

Book Reviews

Simone Chambers and Will Kymlicka (eds.), *Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2002.

This book is the first in a, potentially seminal, series of three publications that are intended to explore the way in which various ethical traditions conceptualize and deal with pluralism in society. This edited volume addresses a contemporary debate in political science: the existence, nature, and expression of civil society. Contributors offer reflections on the ethical grounding of sociopolitical configurations from within four comparative clusters. Part I centers around contending secular Western, or better said, mainstream liberal Anglo–Saxon interpretations of civil society, whereas Part II covers two theoretical streams of feminism and critical theory. Parts III and IV shift to conceptualizations emanating from religious traditions of Christianity, Natural Law, Judaism, Islam, and Confucianism.

The editors have provided and, largely successfully, held authors to a relatively strict framework for discussion; this makes possible a comparative reading that is too often a weakness of this type of endeavor.

As the editors note, setting the terms of debate within a conceptualization that is so closely allied to Western liberal thought and historical experience introduces a structural imbalance. This is exacerbated by the problems of language and lack of terminologies that can fully express the salience of associational concepts that are embedded in non-English-speaking settings. Aside from struggling with apt translations of the term “civil society,” notions, for example, of rights and duties must also be ethically explained. Nevertheless, in highlighting the problem of an Anglo–Saxon bias in language and comparative structure, both editors and authors ensure that the reader is not lulled into a false sense of uncontested conceptual equivalence.

The breadth of perspectives covered in this volume defies any satisfactory summary in a review. Rather, observations are directed at two aspects of this type of comparative enquiry that would have merited explicit attention, particularly in the framework of questions posed to the authors. First, for many authors, the ethical roots of associational life, attitude, and practice toward “others” are linked to the way in which traditions—be they secular or religious—shape individual and collective identity. Specific attention to the psychosocial impact of ethical traditions

on associational life and the complex delineations of I and We and Us and Them would, therefore, have provided an important additional explanatory dimension to what is being investigated. The more so because, as some of the authors argue, many alternative “traditions”—be they well codified or simply lived as cultural expressions—are not premised on Descartes’ dictum *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am), which underpins Western liberal individualism, but rest upon the dictum *cognatus ergo sum* (I belong therefore I am). Thus self, sameness, otherness, and the “pluralism” of associational expression are differently understood and acted upon.

Second, there is uneven treatment of the way in which ethical traditions also shape the state and its interdependent position in relation to associational life of citizens, particularly with respect to recognition and mediation of pluralist forces. Again, many authors touch on this factor. But, in as far as the Western concept of civil society cannot be understood outside of the concept of a state and the nature of power and governance, more direct discussion would help to sharpen comparative analysis.

Despite these two caveats, a significant merit of this volume is its success in moving conceptualization away from the prevailing narrow emphasis on the geographically and temporally limited foundations of the West that drives so much analysis of civil society and prescriptions for political reform stemming them. A second value is its success in systematically delving beneath the superficial layers of much contemporary research on civil society that has a fixation on enumeration and explanation of tasks and (governance) functions to identify deep lying beliefs—for, though not a religion, secularism is also a belief system—and the concomitant ethical enjoinders that shape and direct associational behavior and a state’s role.

In sum, this book has much to commend it, particularly for those working toward a global foundation for the concept of civil society or, perhaps, a better equivalent with wider resonance and empirical grounding.

Alan F. Fowler

International Society for Third Sector Research

Roger Courtney, *Strategic Management for Voluntary Nonprofit Organizations*, Routledge, New York, 2002.

Strategic management is vital for every kind of organization, including voluntary nonprofit organizations (NPOs). This is the focus of Roger Courtney’s *Strategic Management for Voluntary Nonprofit Organizations*. The author is an experienced Northern Irish NPO manager holding degrees in psychology, management, and human resources development. The book builds on an impressive list of references and is aimed at practitioners and interested outsiders with no prerequisite knowledge. It is written as a handbook, including an outline in every

chapter, learning objectives, questions (no answers), and a suggested reading list (with special attention to a US perspective as the rest of the lists and the book as a whole is UK-centric).

The book's structure may not be surprising, but it is adequate—an introduction to the sector, different approaches to strategic management, strategy and the voluntary nonprofit sector, strategic analysis, formulation, choice and implementation, ending with nine case studies: Save the Children Fund, Care in the Home, World Wide Fund for Nature, CARE, the Simon Community, Grameen Bank, Homeline, NSPCC, and Oxfam (six British cases, one US case, one case from Bangladesh, and one international case). These cases do not always contribute to the main topic of the book, as some of them are merely historically descriptive.

Despite the fact that the author uses the term “voluntary nonprofit sector,” this book addresses all NPOs including the fully professional ones. Throughout the book, the author assumes, rightly in my opinion, that “strategic management has provided a useful set of tools and techniques to draw on and enable them to be more focused, to create a stronger sense of unity and direction, to understand the external environment better and to manage more effectively the development of the organization” (p. 6).

The rise of strategic management in voluntary NPOs is explained by two factors: the outsourcing of public activities, at least in the United Kingdom, by authorities embracing new public management jargon and techniques, and the fact that the inspiration for these techniques was essentially found in the private sector.

The number of pages devoted to strategic management *an sich* (Parts II and IV, which are fairly standard and concise for an experienced reader of traditional management textbooks) proves, in my view, that there is no such thing as a specific NPO strategic management (see also Miller, K. D., “Competitive strategies of religious organizations.” *Strateg. Manage. J.* 23: 2002, where the same point is made for religious organizations). In fact, the concepts and techniques of strategic management can easily be adapted to the idiosyncrasies of NPOs (Part III and the cases; in Part IV, NPOs are frequently referred to).

The most interesting part of the book deals with strategy in NPOs. In a first chapter a sort of historical overview is offered (the US literature and the UK situation), after which the measurement of NPO effectiveness is addressed. The difficulties of combining value-based results with efficiency-based parameters are rightfully highlighted, as is the importance of internal evaluation procedures. The last, very short, chapter in this part asks the question whether strategic management is effective in NPOs. Eight empirical papers are presented on one page, and some anecdotal evidence on another half page, to reach the answer “yes,” conditional on confirmation through further empirical research.

To be clear, this book is not a cookbook for NPO managers, but an interesting, insightful, and also useful collection of literature-based reflections on the different

aspects of NPO strategic management. If you are looking for such a book, you found it.

Marc Jegers

Microeconomics for the Profit and Non-Profit Sectors
Free University Brussels (VUB)
Belgium

Paul Dekker and Eric M. Uslaner (eds.), *Social Capital and Participation in Everyday Life*, Routledge, London, 2001.

Over the last fifteen years, social capital has become a widely invoked concept. It features prominently in contemporary debates regarding social participation and democracy and, indeed, is sometimes hard to avoid. Amongst practitioners in the community and voluntary sector its usage has similarly grown. Although the concept has gained significant purchase, however, it has also attracted a good deal of criticism. In his now well-known formulation, Robert Putnam (*Making Democracy Work*, 1993, p. 167) has suggested that social capital can be understood as those “features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated action.” This understanding has undoubtedly been persuasive, but skeptics have responded that it is overly broad and requires further definition. It is correspondingly difficult, they argue, to operationalize in empirical terms. Those researching social capital tend to focus upon what they view as tangible behavioral indicators of social trust and participation, but there is no simple agreement over what these should be. In addition, the assumption that social capital straightforwardly translates into political participation and a vibrant democratic society has also been challenged.

Social Capital and Participation in Everyday Life seeks to engage with just these debates. It brings together an international portfolio of research to explore the development and consequences of social capital in everyday life. A particular concern is to evaluate the link often assumed to exist between social cooperation and productive political involvement. Does the presence of the former necessarily generate the latter? Putnam and others appear to imply so, but the editors are not convinced. The contributors explore this question in a selection of predominantly western countries, offering at the same time valuable illustrations of how social capital might be empirically interrogated in these different national settings.

There is not space here to discuss the volume’s contents in detail, so I will elaborate a little on those chapters where the relationship between volunteering and social capital is foregrounded. The significance of religious faith for volunteering is an important theme here, and is explored in both The Netherlands (by De Hart) and the United States (Uslaner) in turn, with some interesting comparisons emerging from the juxtaposition. Stolle then draws on comparative research undertaken in

Germany, Sweden, and the United States to consider whether participation in a voluntary organization in itself generates social trust. There follow two Scandinavian-based chapters, focusing on Norway (Selle and Strømsnes) and Denmark (Bang and Sørensen), respectively, which explore the relations between participation in voluntary organizations and democratic involvement. Though exploring quite different territories, these five chapters are engaging and lively; the interpretation of the empirical materials is interesting and the arguments are thought provoking.

For Dekker and Uslaner, what the research in this volume clearly indicates is that “the connection from daily social trust and co-operation to democratic public life and good government is far from settled” (p. 184). Following Putnam, they suggest that a distinction should be made between those individuals whose collective social activities are essentially directed toward their own group—a bonding form of social capital—and those who are “owners of bridging social capital, with less strong and enduring bonds with their fellow citizens close to them, but [who are] more competent to cooperate with strangers and able to deal with diversity, controversies and real large-scale politics” (p. 184). In their view it is the latter group whose activities are of most significance for a healthy democratic society. There are thus different *forms* of social capital and, significantly, not all are rooted in social cooperation. Neither can all be straightforwardly equated with democratic participation. The relations between social participation, trust, and democracy are thus more complex than simplistic conceptions of social capital suggest.

In probing the utility and complexity of the notion of social capital in this way, *Social Capital and Participation in Everyday Life* performs a valuable service for the academic community. Like most edited collections, the relation of individual chapters to the overall themes is a little uneven in places, but the collective work is nonetheless a significant contribution to debates over social capital. It leads us toward more nuanced articulations of the concept, at the same time, it usefully undermines the idea that social capital can be unproblematically viewed as some form of social elixir. For voluntary sector researchers with an interest in this area, it is a significant volume, both for its theoretical claims and for the range of methodological strategies its contributors employ.

David Conradson

*Department of Geography
University of Southampton
United Kingdom*

Sudipta Kaviraj and Sunil Khilnani (eds.), *Civil Society: History and Possibilities*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.

Kaviraj and Khilnani begin this volume by arguing that although the idea of civil society has seen a dramatic return in diverse settings, this popularity has itself

created a problem of indeterminacy. This leads them to ask two questions: “Does the idea mean the same thing in all these different contexts?” and “exactly what sort of thing is the idea of civil society?” (p. 1). To address these questions, Kaviraj and Khilnani have compiled a collection of papers, the first half of which focuses on the theoretical origins of the concept civil society within Western political philosophy and the second half of which discusses its meanings and uses in “the South.”

The first half of this book begins with a chapter by Khilnani, which combines an outline of the three key moments in civil society’s development within the West with a consideration of “the category of civil society, both as an analytic tool and as a critical, regulative principle for the politics of the South” (p. 14). The remaining chapters in this section build on the three strands of theory introduced by Khilnani. Antony Black discusses civil society in premodern Europe. John Dunn outlines the significance of Locke’s conception of civil society. Fania Oz-Salzberger examines civil society in the Scottish Enlightenment. Keith Michael Baker discusses civil society in the context of the enlightenment and the institution of society. Gareth Stedman Jones considers Hegel and the economics of civil society. Joseph Famia offers a consideration of Marxist understandings of civil society.

As a whole, this section offers a comprehensive overview of the political and philosophical origins of the concept civil society. Perhaps its most helpful contribution is to make it clear that “when faced with theoretical ambiguity in the Third World debate, it was not enough simply to say that those who used the idea did not look carefully at *the* Western concept. There was no single or simple Western concept to study and emulate” (p. 3).

The second half of the book is a consideration of “Arguments in the South.” Most of the chapters consist of detailed, contextual reflections on civil society within specific countries or regions. Jack Goody discusses the African case, with particular reference to African states. Partha Chatterjee considers the meaning of terms such as family, civil society, political society, and the state in pre- and postcolonial India. Luis Castro Leiva and Anthony Pagden outline the uses of civil society within Latin America, highlighting its origins in historical efforts to enact republican constitutions in the region. Thomas Metzger examines the intersection of Chinese history, modern Chinese thought, and Western theories of civil society. Sami Zubaida provides an overview of efforts to establish civil society and democracy within the Middle East.

The remaining chapters focus on particular issues or trends, rather than on specific countries or regions. Rob Jenkins examines and critiques donor conceptualizations of civil society as the basis of promoting democracy and governance. Geoffrey Hawthorn considers the development of civil society in the South in light of the changing global political economy and the subsequent weakening and shrinking of the Southern state. The book concludes with a chapter by Sudipta Kaviraj tracing the origins of civil society in Western theory, reflecting on how

these ideas have been used in non-Western politics and suggesting lessons to be drawn from these reflections.

Kaviraj and Khilnani have assembled an interesting and varied collection of essays. For the large part, this is a theoretical consideration of the concept of civil society, rather than an applied study of civil society itself. However, for those with an interest in civil society in the South but wanting to understand the historical and philosophical origins of the concept of civil society, this volume will make a useful starting point.

Deborah Simpson

*Culture, Development and Environment Research Centre
University of Sussex
United Kingdom*

Kathleen D. McCarthy (ed.), *Women, Philanthropy, and Civil Society*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2001.

It should not have come as a surprise to me, but it did. The overarching theme in *Women, Philanthropy and Civil Society* is religion. Certainly I should have been forewarned. Kathleen D. McCarthy, who edited the collection, noted that the writers, all part of a 1994 research project at the Center for Study of Philanthropy at the Graduate Center of The City University of New York, worked with a common set of seven hypotheses and the first was “Religion was the most important factor in shaping women’s philanthropy and civil society” (p. 5). But until I read the book, I had not realized religion and women’s attachment to their faith was a more relevant lens with which to view their philanthropic activities than the lens of funding, or the issues of authority and autonomy in organizations, or women’s ability to build “parallel power structures” to those of men (p. 5).

In this brief review, I cannot encapsulate eleven chapters. However, a couple of chapters deserve special mention. Hye Kyung Lee’s chapter, “Women and Philanthropy in South Korea from a Non-Western Perspective,” was very different from the others. She starts by writing “‘Philanthropy’ is one of the few English words that is still waiting for an appropriate translation in Korea” (p. 287). She claims that the US model, first enunciated by McCarthy, of separatism, assimilationism, and individualism does not apply in Korea. For example “individualism”—the concept that wealthy, independent women create their own foundations and organizations—is rarely found. She argues that this is primarily due to the former feudal family system and its present-day patriarchal nature. Further, she contends that “the image of women philanthropists as donors is closely associated with advanced capitalism” (p. 290), and possibly the fading influence of the family. Although the Republic of Korea can no longer be characterized as underdeveloped—the author cites the

1,250-fold increase in Gross National Product from 1960 to 1995—it is still a world in which women’s inequality is evident. Despite their higher education attainment in the past few decades, women’s wages continue to be low and unskilled work is mainly what is available to them.

In the “assimilationism” model, women work with male-controlled organizations as donors. Lee claims that with few personal monetary resources and a culture which acknowledges women’s domestic duties come first, women in general do not amass the kind of wealth necessary to fund philanthropy—even as regular donors. Lee explains that the first model, the “separatism” model, is somewhat applicable to her country because it is about women working with other women in nonprofits which cater to social and human services. This model has some potential.

The other chapter I will touch on is Beth Baron’s “An Islamic Activist in Interwar Egypt.” In fact, the author compares two different styles of female philanthropic activity. One was Labiba Ahmad, who argued against imitating western traditions and a return to Islam as a way of promoting women’s and the nation’s progress. In 1920, she founded the Society of Egyptian Ladies’ Awakening, which provided social services to the poor. In contrast nearly a generation later, Zaynab al-Ghazali founded the Muslim Ladies’ Association, which supported an orphanage among other good works. With links to the Muslim Brothers, al-Ghazali became more politicized and worked toward the founding of an Islamic state. In 1965, she was arrested and held for six years “in the wake of an apparent Islamist conspiracy to assassinate Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasir” (p. 237). This is an interesting chapter because it ties the strands of philanthropy together with nationalism, women’s roles, and religion.

The value of this book is that it clarifies women’s role in philanthropy in several developing countries, as well as some in the developed world. The chapters that touch on the former are more fascinating than those that touch on the latter.

Judy Haiven

Department of Management

*Saint Mary’s University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
Canada*

John M. Riley, *Stakeholders in Rural Development: Critical Collaboration in State–NGO Partnerships*, Sage, New Delhi, 2002.

Traditionally, most NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) have been suspicious of the state, their relationships varying between benign neglect and outright hostility. The state often shares a similarly suspicious view of NGOs, national and international, and their relationship, at least in Africa, has been likened to cat and mouse. There are many studies on governmental organization (GO)–NGO

cooperation but not on critical collaboration. In that sense this book is a ground-breaking work.

By critical collaboration the author means a form of cooperation between an NGO and a GO that involves the acknowledged, active participation of both parties with each other in one or more aspect of a particular issue. This form of collaboration is critical collaboration because the NGO is specifically empowered to more fully participate in the process, and acts in association with a GO and often as a critic of the GO. Riley focuses on the relationship in which NGOs attempt to reform the state through deliberate collaboration with the pertinent government agency to improve the formulation and delivery of services. The author argues that complementing the state and reform are constructive and most likely to foster an atmosphere in which both policy-making and implementation can be made more effective.

To set the scene, Riley discusses the role of the state and bureaucracy in India's development, NGOs, and what he means by critical collaboration. He rightly points out that the many failed attempts to decentralize rural development policy-making has been one major reason for the growth of NGOs, both as an alternative to governments in delivering rural development interventions, and as intermediaries between rural populations and government agencies. However, the chapter on NGOs lacks a detailed discussion of the problems of NGOs. This is important because to many donors and bilateral and multilateral funding agencies the failure of the state in the developing world is a self-perpetuating reality. The dependency of NGOs on donors, lack of accountability, and loss of quality in service provision during scaling-up are major problems for NGOs.

The author could also have elaborated his discussion of research methods. He did not make it clear why he had chosen only NGOs working on the environment and natural resources. He studied only one state (Tamil Nadu) in a vast country like India. These all have limited the value of the research.

Although the author cautions us that India may well present a political atmosphere that is not readily apparent in other developing countries. Political dissent and protest are generally accepted tools for the rural poor, as well as other groups, classes, and castes to make their grievances known to the government. The system in India is relatively stable, and it appears to be unique, still NGOs and states in other parts of the developing world can learn from critical collaboration within India.

The author concludes that there is no single measurement of NGOs that can be identified as the ultimate causal factor in the creation of critical collaborations. However, he has identified some criteria like size, past records and activities, capacity, and legitimacy of NGOs. Had there been a study on how the critical collaboration between NGOs and the state fail, we could have gotten an idea as to the causes and consequences of such failures. Another key issue which does not receive sufficient attention concerns critical collaboration among NGOs.

A major finding of this research is that at the local level, collaboration (or even cooperation) between NGOs and GOs remains highly dependent on the individual agency or decision maker, despite national and state policies that encourage and mandate greater decentralization, and local participation. In the final chapter the author makes some suggestions as to how to make critical collaboration more effective. He also underlines the importance of overcoming fear and mistrust between NGOs and the state. This is a real challenge.

Mokbul Morshed Ahmad

*Department of Geography and Environment
Dhaka University
Bangladesh*

John Street, *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2001.

Nonprofit organizations have had a long-standing involvement in the political world, both as advocates for their missions and as defenders of the third sector. The proper discharge of this mission has always required that nonprofit leaders have an understanding of the institutions and processes that govern modern politics. The growing influence of new and traditional media creates new areas that scholars who study the third sector should understand. John Street's new book offers a fascinating and enlightening view of these forces and provides an excellent map for incorporating the study of political communication into nonprofit scholarship.

The book begins with a general discussion of some of the key methodological and conceptual issues involved in the relationship between mass media and politics. In the first four chapters, the author discusses both the connection between politics and news, but also the political aspects of other types of mass media programming. Chapter one is largely concerned with the issues and problems related to political bias and competing concepts. Chapters two and three deal with news and the political content of entertainment. Chapter four, which examines media effects, is especially useful to those concerned with the study of advocacy and policy-making. In this chapter Street does a stellar job of illuminating some of the difficulties involved in studying policy change efforts.

The second part of the book examines the major institutional forces in the mass media today. The role of the state is considered in chapter five, with examination of censorship, secrecy, propaganda, regulation, and so forth. Following that, there is an examination of commercial media organizations. Next, Street deals with journalism and various models of the journalistic role. Finally, chapter eight reviews the role of globalization on the media.

The balance of the book deals with the impact of mass media on democracy. The issue of political packaging and political marketing is examined in chapter nine. This is a much more evenhanded approach than one usually sees, with a clear

delineation of possible costs and benefits of this type of activity. The next chapter discusses the role and impact of the Internet on the political sphere. Street offers a nice, even elegant, examination of the various forms of cyber politics. Again, this is a very balanced discussion of the major issues in this area. The next chapter considers the role of power in the media and politics. Street relates several theories of power to the dilemmas identified earlier in the book. The final section discusses conceptions of a free press in a democracy. The discussion is, again, balanced and logical.

Mass Media, Politics and Democracy is a valuable book. Although it would be difficult to call it comprehensive (it is less than 300 pages long), Street does a very good job of conveying to the reader the sense and range of the subject. The book is readable and the author takes great pains to elucidate both sides of the issues he considers. Street is obviously a scholar with great affection for his area, something that shows clearly in the care he gives to explaining each dimension of the field.

While clearly not a book for specialists in political communication, it is a very good resource for those in other fields who need to make use of some of the research in the area. Nonprofit scholars who deal with politics, policy, and advocacy should read this book. It provides a wealth of ideas and perspectives.

John G. McNutt

*Graduate School of Social Work
Boston College
United States*

Ferdinand Tonnies, *Community and Civil Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.

Jose Harris and Margaret Hollis have done admirably well in translating Ferdinand Tonnies' widely acclaimed but sparingly consulted tome into English. *Community and Civil Society* is arguably the foundation on which the German sociologist's well-deserved scholarly reputation rests, and its inclusion in the series on *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought* should not be too difficult to justify. Yet, this remains a difficult book. The obvious skills of the translators have failed to completely repair a certain denseness in the prose; the book is certain to remain beyond the perceptual grasp of a reader without a reasonable knowledge of philosophy, law, and sociology. In the Preface to the first edition, Tonnies himself declared his volume to be "deeply imperfect" (p. 13).

We need not wonder why Tonnies' polymathic study has been reissued again more than a century after its first publication in 1887. Since the late 1980s, civil society has become, to quote John and Jean Comaroff, the *idée fixe* of the modern era. Perhaps *Community and Civil Society* has been reissued with one eye on this

ongoing intellectual and general fascination? Yet, this is not a book about civil society *per se*, at least not in the way(s) it has been conceptualized in this its most recent incarnation, and enthusiasts and activists who go to Tonnies' work will be "disappointed" that they have lighted upon the "wrong" volume.

The work is divided into three "books." In the first book, a "general classification of key ideas," Ferdinand Tonnies outlines his main arguments on the theories of *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (civil society). The second and third books are more or less philosophical treatises (with regular explorations into law, medicine, and literary criticism) on "Natural will and rational will" and "The sociological basis of natural law." Tonnies, clearly, is a true product of his age, one in which the boundaries which demarcate the human and natural sciences today did not exist.

Although Tonnies apparently set out with the self-imposed mandate of resolving the wanton conflation of the two terminologies, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, in workaday German usage, *Community and Civil Society* may however be understood in several different senses. I will mention just two. First, it may be seen as a general essay on human societies, keeping as its narrative focus the mysterious "transition" from community to civil society, or, from "mere heaps of contiguous individuals" to "collectivities which had acquired a common political 'personality'" (p. xix). This is an old question, considered earlier in other contexts by other famous philosophers, notably Kant and Hume. *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* having been rescued from the dead hands of conflation, the book may also be seen as an attempt to weigh the merits and demerits of the two, and as such arrive at an understanding of which is better for human development and progress. The dichotomy that clearly emerges, as Jose Harris notes in the Introduction, is between "an 'organic' Community bound together by ties of kinship, fellowship, custom, history and communal ownership of primary goods; and a 'mechanical' Society where free-standing individuals interacted with each other through self-interest, commercial contracts, a 'spatial' rather than 'historical' sense of mutual awareness, and the external constraints of formally enacted laws" (pp. xvii–xviii).

Although Tonnies does not exactly say that one is morally superior to the other, it does emerge at least that it is the latter that humanity has become saddled with as part of the heritage of "modernity." Ideas being what they are, it is not entirely surprising that the distinction between "Community" and "Society" has been smuggled into the vast and often-confused debate about the pedigree of civil society, the two concepts taken as easy analogues of "developing" and "Western" societies respectively. A good indication perhaps of the many cognitive possibilities of this erudite and multilayered book.

Ebenezer Obadare

Centre for Civil Society

London School of Economics

United Kingdom

Feargal Cochrane and Seamus Dunn, *People Power? The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in the Northern Ireland Conflict*, Cork University Press, Cork, 2002.

This book was the product of a larger project comparing peace and conflict resolution organizations in South Africa, Israel, Palestine, and Northern Ireland. The wider comparative framework is reflected in the authors' approach to their subject. For example, Cochrane and Dunn make effective use of the contrast between the perspectives of the South African NGOs and their Northern Irish counterparts on the issues of their analysis of the conflict and their prescriptions for its resolution. They summarize the approach of the Northern Irish NGOs as one of addressing symptoms rather than causes. The book also reflects both in the questions it addresses and in the primary material on which it is based, the time period when the research for the project was carried out (roughly the mid to late 1990s). In the case of Northern Ireland this more or less coincided with the most optimistic phase of the peace process, starting with the declaration of paramilitary cease-fires in 1994 and culminating in the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in April 1998.

It is a tribute to the good sense of the authors that they never get carried away by the optimism of the period they were studying. Their cautious skepticism is well conveyed by the title of their final chapter assessing the contribution of peace and conflict resolution NGOs in Northern Ireland, "Hitting the Target or Firing Blanks?" Their analysis holds up remarkably well against the backdrop of the bleaker circumstances that currently prevail in Northern Ireland, although what has happened in Northern Ireland scarcely bears comparison with the scale of the disaster that has befallen Israel and Palestine. But at times in their determination to give due weight to the role of power politics in political outcomes so as to avoid the slightest implication of liberal naivety, their emphasis on the role of *realpolitik* in the peace process is overdone. The basis for their analysis is a study in depth of ten peace and conflict resolution organizations selected out of a larger sample of 36 organizations on which data were collected. Their choice of organizations maintains the diversity of the original sample, so that, for example, single-identity and cross-community organizations are included in the ten.

To arrive at an assessment of the sector's impact on the peace process, they make extensive use of interviews with "key players in civil society, including funders, practitioners, politicians, academics and journalists" (p. 150). However, this is where a problem arises. Because some of the interviewees insisted on their contribution's remaining anonymous, the authors have opted to identify none of their sources for specific quotations. At the same time, they have created a guessing game for their readers by thanking a number of prominent members of civil society, whom they do name, for their assistance in compiling the chapter. To top it all, they are then extraordinarily rude about conclusions that some of their interviewees draw about the role of the sector in the peace process. Thus, in response to an interviewee who claimed that the significance of the sector lay in its

demonstration of the extent of popular opposition to political violence, the authors savagely conclude that this “unimpressive” view “epitomizes the woolly liberalism and well-meaning but ultimately ineffectual culture for which the sector has rightly been criticized” (p. 153). To put it mildly, this is an exaggerated reaction on the part of the authors, if quite amusing. However, they may find their methodology presents an obstacle to securing interviews in future!

Adrian Guelke
School of Politics
Queen's University Belfast
Northern Ireland

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.