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Revolutionizing the Global Aid Chain: Gandhian Grassroots and the Politics of Funding

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Jasper Hootsmans
Netherlands

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Members of the examining committee:

Kees Biekart (supervisor)
Rachel Kurian (reader)

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Inquiries:

Postal address: Institute of Social Studies
 P.O. Box 29776
 2502 LT The Hague
 The Netherlands

Location: Kortenaerkade 12
 2518 AX The Hague
 The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 70 426 0460

Fax: +31 70 426 0799

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List of Acronyms

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FCRA	Foreign Contribution Regulation Act
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPR	Intellectual Property Right
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAA	Private Aid Agency
TRIPs	Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights
UN	United Nations
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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“If you dangle your millions before us, you will make beggars of us and demoralise us. But in one thing I don’t mind being a beggar. You can ask your [...] experts to place their services at our disposal. They must come to us not as lords and masters, but as voluntary workers”

Mahatma Gandhi (1936)

Abstract

This paper questions the transformative potential of the current aid-led development paradigm and attempts to identify radical spaces for grassroots NGOs and private aid agencies in the establishment of new partner relations in a beyond aid paradigm. Not only is development as non-market and non-state space under pressure by shifting state priorities and the rise of corporate social responsibility; the de-politicizing, immobilizing and homogenizing effects of conventional aid channels form strong incentives for grassroots spaces of resistance to look for alternative relations with private aid agencies. The paper draws on notions of the aid chain, injected with the concepts of structural power and radical space, to form a framework within which spaces of potential transformation can be identified. Conclusions are drawn on the base of a case-study in India to provide a case of how grassroots NGOs established alternatives to the dominant aid system that challenge capitalism. With transformative forms of self-finance, like local-oriented, small-scale and non-profit manifestations of fair trade systems and inclusive networks of membership and volunteering, grassroots NGOs can raise radical spaces that structurally challenge capitalism. This grassroots perspective implies an alternative role for private aid agencies that shifts from the exclusive function of aid distribution to more constituency-based forms of knowledge networks, platform creation and alternative development education on one side and more independent and structural forms of advocacy and campaigning towards the hegemonic holders of power within neo-liberal regimes on the other side. **Keywords:** Global Aid Chain, Private Aid Agencies, Grassroots Self-Sufficiency, Transformative Self-Finance, Spaces of Resistance, Crisis of Capitalism

Relevance to Development Studies

While many has been written about reinventing private aid agencies in times of diminishing or more conditional aid, relatively few has been written about consequences for grassroots NGOs and ways for them to play into the beyond aid paradigm. Also, most conceptualizations of the aid chain seem to lack a broader concept of power that goes beyond relational hierarchy and dependency between development actors and includes the concept of structural power that originates from the overriding logic of capitalism.

Chapter 1 **Alternative Development and the Politics of Funding**

1.1 Introduction and Objectives

In past decades of international development, NGOs manifested themselves in multitudes of ways in the context of contemporary neoliberal economic policies. Lately however, the organisation of civil society relations around conditional aid has been criticized from national governments, who demand more proof of aid effectiveness, and from grassroots organisations, who claim these conditions are harming their freedom of operation. Also from academic corners, international development has been criticized for privatizing the public interest (Kamat, 2002) and legitimizing the status quo (Lipschutz, 2005). Private aid agencies (PAAs) seem to be torn between development imperatives and institutional survival and are constantly negotiating upward and downward relations, while conditionalities have morphed into more hidden channels of hegemonic conceptuality about NGO practice, dubbed the new managerialism.

In current times, the exponential expansion of global capitalist space is –not only increasingly challenged by social movements and civic uprising– but also stalled by the growing lack of non-market space to expand capitalist relations into, thus pressuring corporate profitability and translating in expectations of economic crisis. The search of a new temporal fix to sustain capitalism seems to be threatening the existence of development NGOs as non-market space, which in the process would make PAAs largely obsolete as brokers of aid.

In this reality of multiple challenges for aid-based development, there slowly but surely seem to be rising the establishing of a beyond aid paradigm (Vincent, 1995; Fowler, 1997; 2000; Biekart, 1999; *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 2000; *Development*, Vol. 49, No. 2, 2006). Alan Fowler (1997) suggests there are reasons to believe that the ‘NGOization of the grassroots’ can be correlated with rises in the international availability of funding and that diminishing funds would mean the disappearance of many of these NGOs. Many academics have written about the implications of diminishing aid for PAAs. Rarely however is looked at consequences for grassroots NGOs and how this changing development regime shapes their

spectrum of possibilities. This paper attempts to engage into the beyond aid paradigm from this grassroots angle to identify radical spaces to structurally challenge the dispossessing tendencies of contemporary capitalism.

Conclusions of this paper are based on a case-study that translates into two fundamental elements: First, the ways that grassroots initiatives can sidestep power relations of the aid chain and construct truly self-sufficient spaces of resistance, independent of the structural power of capitalism and constituting a genuine alternative. Second, the ways PAAs can reinvent themselves to avoid becoming obsolete and establish alternative civil society relations beyond aid to re-politicise their development efforts and regain their legitimacy as genuine challenge to the dispossessing logic of capitalism. Thereby formulizing the main question: how have grassroots NGOs established alternatives to the dominant aid system that challenge the dispossessing logic of capitalism? And the closely related subquestion: what does this imply for partner relations with PAAs?

These provocative questions of course raise the need for some explanation. First of all, which concrete entities are meant by the terms 'grassroots NGO' and 'private aid agency' and why is their relation so important? Second, what is the highly normative term 'alternative' in relation to NGOs? And last, what is meant by the ambiguous phrase 'the dispossessing logic of capitalism'? The coming paragraphs will attempt to provide answers to provide a clear picture about the objective of this paper.

Private aid agencies are often perceived as a subset of the larger, more diverse category of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Sogge et al, 1996). Kees Biekart (1999) made the point that the term NGO is a container concept that includes all organizations that are non-state and, because of its all-encompassing character, often confusing when used in practice. Therefore the use of the term NGO is not practical without further specification and this paper will provide this specification when used. This paper will define PAAs as non-state, non-profit entities based in the rich, dominant countries and founded to collect, transfer and deliver development aid in poor countries on the base of certain humanitarian values (Sogge et al., 1996; Biekart, 1999). Since this paper is biased towards challenging contemporary

capitalism, it will deal critically with tendencies to accept, adapt or reinforce the status quo as though nothing structural can be changed.

When PAAs took the main stage of development in the 1980s, these organizations claimed that their leadership in development could serve as catalyst for structural change –a true alternative to mainstream development that would alter conditions of poverty and inequality. Critical reflections about their practice since what has been dubbed as the ‘NGO decade’ (Bratton, 1989) were outnumbered by perceptions of NGOs as the institutional alternative to existing development approaches (Korten, 1987). Fundamental criticisms at this point were largely muted, inclined to offer the benefit of the doubt, As 1990s came however, NGOs came under a closer and more critical scrutiny, both from supporters and sceptics alike (Edwards and Hulme, 1992; Fowler, 1992 and others). Current times obliges us to ask critical questions about contemporary NGO and PAA practices as genuine alternatives. There seem to occur a “blurring between civil and market logics” (Bebbington et al, 2008), where pro-market diversification may be an “erosion of their potential as agents of systematic social and political change” (Fowler, 2005). Some argue that the contemporary aid industry has robbed grassroots NGOs of their autonomy, where “they have lost their radical origins and been co-opted into serving the neo-liberal project” (Tvedt, 2001). For others, this has allowed these NGOs to work more effectively, and to act as “authorised critical voices” with increased abilities to influence governments and global institutions (Tandon 2003). Lately, the question is echoing “have NGOs made a difference” and “can NGOs make a difference” (Bebbington et al, 2008)? The apparently limited success of development NGOs as agents of structural change came under critique and PAAs were advised to devise new roles for themselves or risk becoming obsolete.

Grassroots NGOs are much harder to define. While NGOs imply a non-state and often non-profit character, the concept of grassroots has become more ambiguous. It always implied a certain local groundedness, often associated with small communities where the ‘common people’ lived. In most contexts, it was used to signify the poor and marginalized as opposed to the dominant elites. Mostly the term applied to rural, village-level communities with an often forgotten urban dimension (Castells, 1983). Since the transnationalization of civic activism however, the term grassroots seems to have broadened to include those global

citizens who voice grassroots concerns, thereby giving rise to the term “grassroots globalisation” (Karliner, 1997). Batliwala (2002) is concerned that “this broadening of the term grassroots [...] disguises the very real differences in power, resources, visibility, access, structure, ideology and strategies between movements of directly affected peoples and those of their champions, spokespeople, or advocates” and proposes to reserve the term to those “severely affected in terms of the material condition of their daily lives”. This paper will follow this reasoning and will define grassroots NGOs as non-state, non-profit and development-oriented entities based in the poor countries and founded on structural links with those materially most marginalized, but potentially organizing across borders to interact with external power holders that influence their local reality. Since the case-study of this paper concerns small farmers, the term utilized here will however contain a strong rural bias.

Additionally, thinking around concepts of grassroots within this paper is very much influenced by the tradition of Gandhianism. The vision of Swaraj –self-governance and self-determination–, Swadeshi –politics of peoples’ own control over their economic, social and ecological surrounding– and Satyagraha –non-violent civil disobedience– still resonates strongly among Indian social movements (Pratap et al, 2004). The principle of self-reliance in basic needs as precondition for self-determination, also resonates strongly within this thesis. As Fernand Vincent (2006) asks: can one challenge a system when one is dependent on it? Gandhianism has been criticized as being too utopian; a romanticized perception of poor rural livelihood. But before one idealizes the phenomenon of self-help, it is important to remind ourselves that it is first of all “a child of necessity, of desperation even” (Aken, 2000). And to refocus on grassroots NGOs, these Gandhian values have never been more relevant: In times of financial and economic crisis, local mobilisation of development finance seem logical sites of progressive resistance.

The case study of this paper is an Indian grassroots NGO which foundation lies in Gandhian values of Swadeshi and Satyagraha, self-reliance and civil disobedience. Founded by global activist and critical academic Vandana Shiva, the NGO Navdanya is closely interlinked with small farmers to engage in self-reliance as resistance against the dominant food- and knowledge regime. The principle of self-finance is carried through to a certain extent, but Navdanya’s position in the global aid chain becomes interesting by its external funding of

campaigns. I visited Navdanya for the period of July and August (2008), interviewed members, volunteers, co-ordinators, beneficiaries and founder Vandana Shiva herself and engaged with the regional office of HIVOS, which is one of the main funders of Navdanya. The goals of the fieldwork were to identify spaces of self-sufficiency and their lessons for grassroots NGOs. Data collection will mostly consist of qualitative data in the form of in-depth interviews and focus groups, mostly with Navdanya's representatives and associated farmers, but also other grassroots NGOs like the Green Foundation and the Alternative Law Forum. All three of these NGOs have HIVOS as their donor and the regional office of HIVOS in India was very helpful to provide their perspective. Also, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation was interviewed for this paper to present a background of international governance. This combination of data provides an interesting picture of an organisation intertwined in the politics of funding, but attempting to defy the global aid chain with values of self-reliance and self-finance.

Navdanya's outspoken attempt to manifest an alternative space of self-reliance, opens up discussion about the form of partnership in which PAAs should engage here and which roles they should and should not play. Navdanya thereby is placed in the centre of the ongoing conflict between technicist, apolitical development interventions on the one hand, and the people-centred strategies of mass-oriented social movements of the oppressed on the other hand (Bond, 2001). Moving beyond relations premised on aid; beyond compliant humanitarianism and beyond the cloak of neutrality would however be refreshing and "should enhance the possibilities of building a much stronger global movement for social justice and poverty eradication" (Malhotra, 2000).

The paper draws upon the concept of the aid chain, which will be reconstructed through notions of power, space and civic agency to provide the base of analysis for relations between PAAs and grassroots NGOs in a fundamentally changing aid chain. This paper will provide a new framework of a spatial regime of flows and places (Castells, 2000), wherein radical spaces (Kohn, 2003) are identified through their potential to challenge the structural power of capitalism (Gill, 1989). With this framework, alternative development practices are identified for grassroots NGOs as well as PAAs.

1.2 NGOs and Alternative Development

Development, and specifically international development as defined since Truman, is merely the deterministic programme to bring the entire planet into one clear, concerted, and unified road of progress: the road of capitalism. That 'development' is an imposition on those who are being 'developed'. The fact that progress itself is often destructive of what already exists, while offering little to those dispossessed by it, is not seriously considered, although critique has been voiced from the outset of the development project (Murphy, 2000). Within the most critical of contemporary NGO literature (Wallace et al, 2006; Bebbington et al, 2007), the hope that development NGOs potentially can be an actor of genuine alternative development has not vanished. But development NGOs need to redefine what alternative development means in contemporary times, to re-engage with these ideals and to translate them in more radical development practices.

But what is alternative development? An alternative development paradigm “constitutes an imminent critique of the model in dominance”, faces modernization, growth-maximizing, profit-driven development strategies as its “dialectical other” (Friedman, 1992) and strives towards a more “people-centred development practice [...] to strengthen institutional and social capacity supportive of greater local control, accountability, initiative and self- reliance” (Korten, 1987). Many development academics have distinguished between big D and little d D/development, where the former refers to the “project of intervention in the third world”, while the latter involves the “geographically uneven, profoundly contradictory set of processes underlying capitalist developments” (Cowen and Shenton, 1996; Hart, 2001). This distinction between notions of intervention and of political economic, structural change when thinking about development, is useful for thinking around NGOs, who are intervening in societies (big D) at the same time that they are part of and shaped by society and its political economy (small d) (Bebbington et al, 2008).

But more fundamentally, the distinction is also useful in relation to the alternative development paradigm. On one side and mostly assumed, alternative development is an alternative set of interventions, other ways of modifying society in a manner that is more people-centred than conventional development. But an alternative paradigm does predominantly imply an non-interventionist alternative “in relation to the underlying

processes of capitalist development, or little d development. Here the emphasis is on alternative ways of organizing the economy, politics, and social relationships in a society (Mitlin et al, 2007). This paper will be based on this little d development as a structural, radical alternative originating at the grassroots level and will look at the interventionist big D development by PAAs from this perspective. The creation of alternative space independent of capitalist development than can only emerge as self-organised initiative, where big D development alternatives play supportive roles, not initiating roles.

Besides the threefold global crisis of deepening poverty, social disintegration and environmental degradation (Korten, 1995) and the fact that these crisis are still here, financial crisis' and rumours of recession are threatening the capitalist economy from the inside. These years may be "the prelude to deflation, a deeper recession and perhaps even a depression, as the world enters the tail end of the current long wave of capitalist expansion" (Bello, 2006). And in addition, inevitable shortage of fossil energy –which fuelled the capitalist boom of the last century– and the passing of peak oil seem another internal threat to capitalist relations (Campbell, 2005; Duncan, 2007). But these manifestations of capitalist development are merely outcomes and do not define the root pillars of capitalist structure.

1.3 Constant Crisis of Capitalism

Capitalism is the first and only historical social system that can claim to be global in scale and scope. The growth of a global capitalist system has been referred to as globalisation, which seems misleading for the depoliticised character of the term. This thesis will draw heavily on David Harvey's (2003; 2006) concepts of "accumulation by dispossession", "constant crisis of capitalism" and the "temporal spatial fix" to identify the roots of structural power within capitalism.

Despite many predictions from multiple angels of the imminent demise of capitalism as historic system, it still has survived in the face of numerous crises and reorganisations. These predictions of the inevitable collapse of capitalism are diverse, but often are rooted in Marx, who stressed the necessity within capitalism of an unavoidable tendency of the general rate of profits to fall. This gradual fall and the resulting capital surplus produces crises of overaccumulation by a general lack of profitable space (Marx, 1887). The crisis of

overaccumulation, over-investment, and over-capacity, meaning the emergence of too much productive capacity globally relative to global demand, resulting in a decline in the rate of profit (Bello, 2006). That a crisis of overproduction can occur simultaneously with starvation is one extreme example of the destructive tendencies within capitalism.

These crisis tendencies are met by countervailing management techniques: increasingly sophisticated crisis displacement techniques to fix this constant crisis of capitalism. Harvey mounts his concept of “accumulation by dispossession” in this context, where capitalist space constantly has to grow to counteract this tendency of declining profits by expanding into and dispossessing non-capitalist space (Harvey, 2003). Thereby capitalism needs the constant supply of space to appropriate into capitalist relations and the general perception of limits to this space make up the reasoning to the inherent limits to capitalist expansion. The lack of sufficiently profitable areas for investment has forced capitalism to turn to speculation (Soh Young-Joo, 1999), what might be conceptualise as “the squeezing of value from already created value” and has been dubbed “casino capitalism” (Strange, 1986). Besides phenomena of neoliberal restructuring, the “annihilation of space by time” (Marx, 1887) or in other words globalisation, the stagflated world economy of the ‘70s has since then financialized to create a bubble of profitability countering falling real profits.

For Harvey (2003; 2006), these crisis displacement techniques constitute examples of a “temporal spatial fix”, which temporarily delays the crisis of overaccumulation by extension of profitable space. The constant crisis of capitalism needs the constant injection of these spatial fixes. The IMF, World Bank and the WTO have been central in regulating this crisis displacement, but always manage the crisis and never bring resolution (Bond, 2000). But this paper will perceive the constant need of capitalist expansion, not resulting from the greed of agency, but by the construction of a structural logic of dispossessing accumulation. This logic originates from corporate and banking laws. The ‘money as debt’ system creates a reality where money is issued by banks whenever they make a loan and since the total debt incurred continually spirals upwards since interest must be paid, capitalism needs constant growth to sustain the demand for new debt (Grignon, 2006; Hart, 2007). Combined with a corporate system, that in law divides management and ownership resulting in an inherent “pathological pursuit of profit” (Bakan, 2004) for corporations, capitalism as a system structurally contains

imperialistic tendencies. These tendencies will further be referred to as the logic of dispossessing accumulation or the dispossessing logic of capitalism

Powerful movements against this capitalist expansion have however been built over many decades in all parts of the world. In an attempt to fix the most horrific edges of these dispossessing tendencies, development NGOs are often seen as agents of co-optation (Lipschutz, 2005) –not by spreading the values of the hegemonic class– but by engaging in forms of “governmentality” (Foucault, 1991) or in other words shaping those that are ruled into more governable subjects of the dominant system. The above perception of capitalism is important for this paper, for it will provide the underpinnings for the creation of a concept of structural power that permeates the operation of development NGOs. The current financial crisis enlightens the critical awareness of more people and potentially develops further as recession starts to increasingly influence real conditions and economies start sinking into depression. There is new openness to alternatives and therefore this economic crisis provides an historic opportunity for radical transformation.

Chapter 2 Reinventing the Global Aid Chain

This chapter will develop the conceptual narrative that this paper will draw on. The basic premise is the concept of the global aid chain, which is a tool to effectively discuss dilemma's and trade-offs between development and institutional imperatives related to upward and downward accountability and will connect grassroots NGOs and private aid agencies in relations of power and hierarchy. From the perspective of grassroots NGOs, this chapter will then continue to discuss the three main imperatives of a beyond aid paradigm, using aid chain conceptuality. Since aid chain conceptuality seem to miss a more broad concept of power that goes beyond relational hierarchy and dependency between development actors, this chapter then continues to relate aid in the broader context of capitalist regimes of global flows (like food, water and energy) and the marginalized spaces excluded from these global flows. With chains of aid as just one of the basic transnational flows between spaces of inclusion and spaces of exclusion, the aid chain can be seen beyond short term big D project impacts and more in terms of its structural relation with small d processes of uneven distribution of these global flows. This broader perspective of the aid chain helps to inject concepts of structural power and radical space to construct the final conceptual framework. With a clear notion of structural power, the choice of radical spaces can be visualized in the regime of flows.

2.1 The Global Aid Chain

The basic premise of theorizing contemporary aid regimes is the concept of the aid chain, which conceptualizes aid along a vertical hierarchy to visualize the power relations along the different actors involved with aid distribution. Wallace et al (2006) define the aid chain as “the series of actors involved in the process of moving funds from their initial institutional source to be spent on behalf of the targeted beneficiaries in the recipient area and the associated processes of accounting to donors for the use of these funds”. In this process of fund moving to beneficiaries, each actor becomes part of a “system of multiple dependencies” (Biekart, 1999). Accountability, power and conditionalities, and dilemmas between institutional survival and development imperatives are at the centre of the aid regime and these highly interrelated elements will here be shortly elaborated.

The identity crisis and fading legitimacy of development NGOs can be described as mere symptoms of what Edwards and Hulme (1995) illustrated as the “tension between institutional imperatives and development imperatives”. Or in other words, the increasing contradiction between what NGOs perceive as necessary activities to survive as institution in an increasingly difficult environment and what activities should be done in the name of fulfilling their mission statement. The strife to ensure secure continued or higher degrees of aid –required for institutional survival– are not always combinable with officially stated development goals and often contradictory. “Institutional imperatives emphasise competition, short-term results, hierarchy, secrecy and a Northern bias, whereas development imperatives generally demand the opposite: coordination, longer term results, partnership, transparency and a Southern bias” (Biekart, 1999).

The reason for this dilemma can also be seen in the context of multiple accountabilities. Development NGOs face “upward accountability”, which usually refers to their relationship with donors or governments, while “downward accountability” refers to relationships with recipients or beneficiaries (Edwards and Hulme, 1995). These multiple accountabilities however are not equal, but are filled with hierarchy and power. NGOs cannot be formally held accountable to their beneficiaries and there are no official mechanisms to prove or disprove claims of legitimacy that development NGOs make, thereby leaving beneficiaries in a “take it or leave it relationship” (Uphoff, 1995). As Fowler (1997) puts it, PAAs with an intermediary role in the aid transfer process, continuously have to prove that they add value to this process. Thereby downward accountability is not only of a moral character, but also has to provide credibility as base for upwards claims of legitimacy. These claims provide enormous difficulties, because this performance is hard to measure. In practice thereby, accountability is linked to a variety of other terms, such as “surveillance, monitoring, oversight, control, checks, restraint, public exposure and punishment” (Schedler et al., 1999); all accountability mechanisms coming down from the aid chain from donors and governments. PAAs are therefore pressured to forsake much of their attention to difficult-to-measure long-term impact in order to answer these performance demands (Fowler, 1997). The deeper dimension of accountability then becomes to “define who has the power to call for an account and who is obligated to give an explanation for their action” (Schedler et al., 1999). And since who has the availability of aid finance has the power in this chain, an obvious pressure for co-option arises and increasingly enhance the likelihood that

development NGOs are becoming “implementers of donor policies” (Hulme and Edwards, 1997).

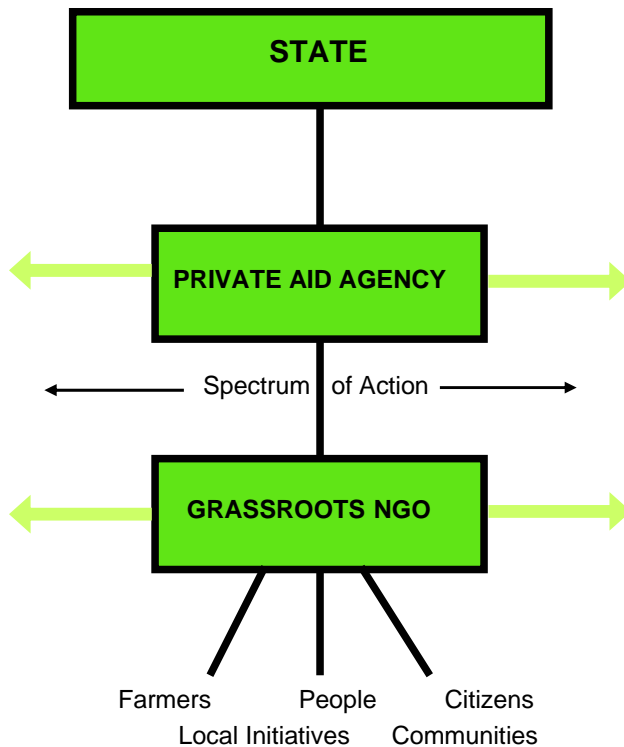


Figure 1: The Global Aid Chain

From the perspective of PAAs, upward accountability demands are not politically neutral, but contain hegemonic political priorities and dominant concepts and ideologies of development (Wallace et al, 2006). The gap between rhetoric and reality for these agencies can there be explained in the context of this tension between institutional survival and their development imperatives, which will take many forms with variable outputs contingent upon local circumstances (Biekart, 1999). Most grassroots NGOs see this tension translated in their choices of development operations, where certain forms of

interventions and styles of management qualify for external funding and other don't, thereby creating certain channels of development work.

For Tvedt (1998), grassroots NGOs therefore have become a “donor-created and donor-led system, a transmission belt of a powerful language and of Western concepts of development, carrying resources and authority from the core to the periphery, and information and legitimisation from periphery to core”. Buzz-words are taken to all corners of the globe, and “bringing back to the privileged images of people, of needs, of realities that attract more funding and legitimisation to donors” (Townsend et al, 2002). These channels of aid organised and managed around hegemonic development buzz-words is being dubbed as “the new managerialism”: “global waves of fashion” within the global community of development NGOs “in techniques such as partnership, capacity-building, participation and empowerment and in themes such as environment, gender or education” (Townsend et al,

2002). Fowler (2000) adds to this the mutually exclusive sectorialism of official aid sources, which is structured around sectors like health, education, infrastructure, trade and so on. Also, efficiency and impact are often measured against the Millenium Development Goals (Thomas, 2008), which itself is a projection of hegemonic development discourse.

Wallace et al (2006) describe the basic development project document –perceived as a neutral management tool– that “includes project goals, plans, timetables for implementation, required inputs and expected outcomes with associated measurements” and is “increasingly presented as a series of causal arrows from the goal to the [...] expected changes [translating] complex realities [into] causal relationships” with ill-defined indicators of impact. This new managerialism creates new forms of conditionalities around measurements of cost-effectiveness, where PAAs are becoming mere managers of a report culture designed to make grassroots NGOs financially accountable. Within this global aid chain, grassroots NGOs with external funding mostly are coerced into full compliance with sectoral buzz-words and time consuming management and reporting demands, leaving passive resistance and covert subversion as only option to operate outside this dominant aid spectrum.

This situation of dependency relationships limits the capacity of grassroots NGOs, but also private aid agencies, to be active and express themselves freely in political spaces of their choice. Figure 1 attempts to connect funding with a narrowing of the spectrum of possible action, where funding often functions as instrument to determine which political spaces can be occupied by the NGO community and which are too politically-sensitive (Pato, 2006). The aid chain limits the possible spectrum of action for NGOs by expressions of the power of funding, which ultimately originate from the dominant actors within the capitalist political economy at the top of the aid chain, and thus sustains the argument that NGOs, states and donors may be “too close for comfort” (Hulme and Edwards, 1997).

2.2 Grassroots Imperatives of the Beyond Aid Paradigm

The conventional development paradigm of aid distribution has been criticized from many angles, for many reasons. Arguments to look beyond aid are multiple, but from grassroots perspectives, three main imperatives are brought forward. First, the uncertainty of continued and constant distribution of official state aid to development NGOs and the danger of

shifting state priorities. Second, the rise of new sources of aid in the form of corporate social responsibility with the self-declared role of corporations as development actors. And third and most importantly, the perceived immobilizing, de-politicizing and homogenizing effects of conventional aid channels. These arguments form strong incentives for grassroots NGOs to look for alternative relations with PAAs.

2.1.1 Shifting State Priorities

The official aid agenda has over the 1990s increasingly focused on NGOs as agents of development, in the process opening up unprecedented levels of access to official aid for these NGOs. But with this risen aid flows, hegemonic development concepts, dependencies and a narrowing scope for alternatives came along. Shifting state priorities mean that grassroots NGOs constantly need to adapt to changing funding climates (Bebbington et al, 2008). In an unstable funding climate, it is not uncommon to see funds withdraw from projects or entire countries on the grounds of “new priorities” and “thematic and geographic concentration”, without serious attempts to secure the future of the supported work (Bailey, 1999). This increasingly turbulent and unpredictable political and economic environment means significant pressures on organisational and management capacities of grassroots NGOs and many NGOs need constant adaptation to “new and unfamiliar managerial techniques”, and cope with rapid organisational change (Hailey, 2000). Fowler (2000) suggests that 90 to 95 per cent of grassroots NGOs would disappear without international aid. Many NGO activities and expansion seem tightly linked to the availability of external funding (Ghimire, 2006). Strong reliance on official aid and changes in political climate imply that NGOs must consider life in a beyond-aid scenario or face the risk of being caught by surprise by diminishing funding flows.

Hailey (2000) remarks the increasing willingness of state donors to fund non-traditional development actors, including the military, parastatals, QUANGO's (state-related NGOs), private service contractors and consultancy firms. While richer countries of the world seemed to have chosen for diminished flows of aid assistance (Malhotra, 2000; Fowler, 2000); after 9/11, the situation seems firmly back in a period of rising real aid flows (Edwards, 2008). But besides the dysfunctional aspects of this traditional aid paradigm; continuation of these flows is far from assured. Also, there seems an increasing tendency for the rich governments to

directly fund grassroots NGOs and skipping the intermediary role of PAAs in the process. For grassroots NGOs this means that the buffering effect of the non-governmental values and ethics of PAAs disappear and be replaced by more political and interest-driven development conditionalities.

2.1.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

The space of development NGOs has largely remained non-profit and outside market relations. But non-profit development operations provide opportunities to expand capitalist relations into market-based development. ‘Corporate social responsibility’ (CSR) is now being advocated by many policy-makers “as an alternative route to the public delivery of development” and potentially a “long-term solution for delivering development” (Frynas, 2005). Also, the concept of ‘philanthrocapitalism’ has been heralded as the solution to development, “applying business methods to social problems as diverse as AIDS and global poverty” (Edwards, 2008). In this CSR framework, corporations are presented as development agents through the voluntary commitment to contribute to sustainable development and improve the quality of life for local communities and society at large (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005). The emergence of new funding flows from the corporate sector threatens development NGOs for five reasons.

First, CSR has been accused of being an “implementation of cosmetic changes to business practice in order to preclude bigger changes” (Hamann and Acutt, 2003). Despite rhetoric, discourses of responsibility and sustainability are not only defined by narrow business interests, but “constitute a particular image of the social”, the inclusions and exclusions that this will result in and produce a “particular form of corporate rationality that determine the boundary conditions of corporate social initiatives” (Banerjee, 2006). For example, the corporate fair trade sector is growing and provides simply another marketing label “implying only minor, if any, changes in agro-ecological practice” (Roff, 2006). Second, CSR seems more to be dispossession of non-profit space to sustain capitalism than a structural cure to exclusion, marginalisation and exploitation of that same system. Thereby CSR potentially sustains capitalism. Third, CSR attempts to influence popular and policy-related development discourse “in order to define what questions may be asked and what answers are feasible” (Hamann and Acutt, 2003). When corporations define the spectrum of

development, they redefine the whole meaning of development in the process (Blowfield, 2005) and structural transformation certainly does not fall within that spectrum. Fourth, CSR may replace PAAs as brokers of aid, since looking to the 'private sector' will mean less expenses for international governance. In the least, times of diminishing funds may force PAAs to cooperation with these business motives, which implies the inherent danger of co-optation (Henderson, 2000), thereby decreasing the potential of radical action. Fifth, in scenarios of diminishing official aid, grassroots NGOs may face new kinds of conditionalities, which may prove stricter and more profit driven (Blowfield, 2005). Corporate rationalities of profit growth are bound to present strongly conditioned channels of aid.

2.1.3 Aid Dependency: Immobilizing, Homogenizing and Depoliticizing

Besides changing volumes of aid and the rise of new and more conditional forms of aid, the most important imperative for grassroots NGOs to look beyond aid constitutes the effects of power and hierarchy coming down the aid chain. The process of NGOization –a term which has been used rather cynically– has been criticized for immobilizing, homogenizing and depoliticizing effects that jeopardise the prospects for civic agency, activism and the capacity to assert oneself without constraints. In order to receive funding grassroots NGOs are made to perform as donors expect, explicitly or implicitly defined by upwards accountability; it is however “neither a learning process, nor a partnership; there is little give or take, room to fail or to negotiate terms” (Sadoun, 2006). When grassroots NGOs see an important percentage of activities and functioning financed by external sources, the potential risks for these organizations to remain autonomous with regard to their objectives and strategies need to be discussed.

Fernand Vincent (1995) found that “if one NGO receives more than 30 per cent of its funding through an external agency, it is not free in its actions”. Above this percentage, grassroots NGOs –in case of divergence between the NGO and the donor– could face the inherent risk of diminishing political independence. Since donors have the power over money which they choose to release or not, grassroots NGOs can as development partner not simply take their advice simply as advice, but as conditions in order to qualify for funding. In this process, donors may inadvertently fail to respect the autonomy or emancipation process of the partner (Borren, 2000). Often, grassroots NGOs auto-control themselves unconsciously in order not to lose the funding needed for survival. (Vincent, 2006). These NGOs gained

their legitimacy through their advocated values, their ability to identify with and work with the local communities and therefore their effectiveness. The impact of donor-imposed conditions on their independence and legitimacy seems adverse, where donors increasingly see such NGOs to be contracted to provide specific services, build physical infrastructure or promote income-generating activity (Hailey, 2000). Local capacities tend to be more replaced than build (Eade, 2007).

Thomas Parks (2008) added that external funding for politically engaged grassroots NGOs can be accompanied by inherent risks for the recipient organisation. Foreign funding raises suspicion in the domestic political arena, especially from governments, which makes these NGOs “more vulnerable to accusations of foreign manipulation” (Parks, 2008). Also, when funding shifts to new priorities, NGOs that rely on these donors risk a massive decline in their budget if they continue to focus on their current priorities and activities. Without alternative sources of funding, activities and objectives will be forced to change to adapt to new donor priorities. Little by little, these NGOs will lose their autonomy from donors (Parks, 2008). Many NGOs attempt to spread this risk by engaging with multiple donors. However, donors rarely coordinate their monitoring and reporting process, whereby their partners have to spend lots of time and energy on reporting (Borren, 2000). As Mawdsley et al. (2002) have argued many grassroots NGOs are supportive of the goal of improving effectiveness and accountability, but they are critical of the manner in which these objectives are being pursued.

Also, by taking on more political roles –for which they are not politically accountable– Sonia Alvarez (1998) has shown that grassroots NGOs can effectively depoliticise social movements which had given them their legitimacy in the first place. A process she has dubbed the “NGOization of social movements” (Alvarez, 1998). Originating in donor support, grassroots political struggles become mere fashion accessories or buzzwords –invoked by donors in order to negotiate bureaucratic complexities– draining concepts like empowerment or capacity building of any political content in a process that may actually end up crushing local capacities rather than releasing their potential (Eade, 2007).

Morena (2006) points at the risk of smaller organizations' gradual disappearance, because they mostly lack the professional means to "sell their projects and activities" like bigger NGOs can? While the risk of donor-dominance may be less severe for stronger NGOs at the grassroots; who can negotiate more and who may have other financial options, Malhotra (2000) suggested that "a NGO future without aid may turn out to be quite a refreshing and healthy change for North-South NGO partnership". Critical self-reflection of PAAs and grassroots NGOs is essential to avoid a "development hegemony" as in what Kamat (2002) referred to as the "NGOization of the grassroots". And as Eade (2007) remarked: "just because they paid to fill up the tank does not give [donors] the right to determine the route". Another world is possible, but fundamental reconsiderations about the structural power of aid relations seem essential in achieving this.

2.3 Regimes of Flows

The aid chain is just one way spatially linking diverse actors and regions of development. The position of aid in the broader context of capitalist regimes of global flows, like food, water and energy regimes to some degree defines how structural the transformative effects of aid are. The previous paragraph made the critique that conventional development reshapes grassroots initiatives towards service delivery and constructors of infrastructure for marginalized spaces that are excluded from these global flows. When the aid chain seems to merely connect these excluded spaces to the margins of these global flows to address the basic needs of marginalized communities; it becomes important to situate the aid chain in a broader perspective of multiple global chains or flows that development funding relates to.

The nature of transnational flows can appropriately be conceptualised with the thinking of Manuel Castells (2000). In a time which is fundamentally defined by the transformation of geographic space and the emergence of new dimensions of the "Information Age", Castells proposed the binary concept of the "spaces of flows" and the "space of places" in order to understand such spatial transformation. The space of flows is made up of an infrastructure of information systems, telecommunications and transportation lines and is organised along networks of interaction. The power of each actor within this space is defined by their accessibility to dominant flows and thus their position in different networks. Also the possibility of network participation is exclusive to those connected to the space of flows and thereby facilitating simultaneous processes of integration and segregation. Most contemporary

dominant activities are constructed around the space of flows, wherein dominant refers to financial flows; corporate management in services and manufacturing; subsidiary corporate networks; media, entertainment, religion, science and technology and military power. While organizations are located in places, the dominant organizational logic is placeless, being fundamentally dependent on their connection to the space of flows. Castells calls these connections to the space of flows nodes and hubs, where strategic functions are produced and the core decision-making concentrated. The current global economy is concentrated in these relatively few places.

Whereas most experience, identification and social interaction is still organised around places, the constitution of the space of flows was in itself a form of domination, since this space in its diversity and interrelatedness can escape the control of any place. In globalizing times, grassroots resistance is mostly understood as place-based resistance against the seemingly deterritorializing and delocalizing tendencies of the space of flows. Thereby, “grassroots” is grounded in the space of places, which is “the experience of a particular location that maintains significant connection to everyday life, a certain degree of boundaries [and] groundedness [...] essential for thinking about identity, development and social movements” (Escobar, 2000). The space of places is fragmented, localised and thus increasingly powerless in the face of the versatility of the space of flows. If groups or places wish to interact with the dominant global flows, they must adapt to the logic of those flows. The only chance of local resistance is to “refuse landing rights” for overwhelming flows, only to witness them landing in places nearby, therefore causing the bypassing, marginalisation and isolation of rebellious communities (Castells, 2000).

Structural adjustment increasingly isolated and marginalised those already remote from prevailing market mechanisms, while at the same time promoting the emergence of a globalised upper-middle class that is connected to the space of dominant global flows (Murphy, 2000). Castells (2000) shows how between these groups, resistance identities converge and aim at transforming dominant interests through expanding campaigns into global networks and elevating them from the space of places to operation in the space of flows, “making them visible where it really counts”.

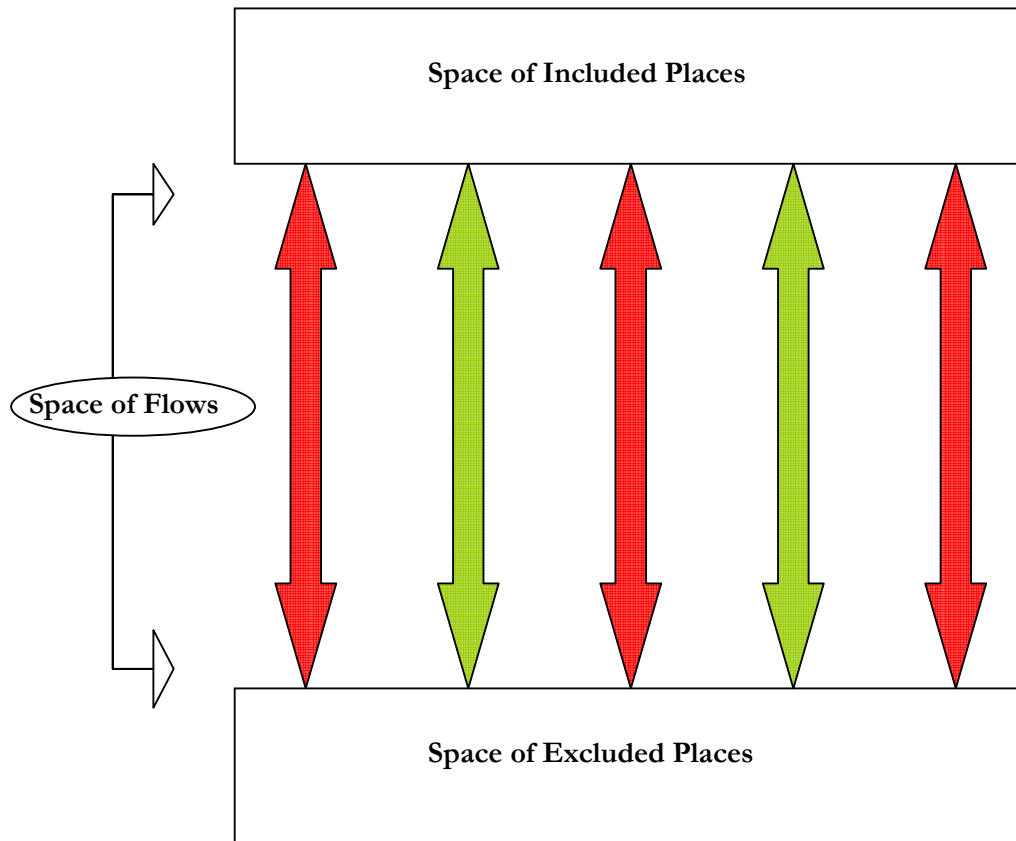


Figure 2: Regime of Flows

The dominant development discourse perceives the aid flow as its primary space of intervention, whereby the majority of the aid regime is directed at empowering marginalized communities to connect to flows that satisfy their basic needs and link the poor to flows of food, water, knowledge and energy. Development is here seen and measured in terms of the extent to which one can integrate its activities to the world capitalist economy, without structurally questioning these hegemonic global flows.

The relation of grassroots NGOs with the space of flows can this way be perceived as the relation of those excluded in flows of finance, information and advocacy and marginalized from dominant regimes of food, water, knowledge and energy production and distribution with those –private aid agencies– that are included in flows of finance, information and advocacy and possess spatial advantage in influencing dominant regimes of food, water, knowledge and energy production and distribution. Previous paragraphs highlighted the inherent limitations of aid flows as primary space of development, but raises the question

which spaces are able to achieve strategic goals which may lead towards structural transformation.

2.4 Notions of Radical Space and Structural Power

The regime of flows is merely a tool in understanding the relation between space, power and civic agency, which is essential in comprehending relations between PAAs and grassroots NGOs. The tension between the space of flows and the space of places is of course highly related with the old structure/agency debate with multiple power relations and complex interactions between space and power surrounding these philosophical ambiguities. This paragraph will engage marginally in this debate for the sake of a concrete framework. The coming paragraph will (1) add a concept of 'structural power' and (2) relate to this; the identification of 'radical space', which will provide the framework for final conclusions to be based on.

Foucault (1991) highlighted how power permeates through spaces in multiple ways and thereby ignites domination as well as resistance. What Castells (2000) labelled the logic of flows, that operates in the space of flows but permeates into the space of places, will in this paper be perceived and referred to as structural power: an entrenching hegemonic structural power that shapes the boundaries of agency in every space. This is not to be confused with John Gaventa's agent-oriented concept of invisible power (2004), which ultimately consists of the discourses that influence the boundaries of civic agency. But Gaventa perceives this power as the result of discursive dominance of certain actors, thereby reserving power as an agent concept and fails to cover power as effects not due to a particular agent, whether individual or collective. Stephen Gill (1989) utilizes the concept of structural power more in the form of the logic of capital as hegemonic in the Gramscian sense. In an attempt to overcome the dominant behavioural power paradigm and the perception of power as inherently relational between agents, Gill refers to structural power as a more impersonal material setting. Through markets the structural power of capital is exercised, which is not necessarily defined by the power struggle of agency, but influenced by what Harvey utilized as the logic of dispossessing accumulation. Although he recognizes the important role of agency in discourse formation and agenda setting, structural forms of systematic impersonal limitations constrain the exercise of agency. While the logic of accumulation by dispossession was shaped by actors and legislated by those who profited from it, this logic has now become the condition within

which actors operate in the space of flows; encompassing social norms, rules and so on. In the words of Sibeon (1999), “social structure both facilitates and constrains the behaviour of actors, influencing their decisions about what course of action to pursue” and in the interaction between social structure and agency in the space of flows, social structure can have causal primacy or causal significance in producing the behaviour of actors by the overriding logic of dispossessing accumulation. The influence of his structural power is inherent in the mainstream framework of development and in the dominant discourse, including that of NGO partnership, which could be seen as reinforcing power asymmetries (Lister, 1999).

But Foucault (1991) also pointed at the “strategic reversibility of power relations”, where practices of domination are in themselves always sites of resistance and thereby produce possibilities for subversion and reconstitution. “Space is a social product [...] it is not simply there, a neutral container waiting to be filled, but is a dynamic, humanly constructed means of control and hence of domination, of power” (Lefebvre, 1991). By illuminating the dynamics of structural power and space, one can identify potential spaces of transformative engagement or as Cornwall (2004) puts it, “the metaphorical qualities [...] [of] thinking spatially can help towards building strategies for more genuinely transformative action”. While she was talking about participation as spatial practice, this is as true for strategic choices of space for private aid agencies and grassroots NGOs. This framework will use Margaret Kohn’s (2003) notion of radical space, which focuses on the creation of sites of resistance and transformative political practices. This radical space will here be defined by the degree that civic agency is bounded by the structural power of capitalism; or in other words, the degree in which the free operation of action within a certain space is limited by the logic of dispossessing accumulation as defined by Harvey. Radical space will therefore have a different meaning for grassroots NGOs than it will have for PAAs, because they relate to structural power in different ways; PAAs from spaces of inclusion, while grassroots NGOs operate in spaces of exclusion and are often forced to express countervailing realities in ‘hidden transcript’ (Scott, 1990), outside the perception of dominant forces.

Aid chain conceptuality is therefore not sufficient as framework by its lack of a concept of structural power. By placing the aid chain in the broader regime of flows, the point is made that this structural power is dominant in the food regime, the water regime, the energy regime,

the knowledge regime and almost any interaction in the space of flows. The chain of the aid regime is ultimately originating from those entities –like national states or the World Bank– that are dependent on this logic of dispossessing accumulation and thereby is fundamentally constraint in challenging that same logic. Thereby the coming case-study will look at potential radical spaces for grassroots NGOs to confront the structural power of capitalism, where spaces are defined by the accepting or avoiding of global flows, entrenched with structural power, which in Navdanya's case are food, knowledge and finance flows. The final conclusions will apply the case of Navdanya to this framework of structural power and radical space.

Chapter 3 Alternative Space of Self-Reliance: The Case of Navdanya

This chapter will present the case-study of Navdanya, an Indian grassroots NGO, and place it in the framework of the regime of flows. Like the term grassroots implies, this NGO is firmly based with the space of places, originating from Gandhian roots, and provides valuable lessons in the ways the NGO interacts with the space of flows, most notably the flows of the dominant food- and knowledge regimes.

3.1 Neoliberal Hegemony: Food and Knowledge Regimes

Neoliberalism, the form of capitalism that leaves the logic of dispossessing accumulation unregulated, has shaped global flows of food and knowledge according to a certain logic over the last decades and this process has been institutionally facilitated by the IMF and the World Bank, and currently predominantly by the WTO. The food and knowledge regime is extremely related with each other in contemporary agriculture, especially since the Agreement on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) came into existence as part of the international regulatory infrastructure that would harmonize a certain set of standards for the protection of intellectual property in the world. Since its implementation, intellectual property rights (IPRs) have become one of the most hotly contested sites of political struggle in debates over the global political economy.

Debates range from the assumption that patents foster innovation in a market economy and that an international IPR regime encourages the transfer of technology, resulting in economic growth (Braga et al, 2000; Maskus, 2000) from criticism of de-political economic triumphalism and accusations of enhancing fortunes of powerful corporations (Richards, 2004), technological protectionism (Correa, 2000) and a worsening of economic dependence of the poor countries (Matthews, 2002). From these last perspectives, TRIPs is a project of corporate interests backed by the larger capitalist alliance, where the institutional mechanisms of the WTO are used to further enhance profits. However, in Harveyan conceptuality (2006), the strengthening of IPR regimes is merely a manifestation of the structural power of capitalism to expand in unexploited spaces; a temporal fix to the constant crisis of over-accumulation. New biotechnology, information and communication technology makes the

enclosure of this knowledge and the dispossession of this informational space from the commons not only a project for profit, but an inevitable process to sustain capitalism's survival or delay its imminent demise.

From an alternative development and grassroots perspective, the TRIPs agreement fundamentally changes livelihood possibilities for rural communities. While traditionally farmers collect their agricultural seeds from every harvest in the sustainable tradition of ecological biodiversity; these same seeds are now liable to corporate patents and become intellectual property, which needs to be bought from the global seed industry. The transformation of this natural, biological product into private property opens the way for corporate exploitation of a traditional community freedom. The doctrine of profit maximisation genetically modifies seeds to artificially cease their natural replenishment – dubbed suicide seeds or terminator seed– and forces farmers to buy these seeds every season (Shiva, 1997). Patents are monopolies and exclusive rights, which prevent farmers from saving seeds and create the increasing necessity of fertilizers and pesticides. TRIPs facilitates the appropriation of traditional knowledge of Third World communities by multinational corporation and thereby constitutes what by many have been dubbed a “global biopiracy” (Shiva, 1997; Mgbeoji, 2006). Uniformity in plant varieties and mono-cropping world over may also affect the gene pool, perhaps, irreversibly, besides rendering food security totally dependant upon the stability of the international seed supply industry (Sreenath, 2006). Since processes of the green revolution, tens of millions of small farmers around the world have been driven off the land by social, economic and ecological pressure of industrial agriculture (Murphy, 2000).

For most farmers, the increase in cost by seeds, fertilizers and pesticides –besides the diminishing terms of trade, the colonial destruction of self-sufficient capabilities and the fading soil after the green revolution– is the critical drop for their livelihood possibilities. Add to this the mostly non-tested character of corporate seeds, the danger of crop failure in the creation of an agricultural monoculture, the increasing use of land seizures for economic purposes and the immense soil- and water pollution by industrial activities and it can be no surprise that farmers take part in the most massive flow of urbanisation in human history and commit suicide in numbers never seen before (Shiva, 1997). The introduction of an IPR

regime in India creates the context for peasant resistance and local explorations of viable alternatives.

The neo-liberal agenda has generally been undertaken with remarkable speed in countries around the world, including India, where the shift towards liberalisation gained further momentum around 1991, but began earlier. In the mid-1990s, when protests against globalisation led by the few movement-groups acquired momentum, different sections of farmers in India began to acutely feel the adverse impact of globalising capitalism and new social and political spaces opened up for them (Sheth, 2006). This mobilization was explicitly linked to Gandhian ideals, primarily organized around the concept of *swadeshi*. Multinationals were portrayed “in imperial terms, as invaders who would dominate India and Indian farmers” (Kothari, 2001). As Piven and Cloward (1977) wrote; “people experience deprivation and oppression within a concrete setting, not as the end product of large and abstract processes” and it is this reality that an organisation like Navdanya is based in, where farmers are more driven by economic interest than ideology and place their survival before possible externalities.

Omvedt (1993) argues, that the real thesis of new farmer movements was that underlying all forms of domination and exploitation were oppressive relations of daily life “deeply hidden in the subterranean spaces of human relations and fossilized into perfectly normal conventions”. This implied that the primary terrain of resistance was to –not only reject– but to transcend capitalist development and to formulate alternative practices: Gandhian ideology expressed in village-centred and decentralized communities as an alternative to modern technological capitalism, where everyday forms of resistance fall short of openly declared contestations, operate beyond the realm of the public domain and outside the observation of the dominant parties (Scott, 1990). It essential to understand class-based interests and the role of everyday resistance as base for civic action.

Movements of farmers in coalition with activist NGOs have been organizing extensive protest and lobbying campaigns for more than a decade. But further than merely campaigns of resistance, organisations and farmers are setting up sovereign and independent networks to

provide an alternative, Vandana Shiva being one of the prime individuals leading this movement and founder and director of Navdanya.

3.2 Navdanya: Challenging Neoliberal Hegemony

Navdanya is placed at the centre of this growing movement to counter hegemonic food and knowledge regimes and is born out the vision “to create alternatives to gigantism and centralisation by building on the strengths of the small and the decentralized” (Navdanya, 2008). Navdanya defies the binary division between a membership organisation or intermediary NGOs, but Shiva defines it more as a network of farmers (interview Shiva). The creation of this alternative network offers the space for the marginalized majority of farmers to defend their resources, their livelihoods and production and consumption patterns through self-organisation. In this alternative space production, distribution and consumption patterns operate outside and independent of the structural power of capitalism, removed from the dominant seed and food regime. “[This] choice to maintain crop diversity has been a political statement—a statement of self-reliance and independent control over their lives” (Navdanya, 2008). The choice for self-reliance and independence as basic principles lie at the roots of the organisation and reflect every element of their operation. The core elements of Navdanya are seed distribution and research, fair trade networks, alternative education and knowledge networks (Swadeshi), mobilisation and campaigning and advocacy and lobbying (Satyagraha) in the creation of radical space.

3.2.1 Radical Space of Food and Knowledge

Instead of buying corporate seeds –which create monocultures because only the economically most efficient are for sale and genetically need the external input of fertilizers and pesticides– farmers can freely use seeds from Navdanya’s seed banks, on only one condition: to return for every kilogram, 1.25 kilogram of seeds back to Navdanya or to spread the seeds to two other farmers for free. Navdanya has set up 43 community seed banks throughout 16 different states in India to include farmers in an alternative seed network (interview Negi). Green revolution varieties are often referred to as “modern” and “miracle seeds”, superior to the backward traditional seeds. These “new” varieties, evolved from a narrow genetic base, spread throughout the world and India and in the process displacing millions of crop varieties, which farmers had evolved over millennia (Adi, 2006). Navdanya’s seed banks do not only function as free distribution of seeds to marginalized farmers to

counter the spread of seed monocultures, but also store and increase the rich genetical biodiversity of seeds, which is greatly threatened after the green revolution and the continuing spread of market seeds. The seed banks contain many varieties of every crop and through constant seed research and experiments keeps growing in diversity, which is treated as common knowledge for all to use (interview Negi). Besides this, the banks also provide the base to disprove corporate patents by the help of community biodiversity registers, which can halt and overturn applications of seed corporations for patents on seeds which are registered as community knowledge (interview Bhatt). These alternative networks of seed distribution and knowledge are there, but farmers have to make the choice to cease chemical farming themselves, which is no easy choice.

Many farmers fell for the promise of higher yields of corporate seeds; their invasion of India was supported by the Indian government and the domestic seed industry was largely bought or in mutual agreement. After the state induced green revolution, the corporate induced introduction of modified seeds seemed like the logical next step for farmers in the process to “upscale” their agricultural business. Heavy advertising in television, newspapers and other local media, accompanied with flyers and even individual letters and in combination with the take-over of traditional seed distribution centres made many farmers to attempt these new seeds, where many were already in the process of agricultural transformation. Many stopped keeping and developing their seeds and depended highly on their new external seed input (interview Bhatt). After years where farmers experiences mixed results, but most importantly high debts to pay for the increased amount of external inputs and increasingly eroded soil, Navdanya facilitates the process to transform back to organic practices. After extensive chemical abuse, it takes three years for the soil to recover, which is why many small farmers can not make the step to organic and have no choice but to keep adding increased quantities of chemical inputs into their soil. In these three years, Navdanya accompanies the process for a slow transition back to organic inputs and traditional seeds. In this process farmers become self-reliant in their farming practice by terminating the need for external inputs and through their seed sharing network become part of the Navdanya membership of organic farmers (interview Negi).

But in times of marginalization of small farmers, threats to farmer livelihoods are not exclusively increasing costs or ecological degradation of land, but also an increasing deterioration of their position in globalising markets. Navdanya thereby also maintains alternative market chains. This network of organic farming has become mostly self-reliant in their food production –first feeding their own communities– but the remaining surplus enters a sort of grassroots organic fair trade network. Navdanya functions as transporter and packager for these organic products, which are sold at outlets in some cities in India. The urban consumers are attracted by the organic brand name and the lower price –possible by its non-profit character–, Navdanya receives part of the price to cover their expenses and the farmers receive higher prices than the market prices of corporate channels (interview Bhatt). This fair trade network is limited in range and includes only two city outlets and one organic restaurant. Recently however, this network extended –partnered with Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL)– to supply two petrol pump outlets of organic food from the fair trade network, with even the possibility of free home delivery at some places (Navdanya, 2008).

In addition, Navdanya’s “educational initiative [...] at the Navdanya Organic Farm, offers a unique opportunity to explore and practise the art and science of sustainability based on the principles of sustainability and diversity” (Navdanya, 2008). The education at this farm targets multiple groups. First of all, it is an experimental zone and showcase of all the seed research and portraits all the diverse possibilities of organic farming to convince visiting Indian farmers that organic farming is not only sustainable but also viable. Second, the farm serves as a base for educational courses for international students. Students of all ages, from all around the world, interested in organic farming, political action or critical academic perspectives of economic globalisation, follow classes at the farm by a selection of the foremost scholar-activists of this time. Third, the farm also serves as accommodation for travellers seeking peace and nature in a pollution-free surrounding. Staying at the farm includes three organic meals a day, which is grown at the farm itself or in the immediate surrounding. By their mere presence the farm has indirect educational effects for those visiting. The farm operates without the generation of any waste whatsoever and deals with no products with any ecological or social harms; coca-cola is banned for example. Fourth, the farm serves as mobilisation point and space of meeting, discussing and planning for civic action. Not only for Indian activists or Navdanya staff, but those with civic engagement from all around the

world meet, share their idealism and become part of a network which potentially can enhance or turn to active civic involvement.

Besides education at the farm, Navdanya organises and is involved in seminars, workshops and lectures throughout India, with farmers, local partner organisations or as part of active social movements with overlapping points of action. Navdanya have so far trained more than two thousand farmers as well as national and international NGO's on biodiversity conservation and organic farming (Navdanya, 2008). The well-known status of Vandana Shiva of course provides the possibility to attend and organise lectures all around the world. In addition, Navdanya releases films and multiple books, some with regional or national reach, many with global reach. The books of Vandana Shiva enjoy worldwide audience. Also does Navdanya use the internet which spreads articles and agenda points for campaigns. And to conclude, Navdanya does woman empowerment programmes, slow food festivals and children education programmes, like small organic farming plots in school (interview Bhatt).

As the above attempts to portray, Navdanya used its principle of self-sufficiency as resistance to establish alternative spaces of seed and food distribution, knowledge, education and market relations. The organisation has provided a network for marginalized farmers to become independent of the system that created debts and ecological damage for their livelihood. Does this manifestation of Swadeshi however mean that the dominant system can effectively be challenged through Satyagraha? Navdanya occupies itself –besides the creation of an alternative space– with campaigning and advocacy. At some times, the campaigns are targeting specific corporate patents of which some major victories have been won with overturned patents. Other times regional states or the national government is targeted by demonstration marches, signature collections or letters. Specific campaigns are designed to create awareness in farmer communities, for example by seed marches and farmer rallies, visits to communities spreading organic seeds or the symbolic burning of chemical crops (interview Shiva). Also in relation to the state, Vandana Shiva often is asked for expert opinions in invited spaces of consultation and where possible Navdanya works together with them, but as often more aggressive letters or court cases reveal a two sided relationship with the Indian state (interview Bhatt). Besides this, Vandana Shiva's presence at international fora

and international institutions suggest that the organisations advocacy influence may extend beyond national borders.

The fact that Navdanya manages networks where small farmers become completely independent of capitalism regarding to seed supply, food supply, fertilizers and pesticides and market relations with consumers and entirely reorganise agricultural practice based on sustainable and social values constitutes an example for more grassroots initiatives worldwide. The question that then becomes relevant for this research is to what extend does Navdanya constitute radical spaces that challenge the structural power of capitalism? If one adds funding relations to the equation; how broad does their spectrum of political action become?

3.2.2 Self-Finance as Sustainable Resistance

Although self-sufficiency and independence runs through every operation of Navdanya, the organisation receives funding from external sources. At this moment Navdanya receives funding from Hivos (Dutch NGO) and Bread for the World (German NGO). Although Hivos appeared to be known for their flexibility (interview Shiva; Narrain; Ramprasad), they also apply conditionalities of accountability and reporting needs (interview Ghose), but also indicators of effectiveness (interview Narrain) thereby follow the new managerialism with certain degrees of dependency. Furthermore, donor politics are not the only influence on NGO agendas. National states can exercise great influence on NGOs receiving foreign funds, especially in India. The Indian government devised the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) in 1976, which intends “to regulate the acceptance and utilization of foreign contribution with a view to ensure that institutions, associations and other voluntary organizations [...] utilize these funds in a manner consistent with the values of sovereign democratic republic” (FCRA, 1976). So, the primary purpose of this law is to warrant that foreign contributions are not used against the highly normative interests of the national state. In history, the Indian government has proven active in using these judgements by denying and cutting all Dutch bilateral aid, where political motives were speculated (Bidwai, 2003). When a NGO is still to some degree dependent on foreign funding, the danger of such government behaviour certainly can influence radical action to less confronting operations if organizational survival is at stake. It is therefore essential to look deeper in the organizational aspects of external funding for activities of Navdanya.

The diverse operational costs and the way these are covered provide an organizational setup which is quite interesting and where principles of self-sufficiency definitely shine through. Navdanya is not completely reliant on foreign funding, but performs many income generating activities themselves which consist of an interesting combination of external funding and autonomous self-finance (interview Bhatt). There are three sectors of Navdanya's activities that are completely financially self-reliant and need no external funding whatsoever. The first of these, is Navdanya's organic farm, which act as an educational centre, seed research and distribution and guesthouse. The courses and lectures that students follow at the farm are paid education and provide enough finance to sustain the wage of staff, educational logistics and food supply. In addition to the guesthouse at the farm, this also provides income to maintain local farmer networks (interview Negi). The second is the organization of festivals, workshops and exhibitions. These manifestation mostly ask for a modest contribution, just enough to cover the expenses of setting up the event, but remain non-profit. Workshops and seminars with auditing marginalized groups remain free and all-inclusive for participants however: "educational purpose before financial purpose" (interview Bhatt). And thirdly, the setup of the local fair trade network is completely self-reliant. The agricultural products sold at the fair trade outlets come directly from the farmers and the income from their sale also goes directly back; Navdanya only takes the amount needed for packaging and transport without resulting profit. As a result of this non-profit character, the prices of the products sold at the outlets are lower than average and farmers income per unit sold higher than average. This system works as independent unit in Navdanya's operation without external input (interview Bhatt).

Besides self-financed units within Navdanya's operations, the organizations also possesses four income generating activities. First of all, the big name of Vandana Shiva attracts massive attention from all over the world and her contribution in major conferences often includes payment which therefore generates finance for Navdanya. This form of income is however highly unsustainable for it is completely dependent on one person. The second form of income suffers from the same difficulty. Navdanya sells many books throughout the world, which covers not only the expenses of publication, but generates extra income for the organization. But many of those books –although not exclusively– are written by Vandana Shiva and their sale is therefore bound to her popularity. But both income sources now generate for the time being finance for the organization to utilize in an autonomous manner

(interview Shiva). A third income are small marketing items, like t-shirts, organic shampoo's or other products that are for sale and are purchased by well-off travelers, students or the Indian middle-class. The fourth and most important –not in quantity but in meaning– is a strong membership base. Navdanya has over 2000 members from around the world, who all pay annual fees. Members are provided a quarterly newsletter and discount on all Navdanya products and publications (Navdanya, 2008).

These self-finance sources however do not fully cover the costs of the whole spectrum of operations of Navdanya. The organisation consists of about 100 paid workers, although there is a bigger degree of volunteers –Indian as well as international– which at some times range into 1000 people, but mostly is short term and campaign based (interview Bhatt). Also, the material conditions of many farmers makes it hard to achieve a higher degree of structural volunteers (interview Negi). But of the 2 million farmers directly involved with Navdanya, 75.000 are primary members which make up a fluent network which at times can provide a strong voluntary resource base (Navdanya, 2008). Vandana Shiva added to this, that “resource scarcity and conservation replaces the importance of fund flows with emphasis on human quality and commitment” (interview Shiva).

Interestingly, the Indian government obstructed a new funding agreement of Navdanya with the European Union for water sovereignty projects, which again shows state power in the international financing of domestic NGOs. Shiva shared in the interview her thoughts that “most funding proposals are not replied” –while most agencies and institutions are very enthusiastic when they meet her at conferences– and she suspects this “has as cause a too high degree of radicality for their taste. But when funding is granted, donors know that Navdanya is not the type of organisation that accepts conditionalities” (interview Shiva). But with the end of the term based Hivos funding in sight and obstructed EU funds, questions of external donors become even more relevant.

Encouraging of this brief picture is the fact that core operations exist without external funding and independently remain in existence despite fluctuations in donor preferences. Through the self-reliance of this alternative space, the organic movement of farmers can and will independently operate. But the campaigns are highly funded by external finance and it is

this sector of operation is that is suffering from the highest degree of funding dependency. The question then again becomes; to what degree does the fact that radical action potentially can activate FCRA and put the funding source of this action into danger, provide a barrier for certain activities? The exact degree to what extend donor shaped funding channels limit the spectrum of radical action matters less than possibilities to overcome this dependency and become truly financially self-reliant and autonomous. The coming chapter will thereby develop the potential of Navdanya's radical spaces to overcome current weaknesses of external funding dependence of their campaigns and unsustainable income based on the fame of current leadership; thereby attempting to translate these lessons into truly radical spaces that challenge structural power. Also it will convert calls of the grassroots for PAAs to reinvent themselves into the identification of radical spaces for PAAs to occupy.

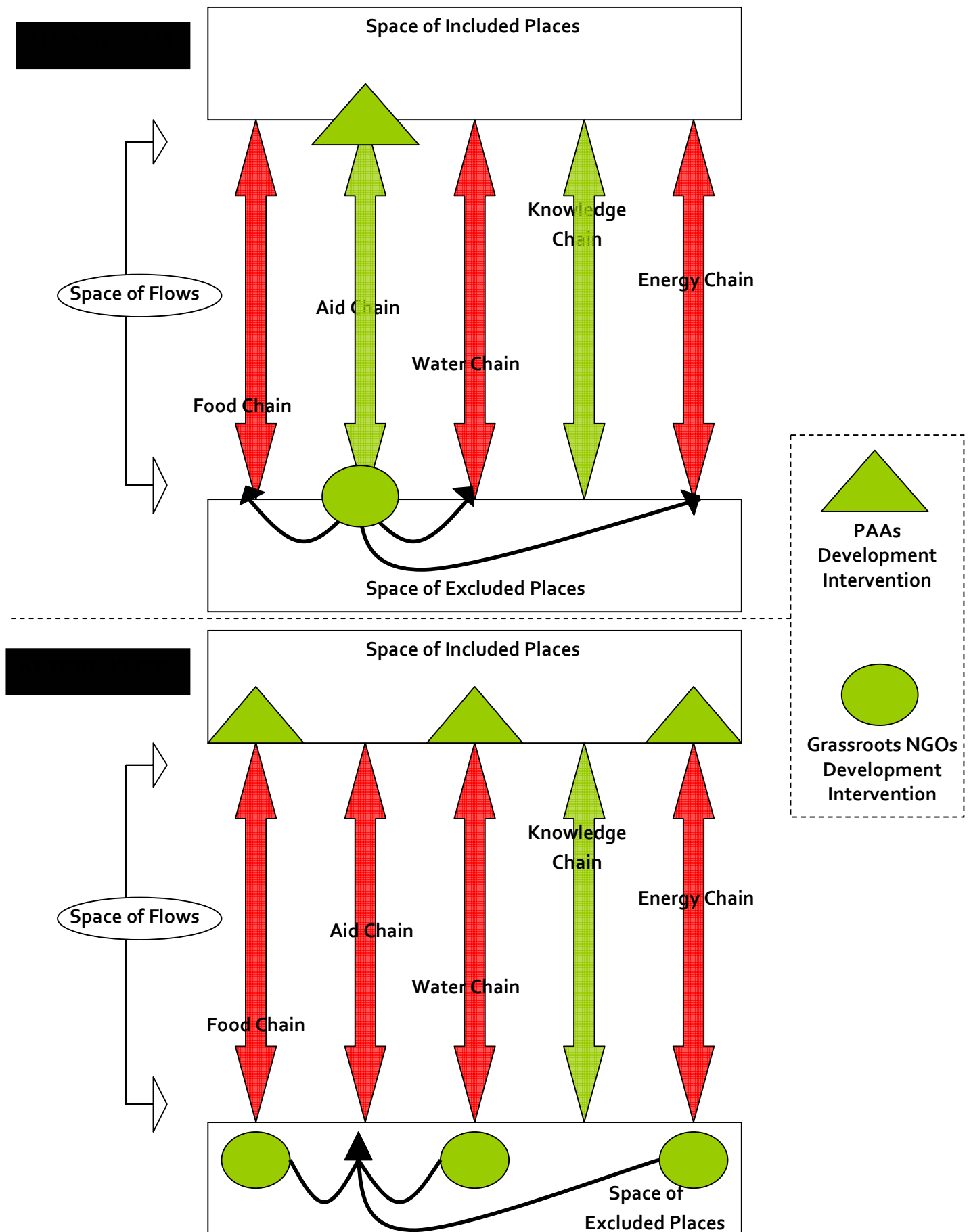


Figure 3: Regime of Flows Revolutionized

Chapter 4 **Beyond the Politics of Aid: Alternative Civil Society Relations**

4.1 Countering Regimes of Flows: Strategic Choice of Spaces

The case-study of Navdanya provides some important lessons for grassroots NGOs in a beyond aid paradigm. Most importantly it shows that the possibility is there, to combine the mobilization of development finance with the creation of alternative ways to provide local communities with basic needs of food and knowledge, independent from dominant global flows. Instead of instrumental efforts of achieving external funds, the establishment of these alternative spaces is at the same time the source of self-finance, while remaining transformative in nature. While Navdanya does still have the necessity of external funds for campaigning, this chapter draws on these self-finance structures and expands it into networks of financial self-reliance that not only sidestep power relations of the aid chain, but construct a genuine alternative to dominant flows of capitalism.

Figure 3 attempts to visualize this strategic choice of space. Bare in mind that –like all models– this display of relations is highly simplistic compared to reality and only serves to highlight a general tendency and an alternative possibility for this tendency. In times where the supply and distribution of basic necessities, like food, water and energy, increasingly is directed by multinational corporations and thereby the logic of dispossessing accumulation. Global aid flows are often attempting to connect those marginalized and dispossessed to these global flows to at least achieve bare survival. Mainstream development either engages in non-confrontational, depoliticized services in attempts to transform the recipient society; or facilitates physical infrastructure and promotes income-generating activity to connect to the economy; or empowers groups and communities to engage in local, regional and national democratization processes. The mainstream focuses on sectors like health, water, education, environment, social welfare, transport, libraries and some generalised concept of poverty, but “with little definition or theory to explain the relationships of exploitation that bring it about; [...] they avoid analysing the nature and consequences of capitalism” (Wallace, 2004). Figure 3 attempts to visualize that this avoidance of analysing the deeper structure of capitalism may more often than desirable result in a mostly unintended reinforcement of these structures.

Also the knowledge sharing between the grassroots and PAAs, that should be an essential element of their mutual strengthening, is often distorted by the power inequalities of the aid relationship. While many positive examples can be given, the norm seems to be that PAAs share management skills and capacity building techniques, while grassroots NGOs share local information and legitimacy. The main purpose of the regime of flows as conceptual tool is to show that mainstream development has chosen the space of flows as its space of intervention; a space that is highly dominated by the structural power of the logic of dispossessing accumulation and thereby inherently permeates into development interventions organised in this space.

The case of Navdanya shows however that with the help of transformative forms of self-finance, grassroots NGOs can raise alternative spaces of self-reliance as local substitute for global food, water and energy regimes without the financial support of PAAs. The inclusion of these lessons in figure 3, alters the picture for grassroots NGOs as well for PAAs in an alternative development paradigm that is not structured around aid. More importantly, these development interventions remove themselves from the space of flows into the space of places; into a genuine manifestation of locally grounded, grassroots development. The metamorphosis in roles and responsibilities suggested here will not be easy nor without pain; especially for current major PAAs. It will require major revisions in institutional assumptions of development, but these will be more painful when forced by decreasing aid flows compared to a voluntarily transition. Also, it will require PAAs as well as grassroots NGOs to “compete with social movements [...] that have never entered the aid transfer paradigm”, but they will choose to play more activist roles (Malhotra, 2000). All of this will call for a fast learning curve.

Despite obvious difficulties in this challenge, this transition is necessary to be ready for a future of vastly diminished aid and, more importantly, to fuel movements for structural transformation that are not premised on the paradigm of aid transfer. The coming paragraphs will answer the main question and combine lessons of the case-study with the conceptual framework to identify radical spaces for grassroots NGOs and PAAs. First, the operational analysis of Navdanya will be translated into spaces that grassroots NGOs can construct truly self-sufficient spaces of resistance, independent of the structural power of capitalism and

constituting a genuine alternative with the help of local-oriented, small-scale and non-profit manifestations of fair trade systems and inclusive networks of membership and volunteering. Second, this implies an alternative role for PAAs, that shifts from the exclusive function of aid distribution to more constituency-based forms of knowledge networks, platform creation and alternative development education on one side and more independent and structural forms of advocacy and campaigning towards the hegemonic holders of power within the regimes of flows.

4.2 Beyond Aid: Transformative Self-Finance as Grassroots Resistance

While some predict that the majority of grassroots NGOs will vanish in a beyond aid paradigm (Fowler, 2000), it is certain that this group will be severely affected. It is thereby surprising that so far self-financing strategies of grassroots NGOs have attracted little attention beyond micro-finance tactics. Not only is self-finance a way of creating financial independency to protect NGOs from external interference; preparation for diminishing aid flows is essential because “self-financing activities in response to a funding crisis are likely to be ill-conceived” (James, 1994). And grassroots NGOs, mostly operating in regions of poverty, will face a tougher challenge than PAAs to go beyond aid. But before discussing self-finance as grassroots tool of independency, it is important to illuminate some ethical concerns.

More contemporary NGOs are moving towards investment in revenue-generating, business-like ventures (Pierre-Emmanuel, 2006; Reddy, 2003). Such strategies and the increasing resemblance between some non-profit organizations and for-profit businesses have often been the cause of controversy about the altruism of these NGOs, questioning their commitment to their original missions. Independent income certainly does not automatically increase the potential of a more radical challenge to dominant structures, but contains the obvious danger that the NGO becomes even part of that same structure, replacing donors by the logic of market. Commercialization can change NGOs from being guided by a social mission and sets of values to becoming a for-profit entity (Reddy, 2003); take up too much staff time (James, 1994) and potentially relegates the key development objectives. Or in the words of Alan Fowler (1997), they might “lose their non-profit virginity”.

BRAC is an example of a self-financing giant. The organization adopts various activities to generate profit and its financial sustainability has dramatically increased. In 2002, BRAC generated 80% of its US\$ 193 million budget (BRAC, 2002). The NGO performs two main kinds of profit-generating activities: First, surplus-generates micro-finance programmes; second, supportive enterprises and various commercial ventures, which includes internet service, banks, real estate and even an university (Kairy, 2004). Many of these commercial investments in corporate activities can hardly be called transformative and in no way seem to challenge the structural power of capitalism; rather it becomes part of it. Thereby the self-finance tactics are clearly an instrument of gathering development finance and not transformative in nature.

The issue of micro-finance is more complex however. Micro-credit has become one of the new fashions of poverty alleviation. There are worries that micro-credit tempts NGOs to capture economies by extending loans to the non-poor, which “leads many to conclude that if financial self-sufficiency is desired, then the very poor will not be reached” (Brau and Woller, 2004). Also one can doubt if the local economic development it leads to is enduring (Fowler, 2000b). But to relate the concept to Harvey’s idea of accumulation by dispossession; micro-finance as source of financial self-sufficiency, creates a situation where institutional survival necessitates the interest rate on other peoples debt and thereby creating a micro-cosmos of self-reinforcing perpetual growth: the logic of dispossessing accumulation. Or more simple, local communities need more loans to sustain development based on debt. Tandon (2000) remarks that, while there are some gains made by making small amounts of low-interest credit available for those marginalized, by its nature, “this intervention seeks to expand the pool of private enterprise for economic development”. The mechanism of micro-credit is a genuine point of discussion. However, rarely it is to combine with the values and ethics of radical democracy and ecology and this paper will thereby perceive it as instrumental and not transformative.

Before discussing potential spaces of self-sufficiency, it is therefore essential to make the distinction between instrumental self-finance and transformative self-finance. Instrumental forms of self-finance is the marketing of goods or services with the only purpose of generating revenue by selling it in private markets. Self-finance in this form implies a division

between the commercial and developmental sector of a NGO; the commercial element does not advance the developmental goal, but merely provides finance for it. BRAC is a clear example of instrumental self-finance. Transformative self-finance however, contains developmental goals in the revenue-generating activity itself with no division between developmental and commercial sides: the establishment of transformative space is self-sufficient, also financially, and like Vinod Bhatt (interview) said, developmental purpose goes before financial purpose. Drawing on the case of Navdanya, two forms of transformative self-finance are presented, namely the establishment of grassroots fair trade networks and a strong membership and volunteer base.

4.2.1 Grassroots Fair Trade Networks

When mentioned before, this paper has proven to be quite cynical about fair trade as radical alternative, but fair trade has many possibilities and definitions. Fidell (2007) stated that fair trade as term is used “to encapsulate a variety of initiatives”. These range from improving living and working conditions of small farmers in the South (Yilmaz, 2006) to an attractive market opportunity for small-scale producers (Bacon, 2004). With regard to its transformative potential, “forces more powerful than the fair trade network have proven capable of pulling the network away from its more radical vision” (Fidell, 2007). Mainstream fair trade encourages people to “vote with their money” by placing the source of transformation in the market and merely giving illusions of change while leaving capitalist power structures intact, thereby giving rise to the term the “neoliberalisation of activism” (Roff, 2007). The powerful forces that Fidell (2007) mentions operate within the space of flows –utilized to connect small farmers with rich consumers– and are another term for the structural power of capitalism to co-opt alternatives into corporate opportunities. Global fair trade networks leaves local farmers as perpetual hostages of the global flows of capitalist markets and like aid flows, the mainstream fair trade’s choice to operate in the space of flows is misguided. The market logic of mainstream fair trade can hardly be called transformative, thereby disqualifying itself as source of self-finance. Fair trade is however not limited to the space of flows.

The concept of fair trade has to gain by the principle of “fair trade miles” of Colin Hines (2003), which involves mixing fair trade with the limiting of miles between producer and consumer in order to minimize the environmental footprint. Fair trade should also imply a

just process that protects the environment. Thereby, Hines called for more localized food production, aimed at smaller local markets. This will enhance food security and reduce environmental costs of production by decreasing “food miles” (Hines, 2003). Also, this will defy external control over the supply chain that allows food corporations to define this process and capture the value created (Morelli, 2004). Hines proposal is also very similar to Navdanya’s practice. This paper will utilize this more transformative, grassroots form of fair trade as source of self-finance.

Navdanya proves the possibility of this grassroots form of fair trade by connecting urban consumers with small farmers in regional setting, while respecting ecological and social values. When determining the just price for fair trade products, the total cost of the product includes three basic costs; coverage of the salary paid to the farmer, the implementation of good working conditions and production methods that respect the environment. Yilmaz (2006) proposes to add a fourth cost, the cost of social struggle. Fair trade products would thereby not only contribute to small farmers’ livelihoods, but would also support the struggle for structural transformation. Fair trade could thereby constitute a source of funding for grassroots NGOs. Navdanya is not the only NGO engaging in this practice; the Landless Workers Movement (MST) in Brazil created a label for their agricultural production. These products are sold throughout Brazil and allow consumers to support the MST through purchasing their goods (Perez-Vitoria, 2005).

To which extent this form of fair trade can address the problem of commodity fetishism is unsure (Hudson and Hudson, 2003), but the case of Navdanya has shown that: first, by cutting long-distance transport costs, chemical agro-inputs and the profit surplus the price of these fair trade products is even ‘competitive’; second, the increased quality compared to most corporate food products benefits health and taste; and third, by pointing at underlying social and environmental relations of commodity production and exchange, educational purposes are served. Navdanya’s fair trade network, while completely self-sustaining, does not create a financial surplus. A small surplus per product could however be a possible source for funding their campaigns and could in general fund the struggle of grassroots NGOs for radical transformation.

Again some caution is required to assure transformative nature over finance generation. The distribution of food must primarily seek to feed the local market before reaching out to higher paying urban customers. Increased efforts to serve a richer population may divert the organization from its social mission (Pierre-Emmanuel, 2006). Also, NGOs cannot compromise local initiatives and create competition between grassroots organisations or communities: “social justice must under no account turn itself against [...] local initiatives, especially involving the weaker mass of the population” (Yilmaz, 2006). And finally, NGOs must assure that fair trade certification requirements do not generate barriers to entry for the poorest of producers (Raynolds, 2003). Thereby, close attention must be paid to which products are chosen to commercialize and the effects of their commercialization on the original development goals.

4.2.2 Membership, Contributions and Volunteers

Another way to improve autonomy is through a high in number membership that is committed, prepared to participate and share responsibilities of work on voluntary basis. Revenues stemming from members’ contributions combined with a strong, mobilized and motivated voluntary group are the best solution against dependence (Vincent, 2006). Experiences at Navdanya show that many members live in poverty and in no way can contribute financially nor give much of their time. However, there is potential to raise some money from constituencies by their proximity and involvement in everyday effects of dispossessing accumulation (Bailey, 1999). Also, members’ help frequently comes in the form of food, lending a room, paying a bus fare or other indirect contributions (Bailey, 1999). Membership is also a way of involving people and broadening the network of the NGO (Pradjasto and Saptaningrum, 2006). Last but not least, strongly engaged citizens in the rich countries can also provide a base of direct membership. New media offers possibilities of an interactive relationship with members: chances to mobilise and activate people over larger distance (Leipold, 2000). Instead of support through PAAs, this provides tools for support without intermediary.

Most concepts of NGO sustainability focus only narrowly on financial considerations and ignore human resources (Devine, 2003). Self-sufficiency, however can be attained by people’s work and passion for the cause. Of course, the constituencies that are themselves affected by the development goal –like the small farmers in Navdanya’s case– are the core

base of volunteers. But grassroots NGOs can also take advantage of those with a sense of social responsibility, which includes university students and the retired (Bailey, 1999). Besides that, NGOs can focus their recruitment more on skills more closely related to their mission statement, instead of grant-hunting skills. Even internationally, grassroots NGOs can attract the attention of volunteering global activists, attracted to their cause. This voluntary effort has been the heart of many social movements and could potentially drive the core of grassroots NGOs. Levels of participation are of course hard to predict, just like levels of membership contributions, but this should motivate NGOs to be innovative and original in their developmental strategies to attract attention of potential participants. But of course not every NGO can count on the fame of their leadership, like Navdanya can.

Most grassroots NGOs that will attempt to generate funds outside the aid chain will be likely to find a more modest income compared to external funding. But besides a more committed focus on volunteering most NGOs can reduce costs. Like Vandana Shiva said (interview), resource scarcity is not that bad for it renews one commitment to human quality. An important step is to operate more simply, like “using public transport [...], standardising equipment and sharing facilities” (Fowler, 1997). Also, this paper does not plea for the complete stop of external funding, but it should not be the majority of income neither should it finance core strategies, but this grassroots independence and self-reliance strengthen their position towards donors. From this self-reliant base of operation, these local spaces have bargaining power versus their aid distributor and create the base for more genuine partnership. Thereby, this grassroots rebellion to autonomy certainly implies a different position of PAAs in the development field.

4.3 Beyond Aid: Alternatives to Exclusive Role of Aid Distribution

Independent on how long PAAs can prolong their current reliance on official aid, the handover of power to grassroots NGOs is long overdue. Many transnational activists dismiss the efforts of moderate, reform-minded PAAs for working with governance institutions, lending legitimacy to these institutions and depriving the people they claim to represent of an authentic voice (Tarrow, 2005). While international NGOs efforts to reform governance institutions from within should not completely be dismissed, nor are voices of transnational activist always authentic, but the point that PAAs are less inclined to engage in political activities that might upset these governance structures seems genuine.

In discussion with grassroots NGOs in India, the question was asked what space they would like PAAs to occupy. Navdanya and other pointed first of all at the favourable position their PAA partners were to critically engage with powerful governance institutions and second, to educating their domestic audiences about social and ecological justice issues (interview Shiva; Negi; Ramprasad). But PAAs also face funding complications of the aid chain; these governance institutions represent their donor community and they may not be willing to “feed the hand that bites” (Harding, 2001). Bishwadeep Ghose (interview) shared that Hivos attempts to remain political neutral and leave confrontation with governance to partner organisations. Not only in India are relevant aid dependencies, but also higher up the aid in the richer countries. It has to be remarked that the official market-led approach of development within Hivos might endanger radical action (interview Ghose). Although when radical proposals are framed into all the buzzwords, Hivos might accept it: Fernandez (interview) commented that the role of intermediary means “interpreting upwards policy on the ground and selling the packaging of local priorities” to deal with these multiple accountabilities.

That Holland also knows possible state interference was shown recently, when the state questioned if Greenpeace’s funding should be restricted after they prevented the fishing industry to fish in protected areas (Greenpeace, 2008). Some NGOs like these environmental groups as well as some human rights, peace and lobbying organisations already do not accept funding from governance institutions to deal with more confrontational issues (Roche, 1998). The horizon of a beyond aid situation can provide the stimulant for PAAs to reflect on their current position in development. From a grassroots perspective, there are hopes of renewed openness and space within PAAs to allow and encourage political activists, young and old, to challenge the current development hegemony. Interviews in India called upon PAAs to redefine their concept of solidarity towards “taking sides in the face of injustice, or the processes that reproduce injustice” (Manji, 1999). While it is unjust to criticize all PAAs in to the same extent –partner organisations portrayed Hivos as an organisation consciousness about the politics of their role– the dispute about their role as legitimate advocates for the poor while remaining political detached, is one that PAAs have to confront. A beyond aid scenario might provide new worlds of possibilities to transform their sole purpose of aid

distribution to a whole range of activities with more political value and radical possibility, regaining their relevance and credibility in the process.

4.3.1 Advocacy and Campaigning

Advocacy from international NGOs seems to become more strategic, increasingly utilizes the media effectively and has gained access to the political-economic environment, domestically as well as internationally. This has led to stronger interaction between NGOs and governance institutions (Anderson, 2000). Roe (1995) has criticised international NGO advocacy as a debate between members of a “new managerial class” in which NGO professionals debate with other members of the same global class, which together “can force policy-making processes that are open to their own participation, without assuring access for excluded communities”. Advocacy should by its nature be confrontational and as such they are constrained if the organisation is too close to governance structures. It is therefore thought to combine confrontation with co-operation and funding dependency (Leipold, 2000). This situation might even relegate these NGOs to being sidelined in the transformation of the institutions, policies and practices which sustain the dispossessing tendencies of capitalism.

Since grassroots NGOs increasingly take over grassroots projects, PAAs should look for new roles with the recognition that these projects will have limited effects without structural changes; thereby the increasing call is to do more advocacy work (Leipold, 2000). Anderson (1999) makes the argument that without aid, PAAs can independently determine issues upon which they advocate; set their own advocacy goals; make judgements about the spaces that they should seek to influence; and define tactics and forms that will be most effective. Thinking beyond aid would liberate PAAs “from the constraints imposed by the beliefs of private and official donors that resources ought not be diverted away from tangible, currently more marketable, humanitarian relief and development projects” (Anderson, 1999). This gives the chance to adjust to their new prominence in dominant political-economic spaces and adopt more structural and radical advocacy strategies.

Also, the institutional emphasis on fundraising within an environment of extreme density in competition for funds, most PAAs undertake campaigning for public profile and the assumption that it helps fundraising (Leipold, 2000). Campaigns undertaken mainly for fundraising purposes generally come at the price of a weak campaign, thereby leaving the

choice of more efficient fundraising or more legitimacy. This however is a vicious circle since the public seems “less likely to donate funds to [...] support a nebulous concept than it is to support a starving child” (Huddock, 1997). And simplistic development images will never enhance public support for more rigorous advocacy strategies. An abandonment of the scramble for funds would greatly boost their campaigning potential.

4.3.2 Domestic Alternative Development Education & Volunteer Seeking

PAAAs have been important players in –what Paolo Freire (1970) calls– “the creation of necessary consciousness”, but they have never fully applied their potential as constituency builders and rarely used their levels of public trust and extended fund-raising networks “as channels for personal transformation and lifestyle change” (Edwards and Sen, 2000). Most domestic audiences of the richer countries remain mostly passive about deeper social justice issues. Fears of PAAAs that domestic projects or views of more long-term development “would dry up public support” seem to limit the scope of work to safer projects (Van Rooy, 2000). But again, by looking beyond funding, PAAAs would greatly enhance their ability to meet grassroots demands of educating their domestic constituencies.

The shallowness of public awareness supports the call for continuing efforts to develop understanding of global processes of exclusion and dispossession. With the decline of aid, PAAAs as explicitly value-based organisations have a crucial role to play in expanding and supporting new and creative forms of alternative development education. This implies changes in organisational praxis to provide inspirational examples of ethics and values (Edwards and Sen, 2000). Or in Gandhi’s words, to become the change they want to see. Core values should more seriously include management practices that create personal change and while a start has been made in this direction, a huge area remains unexplored (Fowler, 1997). But it also implies a stronger link with constituencies, while “resisting the temptation to rely on vivid images of human suffering in order to galvanise the donating public” (Borren, 2000). True and civic-led forms of radical developmental education can potentially enter the dominant educational domain based on voluntary and morally led initiatives.

The challenge this form of development education will face is to construct a process of learning “that allows participants to take ownership of their new ideas and understanding of the underlying causes of poverty and exclusion” (Borren, 2000). Sending volunteers to help

grassroots NGOs will help this feeling of ownership and will bring “stronger recognition of the need to understand fully what happens to people within the processes of poverty and injustice” (Borren, 2000). It is unrealistic to focus on transforming international governance and exclude personal change and spiritual development from development efforts; or in other words, advance the values that make development cooperation work (Edwards and Sen, 2000). Thereby PAAs can play a key role in establishing radical spaces of development education

4.3.3 Knowledge Networks and Platform Creation

In an increasingly complex and dense web of transnational activism, PAAs are more and more using their role as platform. “Micro movements [are] abound all over the place, but there is not enough of a dialogue between them” (Tandon, 2000). Too often connections between local and global lack and instead, there seem to be two activist solitudes. On one hand, the international activists, increasingly triumphant, and on the other hand, the community activists who fight daily struggles for survival and often feel demoralized and powerless. This last group thinks “what in the hell are you guys so excited about?” (Klein, 2004). Sharing experiences and perspectives can become an important challenge for PAAs, who are in the perfect position to provide the platform for both these groups.

Most transnational protests are product of largely occasional coalitions of actors. The fundamental question is how this new transnational activism can reach beyond sporadic international demonstrations into more structural networks (Tarrow, 2005) to make sure that they do not compete for political spaces, but complement each other. This role is currently explored by the World Social Forum (WSF), which provides a platform from progressive activism (Sousa Santos, 2004). One of the critiques many radical activists have about the WSF, is that big NGOs use their funds to claim a prominent voice within the platform which results in dominance of the “NGO world view” (Diaz, 2006). The financing of the WSF by PAAs is however one of the most sustainable sources of funding. In an era beyond funding, these PAAs however can merely arrange international and regional platforms –drawing from the lessons of the WSF. Without asymmetrical relationships based on funding and no need to raise their voices to prominence for sakes of fundraising, these PAAs can use their central place in development as space for activist organisations to deliberate, in physical as well as

virtual space. Without funding relations knowledge sharing and platform creation can be achieved in amore horizontal way.

These radical spaces for both PAAs and grassroots NGOs are in potential sites of transformation, but do not necessary lead to structural transformation. They are merely better placed in relation to the structural power of capitalism. It is to the civic agency of these organisations to utilize this potential. In time of changing developmental discourses and aid relations, combined with times of capitalist crisis and recession, the momentum for structural transformation is increasing. While more activist organisations will play a role in striving for transformation, it is to grassroots NGOs and PAAs to connect with them, identify their radical spaces and begin movements for structural change.

Chapter 5 Conclusions

To come back to the main question of how grassroots NGOs have established alternatives to the dominant aid system that challenge the dispossession logic of capitalism? The case-study of Navdanya showed that, as grassroots NGO, they dealt with the dispossession logic of capitalism in the form of food and knowledge flows and established an alternative to these flows in Gandhian tradition: the establishment of truly radical spaces by construction of self-sufficiency and independence in relation to the food / knowledge regime. The replacement of the external input of fertilizers, pesticides, seed knowledge and market opportunities by local alternatives of organic farming, seed sharing and the local food market make up this independency. Also these spaces require no external finance and are self-reliantly covering their costs. Local fair trade and knowledge sharing networks constitute the radical space in which the free operation of civic agency within this space is not bounded by the structural power of capitalism.

While these radical spaces constitute self-financed alternatives, Navdanya's campaigns are however largely externally financed. The confrontational efforts towards expressions of the structural power of capitalism at grassroots level are thereby constraint by the degree of limiting conditionalities this funding requires. Their campaigns are thereby dependent on external entities operating in hierarchy within the aid chain. The more upwards they operate, the more these entities are constraint in their action by the structural power of capitalism. While Hivos is generally viewed as flexible, they also are limited in their action by upwards demands of politically biased effectiveness. Even national states see their sovereignty fading by structural power. With rising funding channels from multinational corporations and speculation about direct state funding to grassroots NGOs, Navdanya should fear to see their funding environment become either increasingly constraining or diminishing. As long as Navdanya's campaigns are dependent on external aid chains, they are to some degree or another constraint in structurally challenging the status quo.

While transformative practices consist of course of broader amounts of parameters than just permeating structural power, it is worthy to avoid its limiting intrusion in confrontation with power holders in capitalism. The last chapter of this paper develops the

construction that radical spaces of alternative food and knowledge networks can be the source of funding themselves. Grassroots fair trade networks can –besides contribute to fair social and ecological practices– also include the cost of transformative practices and thereby function as funding for structural transformation. Also, the case of Navdanya shows that strong and widespread membership means a source of resources, not only in the form of membership fees or other material gifts, but also human resources in the form of committed volunteers. Further building on principles of self-finance within Navdanya, provides the potential of establishing radical spaces independent of external interference by structural power of funding. Especially for cases like Navdanya this is important, since their external funding heavily drives on the well known status of Vandana Shiva and thereby fails to be sustainable in the long term.

The concept of radical space contains a different meaning for PAAs, since they relate to the structural power of capitalism in a different way. PAAs developed a prominent position around spaces of decision-making for international governance and can thereby influence the dominant power-holders of capitalism to a greater extent. Also, the constituencies of PAAs often portray a shallow understanding of structural power of capitalism and causal relations of poverty, inequality and ecological degradation. Interviews from Navdanya and other Indian NGOs identified these spaces as the most important for PAAs to occupy. When reinventing themselves in a beyond aid scenario, PAAs are called upon to embrace confrontational forms of advocacy and campaigning to challenge the status quo within dominant spaces of international governance. And besides influencing power-holders, PAAs face the challenge of educating their domestic constituencies with transformative forms of development education to strengthen support for structural transformation. These are the radical spaces that PAAs can opt to occupy when faced with the challenge of changing aid relations.

For grassroots NGOs and PAAs, the replacement of the intermediary/recipient relation within aid chains by radical spaces that draw on their comparative advantages in terms of transformative potential, means a shift from cooperation with the status quo to confrontation with these dominant power-holders; from risking cooptation by structural power to independence from structural power. This also means that relations of knowledge sharing are not defined by this unequal and hierarchical intermediary/recipient relation, but truly

horizontal sharing relations of cooperating radical spaces. Knowledge networks and information flows are one of the few global flows where the overriding structural power can still be avoided.

Stepping away from purposes or consequences of governmentality towards radical and structural transformation in a beyond aid-led development paradigm is the revolutionizing of the global aid chain that the title speaks of. But the mere identification of radical spaces is not enough. This research thereby leaves many questions for further research: Under what conditions are grassroots NGOs driven towards these radical spaces of self-finance? How can these NGOs make this shift well before the availability of aid diminishes to avoid organisational change in times of funding crisis? And what forms of development finance can PAAs utilize without constraining their radical development imperatives? Further research with more time and funding to visit multiple developmental organisations can hopefully supply satisfactory answers and increase our understanding of this process of radical change.

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Interviews

NAME	FUNCTION	ORGANISATION
Shiva, V.	Founder and Director	Navdanya
Bhatt, V.	Chief Co-ordinator	Navdanya
Negi, D.S.	Chief Co-ordinator	Navdanya
Narrain, S.	Lawyer	Alternative Law Forum
Ramprasad, V.	Founder and director	Green Foundation
Ghose, B.	Programme officer	Hivos India
Fernandez, R.	Deputy Director	Hivos India
Ghosh, G.N.	Assistant Representative	UN FAO

Table 1: Fieldwork interviews