & Keohane, 2005). The best practices for input have the goal to make it so “the views of the active public could be seen as reflective of the opinions of people in the world as a whole to a significant extent” (Grant & Keohane, 2005: 34). By analyzing the input indicator, we are assessing the input-oriented and throughput-oriented legitimacy we discussed earlier.

The third important indicator in determining effective NGO participation strategies is action. By action I mean that allowing individuals to provide input on NGO dealings is not enough. In order to have *meaningful* participation in the organization, the NGO must have some mechanisms in place to incorporate such input into their decisions, policies, etc. More specifically, measuring action will analyze the extent to which the NGO is incorporating “all relevant concerns of civil society into their own agenda” (Slim, 2002: 12). Action is one of the most important aspects in order for NGOs to be able to have an impact on reducing democratic deficits in global governance and it looks specifically at the output-oriented idea of legitimacy. If NGOs are not acting on the received input from everyday citizens, then what good does it do to try and involve more people to provide their input?

Thus, taking information, input and action together we actually achieve a sort of “feedback loop” that can be seen in the diagram below. One good description of this feedback loop is given by Hugo Slim when he states,

“if an NGO claims that it gains part of its mandate from the people that support it and work with it, then it must be able to show that it is engaged in a meaningful relationship with these people which ensures they are informed about the organization and influential in its operations. And beyond just proving and gauging these things, an NGO must also be able to show that it is acting on them. In other words, that it is acting positively on what it learns about its performance and the levels of trust in which it is held – then reporting its new actions back to its supporters” (2002: 12).

The best participation strategies will address all three indicators as adequately and innovatively as possible, because all three play an important part in effective participation and address the three types of legitimacy (input, throughput and output).



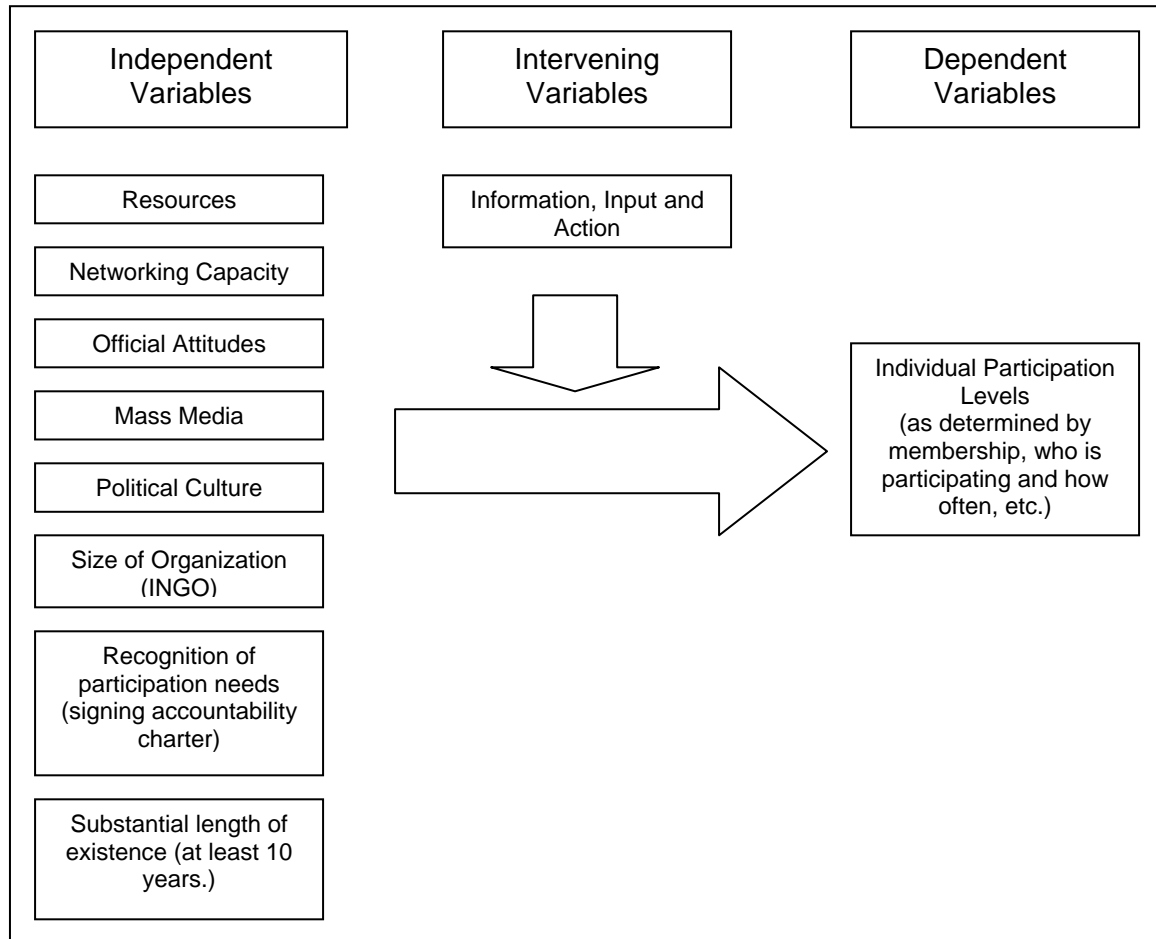
The last measurement indicator that must be addressed is membership. The membership indicator, while it is important to analyze in gauging participation strategy effectiveness, it is not included in the participation “feedback loop” referenced above purposely. It is this author’s hypothesis that size and demographic make-up of a NGO’s membership will reflect the strategies in place to address the other three indicators. Nevertheless, measuring the membership in these ways (size and demographic make-up) is necessary for this study because, “merely by virtue of their numbers, members can serve to demonstrate the legitimacy of the organization’s agenda. Developing a membership does not come as a matter of course, neither does sustaining it” (Wapner, 2002: 201). Additionally, “if an NGO has an extensive and representative membership, their legitimacy is enhanced considerably because they can show the precise extent of their support and identify it as essentially democratic” (Slim, 2002: 9). This is meant to be a supplementary indicator to enrich our analysis. Thus, membership is an overall important indicator of how well participation strategies are working and how well a NGO “represents” the people it claims to. In addition, if large jumps in membership (or large decreases) can be observed, it could possibly be due to a change in participation mechanisms. It will be necessary to analyze such increases and decreases in membership to determine any possible link to participation strategies. It has been pointed out that “quantity of members of an NGO does not reveal much about the quality of the NGO’s ideas” (Charnovitz, 2005: 36). Furthermore that, “nothing guarantees that the issues brought to public view are the most important actual or potential abuses of power” (Grant & Keohane, 2005: 40). These are both valid points and must be addressed. First, I would state that while the quality of ideas are important, it is not what this study is concerned with and is another matter for future study. This study is focused on enhancing democratic legitimacy of NGOs through an empirical analysis of an existing prominent NGO to obtain best and worst practices to improve overall citizen participatory strategies. Moreover, I also recognize that membership alone does not give a thorough understanding of participation, which is why it is taken together with the other three indicators. It also follows that while individuals participating in NGOs might not bring up the “most important” abuses, that we should not deprive them of the opportunity to voice whatever they perceive as abuse or any other opinion and try to improve upon those opportunities. In other words, while I recognize that there certainly is a potential for ideas and opinions that are brought to the forefront by individuals to be wrong, that it doesn’t mean we shouldn’t strive to improve participatory mechanisms altogether.

By recognizing all factors that affect citizen participation in NGOs and by analyzing our four indicators of information, input, action and membership we will be able to answer two of our sub-research questions pertaining to best/worst practices and the core components behind those practices. The answer to the last research question: *What other factors must be addressed in order for the conclusions and recommendations derived from best and worst practices to be used to benefit other NGOs?* will become evident after the other two sub-questions are answered.

The last point that must be addressed before we can begin introducing our case study and analyzing it, is how I will go about collecting information on the various indicators. First, and foremost, I will try to conduct interviews with various NGO employees to directly ask about participatory strategies in place. I have designed a questionnaire that will be posed to the case-study organization to obtain more information on the indicators. For a copy of this questionnaire, please see Appendix A. If NGO employees are not able to answer my questionnaire (or also in addition to the questionnaire), I will be conducting research on participatory strategies that I am able to observe from their website and other important organizational documents. If this does turn out to be the case, the study will still be able to draw meaningful conclusions. The reason for this is because if I am not able to observe the participatory strategies in place, then neither will the everyday citizen that we are concerned with (which would be an important finding in itself).

5. Oxfam International

Now having discussed all factors affecting participation and how I will measure participation mechanisms to derive best and worst practices, it is time to discuss the case that will be put to analysis, Oxfam International. The following diagram is meant to be a summation of all factors and indicators important to our study to see how they all fit together as they were described in the previous chapter. This is important to visualize in fully comprehending why Oxfam International was chosen and how it fits into the previous outlined criteria for a good case.



Oxfam International has been selected because of several reasons. Firstly, it has significant resources at its disposal, and in 2006 program expenditures totaled \$638.25 million (USD), which demonstrates this fact (Oxfam International, 2006a). Additionally, resources appear to be on the rise when one looks at the 2005 program expenditures totaling \$528.03 million (Oxfam International, 2005a). From looking at these numbers, surely it meets the first criteria of sufficient resources. Secondly, it has very good networking capabilities. For one, Oxfam International is actually a “confederation of 13 independent organizations” (Oxfam International, 2006a: 2). This shows that Oxfam International is already based on a networking principle of sorts. Further illustrating this point, the Netherlands branch of Oxfam, Oxfam Novib (Nederlandse Organisatie voor

International Bijstand), worked with more than 830 organizations and local initiatives in 2006 (Oxfam Novib, 2008). This certainly demonstrates their ability to network. Third, Oxfam International more than qualifies as an INGO with 13 branches throughout the world. Fourth, it has fully recognized the deeper role of individual participation in their organization and the necessity to enhance democratic legitimacy. As proof, in 2006, Oxfam International signed the INGO Accountability Charter referenced earlier as a formal acknowledgement of this (Oxfam International, 2008a). Moreover, in 2006 they also cooperated with One World Trust when it analyzed Oxfam International in its Global Accountability Report (Oxfam International, 2008a). Not only that, but in its Rules of Procedure, it states,

“The constant search for better practice is developed as part of the organizational culture of the Oxfams and is facilitated in local organizations / structures. This involves using and developing participatory processes and instruments at different levels: strategic renewal, planning, monitoring, (self) audit of organizations, programs and projects, (self) evaluation, external evaluations and impact assessment. Linking and learning across projects, organizations and countries should be stimulated” (Oxfam International, 2001: 10)

This demonstrates that Oxfam has deep understanding and appreciation for participation of the public and striving for best practices to stimulate that participation. The fifth and final reason for selecting Oxfam International is that it has been in existence for more than 10 years, since 1995 (Oxfam International, 2008a). Also, the 13 organizations that comprise Oxfam have been in existence for even longer. For example, Oxfam Novib was formed in 1956 (Oxfam Novib, 2008). By selecting an organization with all of these characteristics, I am controlling for many factors that could influence participation mechanisms outside of what I am trying to analyze. In addition, as I already stated, official attitudes, mass media and political cultures are environmental factors that cannot be controlled for, but successful participation mechanisms could possibly address these factors.

5.1 Background

As already stated, Oxfam International is an affiliation of 13 Oxfam branches all over the world. These branches are located in Canada, United States, Great Britain, Ireland, The Netherlands, Germany, France, Spain, Belgium, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and the Canadian province of Quebec. But, all are part of Oxfam International the overall coordinating organization. Each branch has its own programs and goals specifically targeted to the region it operates in. At the same time, all actions are reported to Oxfam International, analyzed, scrutinized and approved by the “mother” organization. Oxfam International has one set of rules, regulations and operating procedures that governs all Oxfam actions and all affiliates must abide by it. In addition they have one set of over-arching goals, strategies and guidelines that each branch must follow. These policies are all spelled out in the Constitution, Code of Conduct and Rules of Procedure that each branch has mutually agreed upon and any new branch wishing to join Oxfam International must also agree upon before entering.

In order to obtain a clear picture of Oxfam International, it is necessary to know about what type of NGO they are and what international topics are of concern to them. As stated in the Oxfam International Constitution (2005b: 1) their mission is:

*“a. to relieve poverty, combat distress and alleviate suffering in any part of the world regardless of race, gender, creed or political convictions;
b. to research the causes and effects of poverty, distress and suffering and to educate the general public and decision-makers as to the same;
c. with a view to the objects set forth under a. and b. to work as an international partnership of goodwill”*

One can see how this organization is targeted to “filling the gap” on the fight against poverty that transcends national borders, a problem of “universal scope” that governments as one territorial entity cannot address, as described in the part 1 of this paper. In fact, Oxfam International recognizes that this is their role within global governance and in the INGO Accountability Charter they signed, it states, “We can often address problems and issues that governments and others are unable or unwilling to address on their own. Through constructive challenge, we seek to promote good governance and foster progress towards our goals” (2005b: 1). From this statement it can also be inferred that organizations that signed this Accountability Charter, such as Oxfam International, see the added value of their organization to global governance not by just mitigating international universal problems, but also by encouraging better global governance through their existence and their use of good practices. Beyond these common goals and missions, as already stated each branch pursues these duties as they see fit, in accordance with Oxfam guidelines and operating procedures. Thus, there are many programs, targeting a wide variety of issues all aiming to alleviate poverty in a given region, city or town. Some major campaigns include, Make Trade Fair, Health & Education for All and Control Arms.

The final piece of background information that must be known in order to proceed with the analysis is how the authoritative and decision making bodies of Oxfam International operate. The main decision-making body is the Board, comprised of the Board of Trustees and the Chair who is elected by “voting trustees” (Oxfam International, 2005b). The Board of Trustees is consists of both “voting trustees” and “non-voting trustees” one of each appointed by each Oxfam branch (Oxfam International, 2005b). There is an annual meeting of the Board and an annual general meeting, involving only the trustees. Although, additional meetings may be called at any time by “written request of not less than 30% of the Voting Trustees to the Chair” (Oxfam International, 2001: 1). The Board has very extensive and broad powers over the entire organization ranging from approval of annual budgets and hiring the executive director to policy formation and designation of auditors for evaluation (Oxfam International, 2005b).

This summation is meant to provide a brief overview into Oxfam’s mission and organizational structure that is necessary to conduct a full analysis of their participatory mechanisms. It is necessary to know the context in which the participatory mechanisms operate. Now that we know that context, we can continue with our analysis of Oxfam International.

5.2 Observed Information, Input and Action

Our first area of analysis consists of observed tactics used by Oxfam International to disseminate important information about its activities to stakeholders and any other interested person. I will state here that I tried to contact Oxfam International, as well as branch employees to have them answer my questionnaire as I discussed in the last

chapter in order to contribute to research for my analysis. But, after many attempts at contact, they have only responded stating they cannot answer personal inquiries for persons conducting research because they receive so many requests regularly. One Oxfam Branch, Oxfam Novib (the Netherlands) did have a representative agree to take the questionnaire, but no completed survey was ever returned even after several reminders. However, as I also stated earlier, this is not a hindrance because if I want to know what the best ways are to involve the general public in NGO activities, these participatory mechanisms must be observable to the general public (otherwise they would not be effective). So, while it would have been nice to receive some actual input from Oxfam, the analysis is still able to be conducted.

Oxfam, in the INGO Accountability Charter they signed, appears to be very dedicated to publishing information about its activities to any person who might want it. The Charter states, "We are committed to openness, transparency and honesty about our structures, mission, policies and activities. We will communicate actively to stakeholders about ourselves, and make information publicly available" (2005b: 3). Indeed, Oxfam seems to be very dedicated to openness and transparency upon examination. Their website contains a whole wealth of information on all of their projects and policies. They publish an annual report that is posted on the website. In addition, several previous years of annual reports are also easily accessed online. Also, the Constitution, Code of Conduct, Rules of Procedure and other related documents are easily accessible online. Not only are these important organizational documents available, but also Oxfam "submit[s] its accounts annually to a registered, independent auditor and freely allow[s] public inspection of the auditor's report; (Oxfam International, 2003: 4). I was easily able to find one such independent evaluation entitled "Promises to Keep" which evaluated the strategic plan "Towards Global Equity" enacted in 2000. Additionally, Oxfam updates its website daily with related news and events, and also individuals can sign up for a monthly emailed newsletter for free.

By far, the most innovative techniques for dispersing information involve their website and internet technology. Oxfam makes use of some unique techniques to get information about their organization out to the general public. For example, they post videos of their work on the website YouTube, they share photos of their work on the website Flickr and they have created "groups" on social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace that individuals can join. Also, individuals can subscribe to Oxfam's RSS (really simple syndication) feed and it automatically keeps interested individuals updated on any new content published on the Oxfam website. Furthermore, Oxfam has created what they call "Oxfam Ambassadors" that are high-profile personalities that take [Oxfam's] message around the world," including, the band Coldplay, and actresses Scarlett Johansson and Minnie Driver (Oxfam International, 2008a:1). These techniques are unique and creative and it appears that any effective NGO should employ diverse internet-based strategies to get people involved. Appealing to popular culture with the use of celebrities also proves effective for interesting people in Oxfam's work.

One further issue that must be addressed with respect to provision of information is who is able to access the information and how understandable this information is. There appears to be a clear bias towards providing information to those with computers. The resources and information available that are web-based are immense. But, even though I was unable to speak with an Oxfam representative regarding my research, I was able to call Oxfam America to inquire about how one would get information on Oxfam if a person didn't have access to a computer. What I found out is that the only way to

receive information in a way other than the internet (e.g. through the mail) on a regular basis is to become a member, which at least for Oxfam America requires a one-time donation of \$20-25 (USD). While this might seem a nominal amount, it also appears that they are excluding a large group of individuals from participating by requiring a monetary donation to receive information through the mail. Ironically, I believe those individuals who don't have access to computers are also those who might not be able to afford such a donation, no matter how nominal. From the view of this author, they are alienating an important demographic of people from participating in Oxfam's activities by having information delivery set up in this manner. It appears the statement quoted earlier saying that NGOs sometimes "by design" exclude the very people they claim to represent has some truth to it.

When it comes to the understandability of information, some is very easy to understand, but some is not. Although all operating documents like the Rules of Procedure are published and easily accessible online, they do make use of legal terminology that some individuals might have a hard time understanding. On the other hand, Oxfam explains their campaigns in a relatively understandable way. For example, for their "Make Trade Fair" campaign they came up with an innovative way to articulate complicated Fair Trade Agreements and Policies. They instituted a series of interactive diagrams that take viewers step-by-step through these complex concepts. This is most certainly a useful tool for NGOs to use to make information understandable to all people. Of course again, this was only a web-based tool.

It should also be noted that while there is a great deal of information released by Oxfam, in the Code of Conduct, it states, "Affiliates will consult with other Affiliates likely to be affected before publishing information, research or views which are critical of the government of another Affiliate or of the government of a country in which other Affiliates have programmes and which might impact upon the safety of their staff" (Oxfam International, 2003: 2). While I could not discern any detectable impact of this policy, it certainly seems that there could be some information that is withheld on some level. At that, it could be information that would adversely impact Oxfam's image. For individuals to be able to form meaningful opinions about Oxfam, they need to have access to all information, even if it portrays Oxfam in a negative manner.

With good information, individuals can then form educated opinions about Oxfam's activities and policies. This brings us to the next issue for analysis, input. From the INGO Accountability Charter, it appears, just like information provision, they are dedicated to providing ways for people to comment on their programs and actions. In the Accountability Charter, it asserts that "We will listen to stakeholders' suggestions on how we can improve our work and will encourage inputs by people whose interests may be directly affected. We will also make it easy for the public to comment on our programmes and policies" (2005: 4). This holds true, to a certain extent. For example, any person can contact any branch by email and voice their approval, criticism, concerns, questions or any other comment. In addition, any person is invited to comment on blog stories posted on Oxfam's website for everyone to see, read and discuss. But, this seems to be problematic, in that there were very few comments being posted by readers on the blogs. So, I am unable to determine whether people are viewing the blog and just not commenting or not viewing the blog at all. What is clear is, there needs to be a better way or perhaps more advertisement of these blogs and how to comment on them. Also, in order to comment about an independent evaluation conducted on Oxfam, people must to "log in" or "register" on the website to voice an

opinion. This requires a valid email address, thus the same sort of computer bias exists here as well that we saw with the information indicator. People can write letters and mail their opinions to Oxfam, but with all the information located online about activities (not to mention addresses of where one might send a letter), it appears to be more difficult to not only form educated opinions, but to voice those opinions without a computer. Nevertheless, if one was really motivated, it could be done. It appears that barriers to participation via computers should be addressed by Oxfam. Indeed these biases have been identified in an evaluation on Oxfam and it states as follows:

“The evaluation notes that Oxfam remains predominantly Euro-centric and Anglophone and recommends that the question of Oxfam’s identity deserves more attention” (Oxfam International, 2006b: 6).

To this statement, I would add that it is also upper/middle class-centric as it is the upper/middle classes and Euro/Anglophone countries that predominantly have access to computers or have the monetary resources to pay membership fees to receive Oxfam news by regular mail. This gets to the heart of some of the issues discussed earlier that NGOs need to be responsive to stakeholders, especially to those they claim to represent. Oxfam certainly claims to represent the lower, economically disadvantaged classes of people. Yet, the easiest, least-expensive ways of participating in Oxfam’s various activities are often not available to those people. But, to the credit of Oxfam, in their published response to this evaluation, they recognize these tendencies and state that Oxfam wants to, “Improve understanding and practice of Accountability to “beneficiaries”, especially to women – putting their needs and participation at the centre of our approach and linking this to more effective monitoring and evaluation” (Oxfam International, 2006c: 11). This certainly sounds promising for the future and demonstrates the dedication of Oxfam to actually “acting” on input received, which is our third indicator.

Additionally, there is no formal way for individuals to participate in actual policy creation and direction of Oxfam. Nowhere could I find guidelines for including input in the direction of policy and action taken. As discussed earlier, the Board is the primary decision-making body for Oxfam International and they have very broad powers over the organization including, to “represent the Foundation, decide its overall management and formulate its policies and the programme of common activities” (Oxfam International, 2005b: 4). With such important and extensive powers over the organization, a good practice would to have some formal way to include members, such as giving them voting rights to elect some board members or a veto-power of some sort. This could help distribute the power within the organization to ensure correct and non-abusive use of power. Yet, I could not observe any way that the everyday citizen could impact policy-making short of being able to voice an opinion. There was no formal mechanism stating the necessity of including that input in Board decisions taken. This impacts our input indicator as well as the action indicator that will be discussed below.

Finally, we come to the analysis of how Oxfam takes action based on input from individuals. Oxfam appears to be very dedicated in absorbing input, particularly negative input, and taking action to rectify that negative comment. There are comprehensive guidelines set forth in the Board Accountability Policies for dealing with and responding to criticism. For example a portion of the accountability policy document reads:

“Oxfam believes that any stakeholder has the right to raise a complaint, have that

complaint addressed and receive a response for mistakes, wrongful actions or breaches of the codes to which OI and its affiliates subscribe. The OI website will provide information to stakeholders on how to make a complaint either about OI activities or affiliate activities...All complaints should be addressed to the Executive Director in writing by email or mail. OI will endeavour to assess and respond to complaints in writing as quickly as possible (preferably within 2 weeks). Complainants will be kept informed of delays to investigation of an issue (e.g. due to unavailability of relevant staff, etc), or where it has been referred to an affiliate..." (Oxfam International, 2006d: 3).

The document continues to spell out formalities of complaint procedures. I have not been able to obtain information regarding how effective these policies are, but having a comprehensive plan like this in place creates a place for incorporating input into future Oxfam actions. Simultaneously, we see again the same computer-based bias as evidenced by the reference to complaint-making procedures being published online.

5.3 A word on Membership

Membership numbers, fluctuation of numbers and membership demographics are not widely published by Oxfam. This is troubling when you consider how the size and demographic make-up can enhance legitimacy if they are both numerous and diverse. This leads me to make one of two conclusions: first, their membership is either not large and/or diverse; or second, they do not see it important to publish this sort of information. Even if it would be detrimental to Oxfam to publish this information, I would argue they should still do it in the spirit of transparency. One more important thing to note about membership is that there is a one-time initial membership fee that must be paid. This will inevitably alienate a portion of the population that would have otherwise become members. However, it is also true that if one has a computer, membership is not necessary to meaningfully participate in and learn about Oxfam International. It could be argued that not having full access to membership information would hinder determining best/worst practices, but on the contrary, I have been able to determine many best and worst practices based on the analysis of observed participatory strategies and on the independent evaluation discussed above.

Moreover, from what I can tell, the demographics of their membership and the demographics of the population they claim to represent are different, just based on what I do know about how one becomes a member. How much different, I cannot say. This is certainly an area that needs to be improved upon as well as access to information regarding membership. Additionally, it appears that more attention needs to be paid to getting members to actually participate and not just "passively participate" in monetary means, like discussed earlier.

6. Conclusions & Recommendations: Multi-Media, Popular Culture, Formalization of Citizen Input and Attention to Representation Make-Up

We first set out in this paper in a quest to reduce democratic deficits in global governance through increasing NGO legitimacy by identifying effective/ineffective participation mechanisms of involving the general public in their activities to help improve overall citizen participation. We saw that there was much room for NGOs to democratize subsequent to discussing some of the general criticisms of NGO legitimacy. Some of these general criticisms include the fact that “their leadership is self-elected and stay in office indefinitely. They rarely if ever consult their supposed constituents. They do not report publicly on their activities” (Scholte, 2004: 231). The list goes on like this, but the point is that some organizations handle these criticisms better than others. After extensive study of one NGO in-depth, Oxfam International, many best/worst practices and lessons can be derived from that case. One part of the best/worst practices are derived from the observations of information, input and action and membership; the other part is derived from a look at one of Oxfam’s most successful campaigns, the Make Trade Fair campaign. There are two categories of practices that I am interested in: first, best practices that can be concluded from participatory strategies in use by Oxfam International; second, worst practices that result in recommendations on how Oxfam International could improve their participatory strategies. These conclusions and recommendations are put in general terms to make sure that are applicable to many types of NGOs. Although it should be noted, “accountability procedures cannot be realistically expected to be uniform across a wide range of NGO activity” (Slim, 2002: 13). What this means is that NGOs should take these general recommendations for improving participatory strategies and tailor them to fit in with each organizations’ goals and practices.

In the independent evaluation referenced earlier, the Make Trade Fair campaign by Oxfam is highly praised. The Make Trade Fair campaign “has generated amazing publicity, mobilising public opinion on rigged trade rules around the world. More than 20 million people have signed the Big Noise petition so far” (Oxfam International, 2008b: 1). Despite not having access to the membership numbers to determine successful practices, the practices in use by the Make Trade Fair campaign are certainly successful. Oxfam identifies the following strategy for this campaign:

“Oxfam’s Trade campaign presses decision-makers and governments for new trade rules – fair rules to make a real and positive difference in the fight against poverty. We’re also working with other campaigning organisations to drive home the message – and getting high-profile celebrities to draw attention to the breath-taking potential of trade, too” (Oxfam International, 2008b: 1).

Among these strategies, the independent evaluation “Promises to Keep” specifically identifies the focused direct message, the use of high-profile celebrities, and collaboration and cooperation with affiliates and other organizations as key to mobilizing this campaign (Oxfam International, 2006b). This is important to keep in mind when discuss the general best practice conclusions derived from the study of Oxfam International.

6.1 Best and Worst Practices of Participatory Strategies

Before I can answer the central research question of this study, I must first answer the sub-questions posed by this study. These will be answered below in the order they were propounded.

1. *Based on the in-depth study of one NGO, what are the best-practices in use to involve everyday citizens in their activities? What are the core aspects of these practices?* Best practices obtained about Oxfam International through the analysis of the four indicators (information, action, input and membership) include, comprehensive use of information technologies, the “Oxfam Ambassadors” program, interactive diagrams, simple campaign messages, formalized standards for addressing complaints of stakeholders, and collaboration with other organizations. The core aspects of these practices appear to be a use of multi-media, popular culture, techniques to inspire widespread appeal (understandability), formalization of accountability practices and cooperation with other organizations. NGOs wishing to increase participation of everyday citizens in their organizations will need to address these core aspects to successfully do so.

2. *Based on the in-depth study of one NGO, what are the worst practices in use to involve everyday citizens in their activities? What are the core problems associated with these practices?* Through analysis of Oxfam International, some of the worst practices observed include, exclusion of certain demographics of population through heavily web-based participation strategies as well as requiring donations for memberships, no way for Oxfam to incorporate citizen opinions about the direction of policy/programs of the organization, not enough promotion of participatory opportunities for citizens, and the fact that information regarding membership is basically non-existent on Oxfam International. The core problems associated with these worst practices are the representational make-up of the organization’s membership and participators, formal ways to incorporate opinions other than criticisms, promotion of participation by the organization and selective publishing of information. NGOs wishing to increase citizen participation in their organizations will need to try and avoid these sorts of practices to do so.

3. *What other factors must be addressed for the conclusions and recommendations derived from best and worst practices be used to benefit other NGOs?* The answer to the last of the sub-questions is fairly straightforward. The practices must be presented in a general format, leadership of other NGOs must actively decide to use these ideas to improve their own participatory strategies, and finally NGOs must continually engage in an open dialogue about participatory strategies in order to foster a learning environment in the future.

6.2 Research Question Answered and Theoretical Framework Reflections

We now return to answer the central question of this study: ***How can the participation of everyday citizens in the activities of NGOs be improved?*** The following is a set of generalized practices to improve the everyday citizens’ participation in NGOs. The first set is practice conclusions stemming from Oxfam International good participatory strategies. The second set is practice recommendations resulting from observed

shortfalls in Oxfam's participatory strategies. For the greatest chance to augment citizen participation, all conclusions and recommendations should be taken into account when NGOs develop their participatory strategies, and not just a few of them. Additionally, under each conclusion/recommendation I have reflected upon the theoretical framework of this study, describing how each one, if adopted, can improve democratic deficits in global governance, deliberation and enhance good governance practices.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. There should be use of innovative web-based techniques of information dissemination and participation. There should also be use of campaigns designed to appeal to popular culture, like the "Oxfam Ambassadors" program. Additionally, ways to make information easily understood, like the interactive simple diagrams in use by Oxfam International should be used. Finally every effort should be used to make sure that campaigns have focused and direct messages.

These are all the successful tactics that Oxfam uses that I believe really enhance their capabilities to involve more people in their activities. A combination strategy using all of these techniques will allow for the greatest amount of people to be involved and for their message to reach and be understood by the greatest number of people. When we return to the idea of democratic deficits these tactics can help legitimate NGO actions and alleviate the citizen participation deficit (as described in part 1) in global governance. The web-based and popular culture techniques act to expand participatory bases of the everyday citizen involved in NGO activities, and thus global governance. Techniques to make information easily understood help to ensure that the expansion of participatory bases for NGOs is broad and encompassing many types of people. The use of a direct and focused message will also help to reach as many people as possible and involve them in the campaign/ NGO activities. These last two tactics can also help to expand the deliberative potential of citizens, by making information easily understood and the message direct, so it can be understood and discussed by everyone. When we return to the seven aspects of "good governance" referenced in Chapter one, these practices can help to enhance legitimacy (helping to facilitate participation, thus legitimate exercise of authority) and transparency (making information available to more people).

2. Have a formal policy for addressing inputs, especially complaints/criticisms.

Oxfam also has a formal policy addressing complaints spelled out in their "Board Accountability Policies". This is particularly useful when a complaint arises because there is no question of how it will be dealt with and how it will be remedied. It demonstrates a serious attempt to take actions on comments it receives. As discussed earlier, NGOs taking action on input, especially negative input is absolutely essential to have increased democratic legitimacy. Formalization is the key to how action becomes concrete for NGOs. What this means is that if formal mechanisms exist, individuals participating will be encouraged to voice those opinions knowing that action will be taken. This also enhances the deliberative discourse potential, since concrete action is taken about complaints, they have more potential to alter popular discourse. Also, by formalizing action in this way, NGOs can make sure that complaints about the larger global governing mechanisms are address also, adding additional citizen participation for global governance. Adopting this practice also could improve the good governance aspects of accountability (easier to identify individuals responsible for actions), probity

(helping to ensure ethical behavior of leaders) and responsibility (greater potential to ensure proper adherence to acceptable social operational norms).

3. Collaborate with like-minded organizations and causes as often as possible, when appropriate

This proved to be very effective when Oxfam did this for its Make Trade Fair campaign. It helps in reaching out to more people through the pooling of resources and manpower. The only catch to collaboration is that the organizations must use effective cooperation and if one organization is to have more say and discretion over the campaign, it must be known from the beginning of the project. But, by pooling resources and manpower, the NGOs increase their potential to involve more everyday citizens in their actions and provide more ways for them to participate. Additionally, by cooperating and pooling resources they increase their potential for altering discourses by being able to project the citizens' opinions better on to the global stage. This practice could help the good governance aspects of efficiency (potential for greater cost-effectiveness), fairness (providing more opportunities for participation).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Have a formal way to actively incorporate individual viewpoints in the direction of the organization/policy creation. Have equal focus on pro-active accountability.

This is something that I found to be missing from Oxfam International, but that is surely necessary to have meaningful participation. As already stated, accountability, or after-the-fact input is only half of an effective participation strategy. There needs to be a formal way documented to involve input when it does not entail seeking a remedy for a mistake. NGOs need to have formal ways to incorporate input before there are problems, in shaping and creating the direction of the NGO actions and policies. This together with accountability mechanisms will help to create an environment for meaningful participation of individuals, thus enhancing democratic legitimacy. This would stimulate democratic legitimacy, deliberative potentials and good governance in similar ways to #2 directly above.

2. Advertisement, encouragement and promotion of various ways individuals can voice their input.

From what I can tell based on the observations made about Oxfam International, these practices do not get enough attention. The ways to voice input are certainly there, as is a certain degree of advertisement, encouragement and promotion. But, this can be improved upon. One particularly useful way to do this is to increase non-internet based efforts of advertisement, encouragement and promotion of individual input. This is because most people who are already on NGO websites will know about these ways to participate. It is those without access to computers that need to know more about how to go about participating in Oxfam, or any other NGO. Additionally, based on the observations made about public comments on Oxfam's blog, they could really benefit from an increase in promotion and encouragement of individuals to make use of these ways to participate. By really encouraging and promoting ways to participate, you will invariably draw in new participants and also help to make sure that existing participants are "actively" participating rather than "passively" participating. New participants derived

from increased promotion help to stimulate deliberation and discussion as well. This also helps to alleviate the citizen-participation democratic deficit. When talking about good governance, this can help the aspects of legitimacy (by facilitating participation) and fairness (helping to ensure equal opportunities).

3. Comprehensive, multi-media campaigns that reach out to individuals by computers, but also by other means as well. Specific strategies should be developed to involve lower economic classes and minorities.

This could be one of the most important best-practice recommendations on this list. Only by specifically targeting under-represented populations will NGOs be able to realize their full potential in increasing participation of individuals in global governance and enhancing their own democratic legitimacy. This is one of the biggest legitimacy complaints against NGOs and they are constantly criticized about the discrepancies between those they claim to represent and those who actually participate in their organizations. Oxfam International appears to be guilty of these criticisms as well. While the efforts of Oxfam are certainly going in the right direction, there is much work to be done to effectively involve all interested stakeholders in their activities, and in turn, global governance. By paying particular attention to these populations, it will avoid the accidental exclusion by design that exists now (as seen in the computer-bias associated with Oxfam's activities). There should be free ways to participate in an organization outside of internet-based strategies. By using these sorts of participatory strategies we can make sure that the scope of who is participating in global governance is very diverse and broad to more closely resemble (and hopefully further develop) what we conceive to be a "global public citizenry". This will not only help alleviate the citizen participation democratic deficit in the most obvious way of involving more (typically under-represented) "global citizens", but it could also serve to build a platform for further democratization of global governing arrangements in other ways. This type of strategy certainly could enhance deliberative discourse potential and good governance aspects of legitimacy, responsibility and fairness.

4. Make Membership information public.

I obviously had a difficult time obtaining information about the make-up of Oxfam's membership. When NGOs are dedicated to transparency, they should make this information public, whether it enhances their democratic legitimacy or not. Membership as we discussed earlier, is an important indicator of democratic legitimacy for NGOs, as it can show whether or not they are supported by a large diverse number of people, thus legitimizing claims of representation. At the same time, I am not advocating for publicizing personal information about supporters, just general statistics of who is participating in their organizations. Of course, NGOs might not want to publish this information if it could hurt their representational claims (as I suspect might be happening with Oxfam International). But, if they are truly committed to transparency (like Oxfam claims) they should publish this information regardless. By providing more information it could help to increase deliberative potential of citizens by exposing providing insight into the organization, as well as enhance the good governance aspects of legitimacy, responsibility, fairness and most importantly, transparency.

This is a comprehensive list that other NGOs, aspiring to have effective meaningful participation strategies can follow. By adopting these practices, NGOs can be assured to have a multi-faceted strategy for involving more people in their organizations,

providing for their meaningful participation in their organizations and contributing to the overall democratic legitimacy, good governance and deliberative discourse of global governance. Of course, how each of these strategies will unfold in each individual NGO will vary, but this is a basic list of best practices that can be generalized from the Oxfam International case study. One good recommendation comes from Charnovitz (2005: 32) which says, "accountability mechanisms need to be tailored to NGO functions. Thus, when NGOs deliver services (e.g. immunizations) to individuals, the optimal form of accountability of that function will be different from the accountability of the same NGO carrying out a different function such as public education or advocacy". In order for the participatory strategies to have the greatest effect on democratic legitimacy, good governance and deliberation, they must certainly take into account their own goals and actions. These practices are meant to be general guidelines that can be used to further develop specific participatory strategies.

6.3 Final Words on NGOs and Global Governance

Computers allow international organizations to reach many more people than before and create easy ways to become continuously involved in NGO activities. They must be careful not to completely stifle traditional ways of reaching out to people at the same time. Through effective multi-media strategies, people are more informed on global activities than ever before and have more chances to become involved in global politics and governance than ever before. NGOs have really helped to give more "voice" to citizen grievances over global governance and to make global politics more transparent. This is evident when one looks at an NGO's well-put-together website like Oxfam International's. This helps to lessen all three of the democratic deficits a quoted by Zürn in the first section of this paper: the ability to identify decision-makers to hold accountable, the insulation and inscrutability of international decision-making processes, and the ability of people affected by such decisions to hold institutions/decision-makers accountable. The wonderful information resources that NGOs provide on global governance especially help to alleviate the first two of these deficits. The best potential for NGOs to impact democratic deficits experienced in global governance and the NGOs themselves remains stifled, citizen participation and their ability to hold decision-makers accountable. Although reduced by NGOs actions somewhat, this deficit would be impacted the most by creating a more formal role for NGOs and/or the public in global governance and by using the best practices described above. Furthermore, Oxfam (as well as other NGOs) has been successful in creating a place (online) where discussion of competing ideas and discourse can take place, significantly enhancing its "transnational deliberative democracy" potential. The power of the internet and a well-designed informative website, like Oxfam's, are resources that should be heavily used by NGOs to increase public influence of discourse. Additionally, NGOs and other civil society organizations have been successful in affecting discourse in global governance and through adoption of the best practices, we can get more ideas competing and helping to form the future direction of discourse.

One thing that must be continued and increased if NGOs are to continue to abate the democratic deficit is the advertisement of how people can get involved and why it is important to do so. This "advertisement" must again be *multi-media* if diverse populations of people are to be reached and not solely computer-based. If Non-Governmental Organizations are to be successful in the long run in not only their organization's activities, but contributing something greater to global governance, I have identified some best practices to do that. Also, equally as important, NGOs must

continue to strive for innovative, new ways of involving individuals in their activities. As Nye (2001: 5) says, “proponents of international institutions [and global governance] should experiment with ways to improve accountability”. Simultaneously, as previous stated, accountability is only half of what should be concentrated on in the quest to enhance legitimacy. The more effective they are at adopting best practices for participatory strategies (both accountability and pro-active strategies) and creating new ones will ultimately determine how effective their impact will be on global governance and its arguably perceived democratic deficit. This will require strong leadership from authoritative bodies in the NGOs and a conscious decision to do so, just like Oxfam has done. What is certain is that global governance is here to stay at least in the foreseen future. One of the deciding factors, if not the deciding factor, for what role NGOs will have in the future rests in the hands of the NGOs and what role they choose to have. By eliminating or reducing their own democratic deficits through meaningful public participation, NGOs do have the chance to make a great impact on the democratic legitimacy of global governance.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire Copy

Thank you for agreeing to fill out the following survey. The aim of this survey and study is to obtain best practices for stimulating public involvement with Non-governmental organizations (NGOs). There are four sections to this survey: Information, Input, Action and Membership. Please answer the questions as best as you can. Check all boxes that apply by highlighting the applicable box and typing "x". Any additional details/examples you can provide are greatly appreciated. If you do not know the answer or it is not-applicable, then just leave all boxes blank. Thank you for your time and contribution to enhancing public involvement in NGOs.

Part I: Information

1. By what methods do you provide various kinds information to your members?
 Traditional mail Email Meetings
 Website Other _____

2. What mode is utilized most often to provide information on Oxfam? _____

3. How often do you release/publish information?
 Daily Weekly Monthly
 Yearly Other _____

4. What kinds of information do you provide?
 Info. on Oxfam's actions Info. on Oxfam policies Info. on programs/projects
 Third-party info./studies on Oxfam Other _____

5. If a person is not a member and would like to know this information is it readily available?
 Yes No Only some information (elaborate if possible)

6. Would you say that information provided is easy to understand or does it utilize special vocabulary, technical terms and jargon?
 Yes, it is easy to understand No, it requires special knowledge It depends

7. Have you initiated any sort of new practice that has led to the increase of demand for information?
 No Yes (please explain) _____

Part II: Input

1. In what ways are members allowed to voice their opinions about Oxfam?
 Voting rights Email Meetings
 Mail based surveys/questionnaires Internet based surveys/questionnaires
 Other _____

2. What mode is utilized most often by members to voice opinions about Oxfam? _____

3. What opportunities are there for non-members to voice their opinions?
 Same as members None Only a few ways _____

4. How often are these opportunities for input given for members?
 Continuously At specific time intervals (weekly, monthly, etc.) _____
 Other _____

5. How often are these opportunities for input given for non-members?
 Continuously At specific time intervals (weekly, monthly, etc.) _____
 Other _____
6. On what kind of issues are members invited to comment on?
 Anything Only specific concerns (explain) _____
 Other _____
7. On what kinds of issues are non - members invited to comment on?
 Anything Only specific concerns (explain) _____
 Other _____
8. How often do members make use of input opportunities?
 All the time Sometimes Infrequently or never
9. How often are non-computer ways utilized to voice opinions (if such are provided)?
 All the time Sometimes Infrequently
10. What percentage of members would you estimate use input opportunities?
 100% - 80% 79% - 50% 49% - 20% 19% - 0%
11. Have you initiated any sort of new practice that has led to the increase of members voicing input?
 No Yes (please explain) _____

Part III: Action

1. In what ways does Oxfam respond to opinions of members if they differ from current actions/policies? _____
2. Are such responses reported to members? Yes No
3. Are such responses reported to Non-members? Yes No
4. If they are reported, how are such responses reported?
 Traditional mail Email Meetings
 Website Other _____
5. If they are reported, how often are such responses reported?
 Daily Weekly Monthly
 Yearly Other _____
11. Have you initiated any sort of new action-reporting practice that has led to the increase public interest in Oxfam?
 No Yes (please explain) _____

Part IV: Membership

1. What is the approximate demographic make-up of your membership?
 Mostly White (non-Hispanic) Mostly diverse races/ethnicities
 Mostly middle/upper class economic status
 Mostly diverse economic statuses
 Other _____
2. Have you had an instance where membership significantly increased at one time?
 Yes No

If yes, what do you attribute that to?

3. Have you had an instance where membership significantly decreased at one time?

Yes No

If yes, what do you attribute that to?

4. Are there any monetary costs associated for an individual to become an Oxfam member (i.e. initial fee/donation, required annual donation, etc.)?

No Yes (please explain) _____

5. Have you initiated any sort of new practice that has led to the increase of number of members generally?

No Yes (please explain) _____