

ACCOUNTABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF NGO POLICY ALLIANCES

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INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the last decade of the Twentieth Century, there was much talk of the emerging advocacy role for NGO communities in both the North and South. Debates about the propriety, legality, and safety of NGO lobbying were in the air. Now only a few years later, advocacy activities with governments, donors, multi-lateral development agencies, and publics is assumed to be a crucial ingredient in enhancing the position of NGOs as key players in the diffuse social movement loosely labeled "sustainable development". UNCED, in the Summer of 1992, undoubtedly helped turn the tide from the "Should we?" line of questions regarding NGO roles in policy influence to the "How do we do it?" discourse now emerging.

Democratization, in its messy evolution in societies around the globe, tugs NGOs toward a more active policy influencing role as political space opens for people's voice in public affairs. The promise of democracy becomes a reality, however, when groups (especially marginalized sectors of society) effectively participate in the marketplace of competing interests. Inclusion in political systems long dominated by elites depends, in part, on the institutional strength of policy newcomers and, in part, on the perceived legitimacy of their participation itself. The challenge of building an effective policy influencing organization increases as groups seek to shape positive policy environments as well as protest negative ones. For example, winning policy advantages requires that mobilized public opinion be accompanied by convincing analysis that is at least on a par with the analytic capability of the decision makers NGOs are trying to influence (Clark, 1992). The dual challenges of effectively mobilizing arguments as well as people are great. Arguments that gain the attention of development policy makers on the one hand call for "expert" knowledge of both the issue and the decision making process, while public outcry and protest actions that constrain decision makers' power call for an active and organized grass roots constituency.

Policy influence efforts may or may not create conditions that foster greater popular participation in the future. A movement may not achieve its immediate policy objectives, but getting its issue on the public agenda expands the range of voices engaged in the political process, and so expands political space. On the other hand, attempting policy reform through protest and advocacy that too dramatically threaten vested interests may engender a

dangerous backlash from social and political elites, a problem of special importance in less open political regimes.

Similarly, policy influence campaigns can be carried out in ways that strengthen grass roots organizations and their direct voice in affairs affecting them, or they can be implemented by intermediaries for whom the grass roots are clients. The latter can lead to the evolution of a civil society with a strong professional advocacy sector and a weak (unorganized and non-participative) grass roots base (Jenkins, 1987).

The status of poor and marginalized groups is a poignant reminder of their lack of power in society. Grass roots organizations seldom (if ever) achieve policy change in their favor without the participation of other social groups such as NGOs, churches, professional groups and academe. The small literature on the policy influence work of NGOs in Southern countries reports a strikingly similar pattern of organization. Some sort of alliance emerges to bring together grass roots groups, intermediary NGOs, allies from academe or the church, and (more frequently than perhaps expected) allies from the state or official development agencies. Hall (1992) notes, for example, that the success of the Itaparica hydropower campaign in Northeast Brazil can be attributed to a combined "bottom-up" and "top-down" strategy involving local communities, a regional NGO formation, the church, international NGOs, and the World Bank.

Multi-organizational, multi-sectoral alliances are complex. Questions of how interests, participation and power are balanced among members typically arise in alliance formation and during the course of a campaign. They reflect the challenges inherent in forging alliances across groups representing differences in wealth, class, culture and resources. Fundamentally these questions have to do with finding the right balance of "bottom-up and top-down" forces in an alliance. The process of finding this balance is directly related to the questions central to this conference: What does an alliance need to be effective? How is alliance accountability to its members maintained -- especially to the grass roots interests it purports to represent?

This paper attempts to tease out elements associated with questions of effectiveness and accountability in policy alliances. It is a preliminary exploration of data from two Institute for Development Research (IDR) research programs in progress -- one looking at cases of national policy influence campaigns promoting a wide variety of development issues, and another examining transnational NGO alliances formed to influence World Bank projects.

THE CONCEPTS: EFFECTIVENESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Looking at policy alliances in terms of effectiveness and accountability is important for NGOs that seek to promote sustainable development and more open societies through popular influence on decision makers. Together effectiveness and accountability reflect the character of a policy influence campaign and the nature of relationships among the parties in an alliance. By developing clarity about what effectiveness means and understanding how and to whom accountability flows, those who would pursue development through policy influence can potentially achieve greater success and avoid some unintended consequences of their actions.

Effectiveness of Policy Alliances

Basically the success of a policy alliance is measured by the degree to which its stated policy goals are achieved. Did the alliance win desired policy advantages for those it represented? How significant were its compromises? Even if the gains were small were they consistent with

longer term objectives, or was the alliance co-opted? Is the bureaucracy implementing the policy as it was designed? Answers to these questions depend on one's interests, point of view, and subjective judgment. Nevertheless, they are the measure of the alliance's policy goal achievement.

A second outcome dimension is less explicit in the practice of policy influence. It is often assumed that policy efforts intended to benefit under-represented groups also strengthen the capacity of these groups to be advocates for their own interests. Expanding peoples' consciousness and empowering community based organizations is not an automatic outcome of policy influence work. However, strengthening community based institutions so that grass roots groups can be effective actors in the policy arena is crucial to long term policy alliance effectiveness.

Analyses of the Southern development experience conclude that while presumptions of grass roots association presence and strength are often ill founded, institutions for popular participation are essential for sustainable development (Cernea, 1987; Bratton, 1989). Likewise, policy alliances must strengthen grass roots participation if people are to develop the "staying power" required to build democratic societies. A second set of effectiveness questions emerge concerning the role of policy alliances in strengthening civil society. To what extent has the alliance, through its organization and campaign, strengthened the institutional base for citizen political action? Has it nurtured informed grass roots participation for the long haul, not simply mobilized groups for acts of protest? Has it contributed positively to an inclusive political culture, and public resolution of conflict through peaceful means?

Policy Alliance Accountability

NGO policy alliances typically include some constellation of community based organizations; organized social movements such as peasant federations; local, national, and international NGOs; and allies from the church, academe, business, government and development agencies. This multi-organizational and multi-sectoral cooperation establishes a set of crosscutting social and power relationships that form a bridge between the grass roots and elite groups. Structurally, alliances incorporate many of the very gaps in wealth, power, knowledge and resources they are trying to reshape (Brown & Tandon, 1993).

Where many actors are involved, to what and to whom is the alliance accountable? Each member has unique interests in addition to those encompassed by the shared agenda. Competing interests must be negotiated and renegotiated in some fashion as the alliance carries out its campaign. As the alliance interacts with policy makers and opponents, goals and tactics must be changed. Decision making reflects the power dynamics of the alliance itself. To what extent do these dynamics perpetuate existing patterns of influence in society -- albeit in the service of a shared purpose? To what extent is the alliance internally democratic?

Alliance accountability lies partially in formal representational and decision making structures that characterize membership-based community organizations. However, even when representative democratic structures exist, as in peasant associations, social movement organizations tend not to be democratic because over time the "iron law of oligarchy" presses for bureaucratization and concentration of power at the center (Fox, 1992).

Accountability is similarly elusive between NGOs and the communities with which they work. Despite the growing consensus that people's participation is a hallmark of good development projects, NGOs are seldom formally structured to ensure their accountability to grass roots organizations. In fact, NGO accountability procedures are most often designed to meet donor

needs rather than grass roots objectives. Edwards and Hulme (1994) point to "the paradox of organizations promoting democratization which are themselves only weakly democratic." Carroll (1991), on the other hand, offers alternatives to direct or representative democracy by which NGOs can be held accountable to the grass roots. His findings suggest that an open collegial NGO style and an ethos that encourages community participation help create sensitive and accountable organizations.

In the examination of cases and the discussion that follow this paper asks: 1) what factors increase policy alliance effectiveness on the dimensions of achieving policy outcomes and strengthening civil society? and 2) what factors enable alliances to be accountable to their members, especially grass roots groups?

THE CASES

The paper will explore questions of effectiveness and accountability in NGO policy alliances by comparing two cases of national level policy change efforts in the Philippines and two cases of transnational alliance efforts to affect World Bank projects. The cases were chosen from a larger body of IDR work to illustrate how alliance structures and processes lead to different levels of effectiveness and types of accountability. Both national and trans-national alliances are examined because each has important consequences for the lives of people in developing countries. The Philippine cases involve community based organizations, NGOs, NGO coalitions, and other allies. The transnational cases involve these actors plus international NGOs focused on World Bank environmental policy reform. Together the four cases offer contrasting examples of alliance effectiveness and different patterns of accountability.

The Philippine Campaigns

The first Philippine alliance, the **Urban Land Reform Task Force (ULRTF)** arose from more than twenty years of community efforts to protect the rights of the urban poor. It is the first attempt of urban people's organizations to influence policy through the parliamentary process rather than open confrontation and mass protest. The alliance, which also included policy oriented NGOs, a progressive church related businessmen's group, and leaders of the Catholic church, came together in 1991 when a weak urban land reform bill was drafted by the legislature. The task force's goal was to improve the quality of this legislation.

The Task Force built on the strength of its key players: The mass base of urban people's organizations; the businessmen council's experience with and access to the legislative process; the Bishop's political clout; and the NGO secretariat's technical and professional expertise. The governance and decision-making of the alliance were fairly loose. Over the course of the campaign, trust and flexibility increased significantly within the alliance as more ideologically radical community groups withdrew. The alliance won passage of an amended legislative agenda, and enhanced the legitimacy of urban land concerns of the poor. Furthermore, participation strengthened the ability of grass roots member organizations to negotiate with power holders.

The **Task Force for a Total Commercial Log Ban (TCLB)** was formed in about 1990 when a small number of Manila-based environmental groups, concerned with the rapid depletion of Philippine forests, came together with a few related NGOs and community organizations to launch a coordinated legislative campaign to protect remaining forest cover. As it reached out to other groups around the country the alliance incorporated grass roots economic concerns about equity and community use of forest resources into its proposal. As a result, its initial call for a total ban on logging was modified to call for a ban on commercial logging. The national

campaign was coordinated by a secretariat and a set of operational committees run on a part-time basis by staff from the Manila-based groups. Diverse community and regional log ban campaigns functioned simultaneously, but autonomously from one another.

The Task Force succeeded in placing environmental concerns on the national agenda and strengthening NGO commitment to the issue. However, the alliance's limited resources and the lack of effective coordination between member organizations and among the national and local campaigns reduced its ability to affect national legislative or bureaucratic outcomes.

The Transnational Campaigns

The case of **The Sierra Madre Forestry Project** involved protest of a World Bank-Mexican government venture intended to modernize the forestry industry of northern Mexico. A local church-based human rights organization began tracking this project because of concerns over its environmental and social impacts on the indigenous groups in the area. This group initially worked with a Texas-based policy group and an environmental advocacy group in Washington. Later, other U.S. regional and national NGOs exerted pressure on the World Bank to cancel the project due to concern about its effect on the Rio Grande watershed and plant and wildlife populations. The aim of the local NGO was to redesign the project to increase economic benefits for the area rather than cancel the project altogether. After a second environmental impact assessment was released, international NGOs increased pressure on the Bank to cancel the project. Meanwhile, macro-economic factors associated with trade liberalization

undermined the project's financial viability. It seems at this point to have been canceled.

The forest dwellers (Tarahumara Indians) were largely absent throughout this campaign. Even though the Mexican Department of Indigenous Affairs secured extra funds to consult local indigenous people, and the local NGO had previously worked closely with them on human rights and land tenure issues,

The Mount Apo Geothermal Plant Project was also contested by local, national and international groups whose goal was to persuade the World Bank not to finance a large scale energy project to be sited on sacred indigenous lands in Mindanao, Philippines. In 1983, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) denied the Philippine National Oil Company's exploration request on the grounds that this type of development was prohibited in National Parks. However, in 1985, the Bureau of Energy Development issued an exploration permit without an environmental impact assessment or public hearing. DENR declared the action illegal. In spite of this, the project got underway.

The indigenous communities and farmers in the valley below began to organize. The indigenous people's concerns centered on the desecration of sacred sites and violation of tribal self-determination, while the farmers were worried about downstream pollution. Joined by the local Catholic church, these groups formed a local task force that took initiative in opposing the Mt. Apo project. They solicited assistance from regional advocacy NGOs. The local organizations also obtained help from Manila-based national advocacy groups. Through their various solidarity networks this alliance of local, regional, and national groups brought the project to the attention of counterparts in Europe and North America.

The project was suspended in 1989, but in 1992, the project resumed as pressure to meet growing energy needs mounted. At the suggestion of a U.S. environmental NGO representative, the campaign began to pressure the World Bank and IMF through close coordination between the Manila-based NGOs and a Washington-based advocacy network.

The World Bank rejected the environmental impact assessment approved by DENR. Subsequently the government withdrew its loan request, but is seeking alternative funds to complete the project.

ANALYSIS OF ALLIANCE EFFECTIVENESS

This section will examine the four cases with respect to their effectiveness on policy outcomes and their impact on civil society. Policy effectiveness involves the extent to which the alliance achieved its policy goals through either direct or indirect influence on decision makers. The civil society dimension of effectiveness involves two measures: the alliance's impact on the strength of local institutions, and nature of community participation in the policy influence process. Following a discussion of alliance outcomes, the analysis will draw out characteristics that shape alliance effectiveness.

Table I: POLICY ALLIANCE EFFECTIVENESS

The Cases	Policy/Project Outcomes	Civil Society Outcomes
Urban Land Reform	Achieved its legislative goals.	Involved urban poor in legislative & bureaucratic advocacy.
Logging Ban	Concrete gains at local level. No national reform.	Built environmental constituency.
Sierra Madre Forest Project	Project Canceled.	No involvement of local people.
Mt. Apo Geothermal Plant	Philippine government withdraws World Bank loan request. Project will probably be completed.	Increased strength of existing local & regional groups and their relations to support networks.

Policy Outcomes

In none of the cases was there total victory on policy gains. Influence often come through **compromise**, as in the Urban Land Reform case. The Task Force modified its goals during the campaign and as a result of these compromises won solid, but only partial reform. When **multiple policy goals** are pursued, outcomes are likely to be mixed -- the alliance wins some, loses others. In the Mexican Forestry case, project abandonment achieved the alliance's environmental goals, but simultaneously made the economic development goals of the local NGO impossible to achieve.

The Log Ban case illustrates that policy outcomes often occur at **various levels**. The coalition failed to get national legislation passed because the national campaign was technically and politically unable to counter the weight of the commercial logging lobby. However, local groups did succeed in stopping some commercial logging and in gaining some reforestation projects. When alliance members pursue different levels of policy action (local, national and international) gains at one level do not necessarily flow to others. Determining when to compromise and balancing tradeoffs among different goals and different policy levels pose

major challenges to NGO policy alliances.

Finally, effectiveness in **influencing multiple actors** also needs to be considered. The Mt. Apo campaign skillfully pressured the World Bank to reject the environmental impact assessment performed by the Philippine government which caused the government to withdraw its loan request. In this instance, however, the alliance did not gain sufficient bargaining power to dissuade the government from going forward with alternative funding.

To what extent are the alliance's efforts responsible for the policy outcome? In the urban land reform and community level Log Ban campaigns, the alliances can clearly take credit for the outcomes. However, positive outcomes are not always a direct result of alliance activity. Even though the result for some alliance members in the Mexico forest case was positive, the alliance's efforts were secondary to economic and political forces that made the project undesirable to the Mexican government.

When policy gains are not achieved (Mt. Apo and national level Log Ban campaign) larger forces tend to overwhelm the interests of grass roots groups. The critical demand for energy carried great economic and political weight in the new Philippine government elected to make the country economically sound by the year 2000. Similarly, the economic and political clout of commercial loggers outstripped environmentalists not firmly rooted in broad public acceptance.

Civil Society Impacts

There are clearly positive civil society outcomes in two of the cases. Local organizations were strengthened in some fashion in the Urban Land Reform and Mt. Apo cases. The presence of **pre-existing grass roots organizations** is a critical element in both. In the Mt. Apo case locally initiated action was reinforced and linked to provincial, national and international resources. This was made possible in part, by the active role played by the federation of indigenous people's organizations at the national level. Because the federation was coordinating the national and international lobbying efforts, the grass roots leadership was able to keep its attention focused on salient community issues during the course of the campaign.

The Urban Land Reform Task Force also included strong grass roots organizations, but some of them left the alliance to protest compromises on goals. During the legislative campaign, local organizations were active, citizen participation was high, and grass roots leaders developed new skills. However, when the Task Force later took on the role of monitoring implementation, local organizations became overextended and had difficulty delivering basic services and benefits to their members.

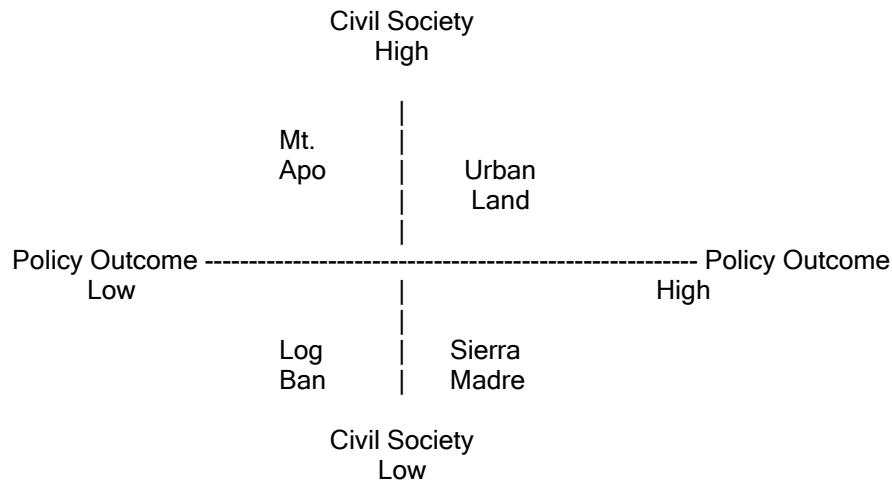
None of the cases illustrates a clear negative impact on grass roots groups. However, in the Sierra Madre case, the affected indigenous people were briefly used to lend legitimacy to the environmental campaign. They felt exploited and withdrew from further involvement and so lost an opportunity to pursue their interests.

Seeking Both Policy and Civil Society Impacts

Figure 1 depicts the degree to which each alliance effectively changed policy and strengthened civil society. The four cases plotted on the two dimensions show strikingly different effectiveness patterns. Urban Land and Sierra Madre are more effective in terms

of policy gains, but differ on the degree to which they promote stronger grass roots groups. In contrast, the Mt. Apo and Log Ban cases are both lower on policy outcomes, but Mt. Apo supported greater local involvement, while the National Log Ban campaign was unable to engage with local groups successfully.

Figure 1: EFFECTIVENESS IN ACHIEVING POLICY GAINS AND STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY



Because the ebb and flow of a successful campaign must match the rhythm of the political process, it often appears that **tradeoffs must be made**, at least in the short term, between policy gains and strengthening grass roots associations. Lobbying actions sometimes can't wait for slower-paced grass roots education and participation efforts. Sometimes, the strategies preferred by the grass roots frame the issues so that they are hard to win.

However, the Urban Land Reform example illustrates that effectiveness on both dimensions is possible. This case illustrates the potential for educating and involving grass roots groups in its campaign decisions and strengthening alliance capacity to achieve policy outcomes. The alliance's strategy simultaneously: 1) increased the commitment of the poor to support the legislation through mass action, 2) expanded these organizations' understanding of political decision processes, and 3) increased their confidence and repertoire for dealing with the government. Through the active involvement of grass roots as well as other members, the alliance had the ability to influence at many points of leverage through multiple channels.

At the other pole, the Log Ban alliance achieved neither its policy goal nor a positive impact on civil society and citizen participation. In fact, efforts to engage local organizations in the commercial log ban campaign were unsuccessful largely because the national environmental NGOs could not forge a genuine alliance with grass roots groups. They were unsuccessful at forging a campaign to encompass both livelihood and environmental issues. There were in fact two campaigns being waged; one at the national level that had little popular support, and another at the grass roots in which people struggled with some measure of success to secure more control over their livelihoods.

Characteristics of Alliance Effectiveness

Among the many factors that influence the outcomes of a policy alliance four alliance characteristics stand out from these cases as fundamental to effective policy alliances. Two influence effectiveness on the policy change dimension; two others affect strengthening civil society.

Fundamental to the accomplishment of policy gains is a **coherent campaign strategy coupled with adequate resources** to influence decision makers. The Urban Land Reform alliance included a policy research center capable of critiquing legislation and offering sound alternative proposals while the businessmen lobbied the realtors and developers, Cardinal Sin lobbied key players in Congress, and the community groups mobilized their constituents at critical junctures. The Task Force brought together excellent access and strong technical capability and well-organized, informed, active grass roots constituents.

The Total Commercial Log Ban Alliance, in contrast, had too few organizational resources to successfully design and implement a campaign strategy or build a coalition. It was particularly limited because it failed to build a strong grass roots based constituency and so was vulnerable to charges that it represented interests of elitist conservationists.

A campaign's ability to win policy advantage also depends on its ability to counter the forces of its opposition. **Framing a winning issue** requires that the alliance define the debate in terms compelling to grass roots groups and which limit the opposition's ability to mobilize its own forces. In the Log Ban case the alliance modified their initial stand from a call for a total logging ban (which directly threatened forest dwellers) to a commercial logging ban. However, community groups had difficulty grasping the difference, and the opposition successfully portrayed the issue as jobs vs. environmental conservation. The Log Ban Task Force was also not able to successfully gain favorable media coverage -- a crucial ingredient to successful issue framing.

Commitment to strengthening civil society and democracy is essential if an alliance is to have a positive impact on citizen participation and building grass roots institutions. This element may be most clearly seen by comparing the international alliances. The Mt. Apo case illustrates relationships among grass roots groups, Philippine NGO coalitions, international NGOs and a U.S. advocacy network that acted on strong commitment to citizen participation and closely coordinated their campaign strategies with grass roots groups. This alliance cared deeply that affected people be centrally involved. Consequently, Mt. Apo offers a clear example where **grass roots groups had significant influence** on the structure, goals and strategies of an alliance. Other alliance members followed the lead of the local groups because of the quality of their organizations and their legitimacy as primary stakeholders.

In contrast, the Tarahumara in the Sierra Madre case were powerless. They expressed disapproval and dissent by withdrawing after being casually used to lend legitimacy to the campaign. In some circumstances this exit option can limit the effectiveness of an alliance. However, the NGOs were not limited by the Tarahumara's absence since their

primary target, the World Bank, did not require local representativeness when considering the merits of environmental issues.

This analysis suggests that an alliance can successfully achieve both policy and civil society outcomes if it aspires to do so, includes the appropriate social groups; and has access to necessary resources. Perhaps the most important element is whether or not the alliance seeks both policy outcomes and increased citizen participation.

ANALYSIS OF ALLIANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

Policy alliances involve multiple members who each expect the alliance to be accountable to their interests. Since there is never a perfect fit among the expectations of alliance members, the task of being accountable to all is challenging. As microcosms of the larger society, alliances can easily replicate unbalanced patterns of influence and so give their grass roots members short shrift. The focus of this analysis is on identifying how alliances are accountable to the grass roots as well as other members. Indicators of accountability include: inclusion in decision making; access to alliance resources (especially information); and division of roles and responsibilities (for example, who are the spokespersons).

The four cases can be arrayed on an accountability-to-the-grass-roots-continuum as in Figure 2. High accountability is associated with alliances in which grass roots groups have access to critical information; participate in strategic as well as tactical decision making; and play leadership roles in the alliance. Low accountability involves the opposite conditions.

Figure 2: ALLIANCE ACCOUNTABILITY TO GRASS ROOTS GROUPS

High	Moderate	Low
Mt. Apo Urban Land	Log Ban	Sierra Madre

The Mt. Apo case has high levels of grass roots accountability. It was structured so that the regional, national and international task forces and networks supported the goals defined by the local indigenous people and farmers. Where alliance members held different institutional priorities (e.g., environmental protection vs. indigenous people's rights) they resolved conflicts arising from these interests in an agenda set by indigenous people's and farmer's concerns.

In contrast, in the Sierra Madre case there was little accountability to affected people. NGOs pursued their own priorities and solicited only token input from the indigenous people.

In the Urban Land Reform case, local groups were active decision makers and implementors of the national campaign strategy -- a task relatively easy to accomplish logistically since Manila was the focus of the national campaign. The secretariat was strongly committed to inclusion of all parties and especially sensitive that legislative proposals be put forward only when they had strong grass roots support. Grass roots

outreach and education enabled active and informed participation by grass roots leaders in alliance decisions. Additionally, through direct member participation in key decisions, the secretariat was highly accountable to all.

In the Log Ban campaign, the rural members of the alliance were geographically, organizationally, and ideologically diverse, with no framework or mechanism for common representation in Manila. Local groups did not have an active presence in Manila where national campaign decisions were made. This lack, coupled with the Task Force's limited resources and its inexperience with the concerns of the local groups, produced significant gaps between the intentions of the Task Force concerning inclusion and accountability and its actual performance.

Factors Affecting Alliance Accountability

These cases suggest several factors that affect an alliance's accountability. Inclusion is the prerequisite for accountability to the grass roots and so **alliance composition** is a fundamental

defining characteristic. The **diversity of interests** and organizations within an alliance also affects its accountability patterns. Where greater numbers and diversity of alliance members exist, the task of accountability is more complex.

The Urban Land Reform Task Force illustrates a heterogenous alliance which cuts across many sectors of Philippine society, from poor urban communities to the highest ranks of the Catholic church. Significant differences in wealth, culture, and power existed among these groups. Even though they came together to seek benefits for the urban poor, their inherent social differences made accountability a complex task. From the beginning, the alliance recognized that community groups had important resources to contribute as well as the primary stake in the outcome of its work. This realization coupled with a strong community empowerment ethos led it to seek high levels of accountability to the grass roots.

The Sierra Madre alliance excluded indigenous people, but it included a Mexican human rights organization, U.S. regional environmental organizations concerned with forests, water conservation and biodiversity, and a Washington-based advocacy NGO. Despite differences among these NGOs, the alliance remained uni-sectoral. It left out others, such as business, the church, and professional groups. Balancing accountability in this type of alliance is simpler than one which includes NGOs, community based organizations, and representatives of other social sectors.

The legitimacy and resources each member brings into the alliance shapes the **power dynamics of the alliance** itself (Brown, 1995). Where the grass roots is organized, respected, and has considerable resources it has power relative to other members. In this instance other members are likely to be more accountable to grass roots interests, as is seen in the Mt. Apo and Urban Land Reform cases. Where grass roots groups can not assert their legitimacy or other groups hold most of the resources, as in the Log Ban and Sierra Madre cases, grass roots accountability will be minimal.

In addition to the strengths a member brings to the alliance, its power depends on its role and functions in campaign strategies. In the Sierra Madre case the Tarahumara lent symbolic legitimacy to the campaign. There was no need for them to be active participants since the target of the campaign, the World Bank, was interested in the technical merits of the argument rather than the political base from which it came. The strategies of the Mt. Apo and Urban Land Reform cases, however, relied heavily on demonstrating to the Philippine government that a political constituency demanded response to their concerns. Community groups in these instances had resources critical to campaign success.

Institutional mechanisms for information sharing and decision making are fundamental to fostering accountability to the grass roots. In the Urban Land Reform alliance, the secretariat played a pivotal role. It was an ideologically neutral, technically competent, professional NGO secretariat committed to supporting grass roots participation. This secretariat was instrumental in negotiations between community organizations and the businessmen's group on specific legislative strategies and goals. It helped balance power in these negotiations, for example, by fully informing the community about various options, and by educating the business group about the core concerns of the community.

The Mt. Apo alliance involved a series of sub-coalitions at local, regional, national and international levels, each with differentiated roles and decision making responsibilities. National groups, for example, had primary responsibility for linking the local, national, and international strategies. But this was done with strong local representation in Manila through the indigenous people's coalition, and through systematic consultation with all parties.

The Log Ban case illustrates that resources and experience in managing multi-organizational, multi-level alliances are necessary for successful inclusion of all parties in the decision processes. Lapses in consultation with the grass roots and in the formulation of a cohesive strategy resulted in large part from limited time, personnel and skills in the coordinating bodies.

Alliances which were more successful in accounting to all their members, especially the grass roots, had both formal and informal mechanisms to ensure good information flows and inclusion of all members in decision making. Some form of structured representation of the grass roots groups in decision making structures coupled with a secretariat that had a commitment to, and resources for encouraging community participation seem to be essential for accountability to the grass roots.

DISCUSSION

NGOs have growing opportunities to be involved in policy alliances as states gradually open themselves to greater citizen participation and as donors learn the value of including the grass roots as a legitimate stakeholder. NGOs also can take an active role in supporting grass roots involvement in situations where the state and donors are not open to popular participation. In these instances contestation is the likely course influence efforts will take.

Whether the policy influence context is cooperative or confrontational, alliances may take one of three basic forms characterized by different patterns of goals, influence,

and accountability: Grass Roots-Centered Alliances, NGO-Centered Alliances, and Mixed Alliances.

Grass roots-Centered Alliances, such as the Mt. Apo coalition, define the policy question from the grass roots point of view. NGOs and NGO coalitions joined the alliance based on their affinity with the issues framed by the grass roots and their willingness to play supporting functions. Established primarily on principles of solidarity, these alliances may forego policy gains to strengthen civil society. For example, NGOs with expert resources may defer to goals and strategies devised by the grass roots, even when their skills and insights could improve alliance strategies for policy change.

NGO-Centered Alliances are exemplified by the Log Ban and Sierra Madre cases. In these alliances NGO definitions of the problem shape the alliance agenda and strategy. If grass roots groups are involved, they play a supporting role to the NGOs, such as providing information, staging local protests, or lending legitimacy to NGO-designed actions. Accountability to the grass roots tends to be weak since the alliance is formed primarily to achieve NGO-defined policy goals. These alliances are well suited to achieving policy change with institutions which themselves have low levels of public accountability, such as multi-lateral development banks. They may also be useful for incremental policy change (Jenkins, 1987), but they have little positive impact on deepening civil society and broadening democratic participation.

Mixed Alliances are represented in this discussion most clearly by the Urban Land Reform case. Alliances that link poor, middle classes, and elites in pursuit of a common objective have the potential to build civil society and to enhance policy outcomes simultaneously. However, this type of alliance offers the greatest challenge as well as the best promise for combining concrete policy benefits for marginalized groups with their increased participation in institutions of civil society. Success requires the alliance to have a bridging mechanism

capable of spanning ideological differences and balancing power.

In a study of NGO roles in community-government partnerships in several Asian and African countries, Brown draws lessons highly relevant to mixed alliances. He concludes that NGOs balanced power in multi-organizational alliances "by controlling important resources, shaping participants' awareness of their own and others' interests, and defining and enforcing the rules of the game to promote mutual influence" (Brown, 1995). The Urban Land Reform Task Force NGO secretariat played this role by being an honest broker between urban grass roots and elite groups. The secretariat's sensitivity and respect for the interests of all members is largely responsible for the alliance's success in balancing local needs and the interests of the business community and church. In the Urban Land Reform alliance, the NGO secretariat had important resources itself (e.g., technical policy analysis skills), but it also provided others with access to resources they didn't have (e.g., information about political processes to community members; "expert" community knowledge to businessmen). The secretariat urged the urban groups to understand their interests in new ways that enabled them to reframe their demands. It also facilitated the creation and implementation of decision making rules that increased mutual influence.

Brown (1991) suggests that this "bridging" function is extremely demanding of the organizations and individuals performing it, but that NGOs are uniquely able to fill the role. In a policy alliance, not only must the bridging agent help others establish mutual goals and reconcile differences, it must responsibly manage its own interests and priorities. The bridging agent must have strong skills for facilitating mutual influence and assisting alliance members to find common ground. When the bridging agent has a strong stake in the alliance's policy outcome (as did the environmental NGOs in the Log Ban case), those interests may undermine its ability to balance information and decision processes. However, the Urban Land Reform and Mt. Apo cases illustrate that it is possible for NGOs to be effective intermediaries in developing multi-sectoral and international policy alliances that influence policy and strengthen civil society at the same time.

ENDNOTES

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1. IDR is researching NGO policy influence efforts at the national level in several countries in

Asia and Africa. A comparative analysis of cases in the Philippines is underway, and new case studies are beginning in Indonesia and India. The study of transnational NGO influence efforts looks at large projects with environmental consequences as well as World Bank operational policies. These studies work with NGO communities to identify and build capacities necessary for effective and accountable policy influence.

1. The analysis of alliance effectiveness draws on Valerie Miller, NGOs and Grassroots Policy Influence: What is Success?, Boston, IDR Working Paper Vol. 11, No. 5, 1994.
1. Differences between the desired outcomes of the Mexican and U.S. advocacy groups undoubtedly affected accountability regarding campaign strategy. This analysis will be refined when the final draft of the Sierra Madre Case is completed.
1. A second form of grassroots centered alliance, not represented in the cases here, is the grassroots movement that has little if any direct involvement of NGOs. National federations of peasants, unions, or women's groups often fit into this category.