



NGOs and the Globalization of Managerialism: A Research Framework

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Summary. — One of the more overlooked aspects of globalization is the circulation of modern managerial practices and knowledges through transnational networks of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). In this paper, we offer an analytical framework for understanding the complex circulation of managerialism through dispersed networks of NGOs, connecting the spatially extensive international NGO (INGO) sector to the projects undertaken by grassroots NGOs. This framework first involves a conceptualization of all flows that might potentially be activated through a hypothetical network comprising all potential nodes. We then offer a discussion of a range of managerialist practices and knowledges. A table summarizing and operationalizing the analytical framework interlinks aspects of managerialism with the cultures, structures, and projects of NGOs. Examples chosen from our ongoing work in the NGO sector in Oaxaca, Mexico, serve as illustrations of how the analytical framework might generate insight into the contradictory workings of managerialism in NGO networks.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In its economic form, globalization is most often associated with integrative flows through the capitalist economy—in trade, investment, and finance. These flows join multinational corporations in complex relations among one another, and between such corporations and more nationally and locally oriented business enterprises. Given a traceable connection to the international sphere, any related corporate entity can be conceptualized as a node of and for economic globalization. Paralleling such connectivity in the domain of the economy are complex relational networks existing in civil society, and especially among nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs have complex

geographical ranges and, in addition to being connected to one another, often are entangled with state or quasigovernmental agencies, as well as with businesses (Aldaba, Antezana,

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Valderrama, & Fowler, 2000; Fowler, 2000a; Malhotra, 2000). Globalization in the NGO sector is exemplified by a complex field of spatially stretched and interlocking webs of inter-organizational relations.

Though these webs are becoming more noticeable, they are difficult to conceptualize analytically, in part because of the density of potential connections. Their nodes can include the 30,000 international NGOs (INGOs) active in the world today and the millions of NGOs active domestically (The Economist, 2000; Union of International Associations, 2003/04). It is likely that most NGOs are related in some way or another to one or more networks, and the rapid growth of INGOs over the past 20 years means that most of the networked NGOs have connections that reach beyond the nation state to the global domain. Even the smallest NGOs often actively seek out connections that embed them in webs of relations with other NGOs and with INGOs and other international donors. NGOs may participate in transnational networks in an attempt to support their projects and to expand their impact in quantitative, substantive, and spatial terms. These efforts are increasingly facilitated by a growing cadre of local, regional, and nationally based intermediary NGOs—organizations that do not carry out projects, but rather connect grassroots organizations to international funding agencies. In spite of the growth of these networks, it remains the case that many NGOs choose to be independent and autonomous, while others more deliberately seek to link themselves only in horizontal networks with other grassroots NGOs. Still another option for NGOs is to be part of less formal but still potentially transnational networks, based on solidarity and perhaps the transfer of information rather than financial resources (see Esteva, 1987; Fisher, 2003; Perrault, 2003).

Noting the increasing prevalence of NGO networks, some analysts have begun to develop frameworks for the examination of particular aspects of their form and function (e.g., Ebrahim, 2003a, 2003b; Lindenberg & Bryant, 2001, pp. 139–154). This paper is a further contribution to that endeavor. We outline a conceptual framework for the analysis of NGO networks, focusing upon managerialism. Managerialism is a term that captures the bundles of knowledges and practices associated with formalized organizational management—a central feature of contemporary NGO networks

(Ebrahim, 2003b; Edwards & Fowler, 2002; Lewis, 2001). We are interested, first, in how to conceptualize transnational NGO networks; the content and implications of managerialism within the networks; and the ways managerialism gets reworked as it circulates through the networks. We then offer a research framework, structured through a table whose elements illustrate how four aspects of managerial knowledges and practices—accountability, organizational definition, capacity building, and spatial strategies and discourses—might affect the culture, structure, and on-the-ground, day-to-day, projects of networked NGOs. This general analytic is offered with the recognition that findings from concrete analyses will be contingent upon the particular NGO sector examined, the actual organizations involved in the network, and a host of social, cultural, political, and economic factors that vary nationally, regionally, and locally. In the table and where it makes sense in the paper, we point to some examples drawn from our on-going research with NGOs in Oaxaca, southern Mexico. The state of Oaxaca is home to at least 400 NGOs working in virtually every sector. They share a rich diversity in the extensiveness of their connections to other NGOs locally, nationally, and internationally, as well as to state institutions and capitalist enterprises.

2. CONCEPTUALIZING NGO NETWORKS

The worldwide proliferation of NGOs has been met with a large literature, including important works that have attempted to establish classificatory schemas (Desai & Preston, 2000; Uvin, 1995; Vakil, 1997). As part of a broader effort to understand the political possibilities and shortfalls inherent in the NGO sector, some analysts distinguish among NGOs according to their relations to progressive social movements and popular struggles on the one hand, and their degree of embeddedness within neo-liberal institutions on the other (Bond, 2000, 2003; Demirovic, 1998; Joseph, 2000; Murphy, 2000; Nelson, 2000; Reid & Taylor, 2000; Townsend, Porter, & Mawdsley, 2004). Others focus more on differentiating NGOs on the basis of their relations with governmental organizations, or with the state more generally (Bebbington, 2000; Bebbington & Farrington, 1993; Coston, 1998; Fernando & Heston, 1997; Mercer, 1999; Smillie, 1993).

Our focus, while acknowledging the importance of both the politics of NGOs and of state-NGO relations, takes the spatial range of operations as the key differentiating criterion. Figure 1 offers an “ideal type” illustration of *all possible* nodes and connections within a fully capacitated network spanning all three societal sectors (state, civil society, capital). As shown in the central portion of the figure, the NGO sector is distributed from international donor groups, through INGOs, and on to locally operating NGOs that, in turn, support particular on-the-ground projects. While the figure depicts all potential connections, the NGO community of course exhibits differences with respect to the degree of connectivity to INGOs and international donors. Some grassroots organizations are relatively less connected to the circuits of funding, practices, and knowledges of INGOs (often deliberately so), while others have extensive relations with a range of international foundations, state agencies, and capital.

NGO networks serve to link organizations, but in doing so they can also fuel stratification among NGOs, as Hayden (2002, p. 58) has noted. Indeed, INGO-NGO relationships are

increasingly being channeled through, or mediated by, a cadre of intermediary organizations taking the form of clearinghouse, partner, or affiliate NGOs (Abramson, 1999; Bebbington & Riddell, 1997; Carroll, 1992; Fisher, 1993, 1998; Stremlau, 1987; Townsend, 1999; Townsend, Porter, & Mawdsley, 2002). These intermediary organizations can be valuable for initiating interorganizational connections, connecting larger NGOs and INGOs to local NGOs through tactical, temporary alliances (Gordenker & Weiss, 1997). In Oaxaca, for example, a local clearinghouse NGO, the *Fundación Comunitaria Oaxaca* (FCO), mediates relations between a number of INGOs and various local, project-based NGOs. In partnership arrangements, by contrast, connections are more formalized and relatively stable. For example, one US-based INGO, The International Youth Foundation (IYF), establishes “Country Partners” who themselves are embedded in a network known as YouthNet International (IYF, 2000). Finally, affiliate arrangements are akin to corporate franchises or branch offices; the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), for example, has an affiliate NGO, WWF—Mexico, which supports local projects

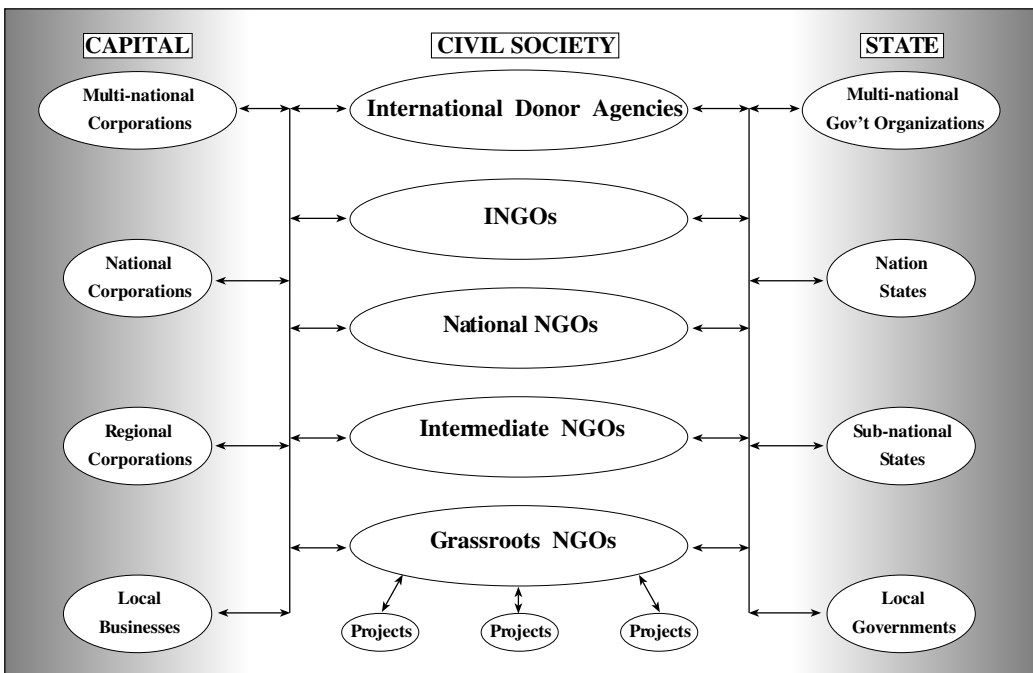


Figure 1. A fully capacitated NGO network.

in several regions of the country. Though each of these types of intermediary arrangements may distribute technical and administrative assistance to local NGOs, thereby relieving them of some managerial burdens, they may also elide, or even contribute to, asymmetries of power and stratification in interorganizational relations (Crewe & Harrison, 1998; also Hamilton, 2000; Hudock, 2000; Keengwe, Percy, Mageka, & Adan, 1999; Lewis, 1998, 2001; Lister, 2000; Malhotra, 2000; Mawdsley, Porter, & Townsend, 2000; Mawdsley, Townsend, Porter, & Oakley, 2002; Postma, 1994; Yonekura, 2000).

One of the most striking elements in the changing landscape of NGO activity is the proliferation of dense intersectoral relations (between NGOs and the state and capital). In addition to partnerships between NGOs and INGOs and donors, it is increasingly common for organizations to seek out and form partnerships or other formalized relations with capital (Bishwapriya, 1997; Heap, 2000; see left hand side of Figure 1). The IYF, for example, has a range of links not only with corporate-affiliated foundations (Ford, Kellogg, etc.), but also directly with multinational corporations, including Nike, Nokia, Cisco Systems, and Microsoft. The IYF's partnerships with businesses have been hailed by Alan Pike in the *Financial Times* as "A Social Role for Capitalism." More instrumentally, and in distinctly managerialist tones, the founder of IYF says of his corporate partners: "[t]hrough IYF and our national partner organizations they can outsource investment in communities in the same way they outsource any other business activity" (*Financial Times*, 2000). Of course, many NGOs are not interested in, and are even opposed to, conducting outsourced "investment in communities" on behalf of corporations (see also Lindenberg & Bryant, 2001, pp. 162–168). Nonetheless, for some NGOs, the forging of alliances with elements of the corporate sector—especially in the local setting—may be viewed as a positive opportunity and may be crucial to ensuring the NGO's sustainability (Aldaba *et al.*, 2000; Henderson, 2000; also see below). While corporatist forms of managerialism may infuse the relations between NGOs and businesses, links with government agencies (see right hand side of Figure 1) and with bilateral and multilateral donors may also act as channels for the circulation of managerialism (Lindenberg & Bryant, 2001). Sometimes, networks may embed NGOs in a tri-

partite partnership linking elements of the state, capital, and civil society. Certainly, the official strategies of major organizations such as the World Bank (2004) promote such tri-sectoral partnerships and in Oaxaca, for instance, their benefits are touted by the clearinghouse NGO, FCO (2000; see also Pezzullo, 2000). Again, whether an NGO establishes linkages with government agencies is a political issue. For example, given the slimming down of the state throughout the south under Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in particular, and neoliberalism more generally, many states are looking to outsource public services through NGOs. The willingness of NGOs to engage in this dynamic varies (Aitken, Craske, Jones, & Stansfield, 1996; Bond, 2003; Gwynne & Kay, 2000; Meyer, 1992, 1999; Paley, 2001; Pearce, 1997; Slater, 1999; Stewart, 1997; Watts, 1999).

An important aspect of Figure 1 is the recursivity implied for each connection between organizational nodes. In other words, one should not assume that managerial flows through the network are unequivocally pernicious impositions onto the organizational culture of NGOs. Equally, it would be unsound to assume that managerialism flows unidirectionally and without mediation from "top" to "bottom," or that the transfer necessarily reinforces extant power relations between the developed and developing worlds. INGOs or donors more generally, for example, can have in place mechanisms by which they learn from NGOs—for example, through meetings and training sessions with NGO personnel, as well as by witnessing first hand, and by studying the reports produced from, their funded projects. This information, in turn, can be incorporated into INGO or donor documents and operating procedures, finding its way through other transnational connections into the practices and projects of NGOs operating in different locales (see Lindenberg & Bryant, 2001, pp. 234–236, for a discussion of this sort of organizational learning). For example, WWF's *Bosques Mexicanos* implements community participation models that have been developed by both grassroots NGOs and by WWF—United Kingdom; these same models are now circulating throughout all of WWF—Mexico's programs. Indeed, the whole idea and ideal of participation may work to empower grassroots NGOs and to effectively undermine top-down managerial practices (although they may not—see Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Finally, it

is important to keep in mind that managerial knowledges are differentially understood, negotiated, and put into practice by NGOs: they can adopt any number of stances toward the many elements of managerialism. These can include promotion, resistance, adoption, circumvention, contextual adaptation, or some combination. One should therefore deliberately avoid conceptualizing NGOs as the endpoints of vectors of managerialism (Crewe & Harrison, 1998, p. 180; Stirrat & Henkel, 1997). Instead, it is important to recognize NGO staff as knowledgeable and heterogeneous agents, with sophisticated and diverse understandings of the institutional, social, economic, and political contexts within which they carry out their projects (see also Bebbington, 2000; Mawdsley *et al.*, 2002; Mutersbaugh, 2002).

3. ELEMENTS OF MANAGERIALISM

The nodes described capacitate flows of many different kinds. A range of tangible items, including money and people, flow through NGO networks, but so too do a host of practices and knowledges. Significant within the latter cluster are managerial practices and knowledges that not only flow through the networks but also in part constitute the nodes, as well as the transfer of other flows. Managerialism of a distinctly northern type—marked by concepts like accountability, transparency, participation, and efficiency, as well as practices like double-entry bookkeeping, strategic planning, Logical Framework Analysis, project evaluation, and organizational self-assessment—has been shown to be pervasive in NGOs' operations (Edwards & Fowler, 2002; Lewis, 2001). Research has also shown how managerialism has transformed the form and day-to-day operations of even the smallest NGOs in the global south (Crewe & Harrison, 1998; Mawdsley *et al.*, 2000, 2002; Robinson, 1997).

In this paper, we use managerialism as a general term for both knowledges and practices of organizational governance and operations. While the roots of managerialism are particularly associated with the corporation, as a set of knowledges and practices it has come to infuse a whole host of other institutions and social spheres beyond the corporate world. For many NGOs, managerialism may in fact be experienced as an impulse emanating from bilateral donors, such as USAID for example,

that have fully embraced major elements of managerialism. The adoption and adaptation of managerialism in the NGO sector has been twinned with a pervasive culture of professionalization, and managerialism has become a central daily concern for staff in networked NGOs. It is increasingly the case that in order to be eligible for project funds, NGO staff must demonstrate that they understand and apply management practices in line with those employed by their donor agencies. Managerialism, however, should not be assumed to be unitary—one can point, for example, to the growing trend toward social and ethical accounting, auditing, and reporting (Korten, 1998, 1999; Spinosa, Flores, & Dreyfus, 1999; Thrift, 1998; Zadek, Bruzan, & Evans, 1997). Nonetheless, even though this heterogeneity should be acknowledged, mainstream northern managerialism has become a fairly entrenched and institutionally developed set of knowledges and practices in the NGO sector. Such organizational transfers are not only inflected by a north-south divide, they are also gendered, as are all aspects of organizations (see Calás & Smircich, 1992; Hearn & Parkin, 1992). This fact has not escaped the attention of NGO analysts (Crewe & Harrison, 1998; Mawdsley *et al.*, 2000, 2002; Peake & Trotz, 1999; Stubbs, 2000; Townsend, Mawdsley, & Porter, 2000). Specifically, it seems reasonable to note that many of the skills, characteristics and attributes that are valued in and by managerialism, are often not those commonly ascribed to women.

Lewis (2001) has documented the ways in which managerialism came into the NGO sector. He notes the widespread adoption of generic management knowledges and practices and, since the late 1990s, the development of specific NGO managerial knowledges blending and tailoring elements from corporate, third sector, and public managerialism. Over the past ten years or so, a growth industry in NGO management has developed. From this has come a wealth of books, newsletters, and articles devoted to specifying managerial knowledges and practices for NGOs (Lewis, 2001, 2002). The weighty *Reader on NGO Management* (Edwards & Fowler, 2002) captures much of the state of play in this field. Other key sites for the production and dissemination of NGO managerialism include a growing number of institutions such as the International NGO Training and Research Center (INTRAC), established in 1991 (see Thrift, 1998, on the production and circulation of management

knowledge more generally). There are also numerous consultants, think-tanks, private organizations, and universities offering specialized training programs in NGO management (Lewis, 2001, p. 10; see, e.g., British Overseas NGOs for Development, 2004; School for International Training, 2004; UNESCO/Galilee College, 2004; also see the Global Development Research Center's NGO Café, 2004). The production and circulation of managerialism has earlier roots, but it has markedly expanded the 1990s and since. Wilson and Larson (2002) report that the number of graduate degree programs in nonprofit management in the United States rose from 17 in 1990 to over 90 in 2000, for example. In what follows, we divide the major elements of managerialism circulating through NGO networks into four broad categories. In each category, we identify and discuss key constitutive concepts and how they are operationalized in NGO networks.

(a) *Accountability*

Few NGO financial connections operate outside of a managerial regime known as *accountability*. Defined by Edwards and Hulme as “the means by which individuals and organizations report to a recognized authority (or authorities) and are held responsible for their actions” (Edwards & Hulme, 1996b, p. 967), accountability is usefully divided into external (upward) and internal (downward) dimensions. The former is associated with connections between NGOs, state entities, and business enterprises, while the latter involves assessments of projects undertaken by NGOs (see below). Internal accountability, by contrast, involves self-assessments by the organization with respect to its own rules, practices, goals, and achievements (see also Edwards & Hulme, 1996a; Fisher, 2003). This formulation, however, can elide the fact that accountability does not always include “downstream” client or beneficiary populations. Thus, while NGO staff may be required to demonstrate accountability to donors seeking to assist, for example, poor women and children, they are not always required to include those same women and children as agents to whom the NGO is accountable (see Lindenberg & Bryant, 2001, pp. 211–213).

In whatever event, many widely employed accountability practices are well poised to be vectors of managerialism. Ebrahim (2003a) shows this in his useful categorization and discussion of different mechanisms and processes

of accountability, including disclosures/reports, performance assessments and evaluations, processes of internal self-regulation, and social auditing. He notes, for example, that Logical Framework Analysis and other project evaluation/assessment tools aimed at comparing objectives to outcomes can: overly emphasize quantitatively measurable outcomes; direct NGO resources from actions to analysis; and confuse evaluation outcomes with NGO performance, thereby punishing those organizations that undertake riskier projects.

Of course, few would argue against the need to ensure that projects funded by INGOs and other large NGOs are administered effectively. But within a managerial regime, this sort of oversight can take on a life of its own, meaning that every aspect of each project, from initial proposal to final report, is subjected to a range of internal and external *evaluations* and *assessments*. The IYF and its country partners, for example, promote the use of a specially developed project *assessment tool* called the “Framework for Effective Planning.” Once a project has been approved, it is subject to rounds of assessments by funders or their partners, through site visits, assessments, and internal reviews (Charlton & May, 1995; Gibbs, Fumo, & Kuby, 1999; Hyman & Dearden, 1998). The on-going and complex nature of these assessment and performance-review exercises requires a project-based NGO to have personnel with appropriate, often quantitative-analytic, abilities (Robinson, 1994), skills that in some contexts may not be considered “natural” for women. Additionally, it is frequently the case that assessment reports have to be in English, which in many places means relying on language skills possessed by only a small percentage of the local population. In addition, such practices assume a certain level of technology (perhaps only a personal computer) and skills that may or may not be easily obtained by a local NGO (Alam, 1998; Everett, 1998). The overall result is the establishment of a “report culture” (Mawdsley *et al.*, 2000). While aspects of it may work to safeguard financial probity and to foster a culture of efficiency in targeting scarce resources (Charlton & May, 1995), participating in this culture requires both technical and language skills—“knowing the buzzwords” (Mawdsley *et al.*, 2000)—and it often comes with a burdensome level of bureaucratization and culturally disjunctive professionalization (Abramson, 1999; Pitner, 2000; Powell & Seddon, 1997).

Overall, the endless rounds of assessment exercises are justified by recourse to generally accepted norms of *transparency* (Fox, 1992; Fox & Brown, 1998; Najam, 1996; Poelhekke, 1999; Smillie, 1997). Transparency is aimed at ensuring a project's financial probity and guarding against any financial "leakages" or diversions, and is thus normatively associated with ethics (e.g., *Fundação Abrinq*, 1999, p. 8). Most commonly, transparency entails the adoption of standard accounting practices and the production of "quantities of information" (Lindenberg & Bryant, 2001, p. 212), such as financial statements (schedules of revenues and expenditures) and annual reports based on audits undertaken by qualified accountants (see Anderson-Gough, Grey, & Robson, 2005, on the gendered organizational processes in multinational audit firms). In some cases, NGOs select auditors from prestigious and expensive global accountability firms (notably Price Waterhouse Coopers, Ernst and Young, KMPG, or Deloitte and Touche) in an effort to ensure a level of transparency acceptable to INGOs. An important element of transparency is that the NGO's accounts and assessment reports be made available to stakeholders. Thus, for example, under a heading "The Need for Transparency" in its annual report, the corporate-sponsored foundation Global Alliance for Workers and Communities states "Global Alliance is now publishing on a regular basis all assessment tools and results on its website. . . , as well as other Global Alliance-related information, including survey instruments" (Global Alliance, 2000).

In the end, accountability and its associated elements lead to an increased workload for NGOs, requiring either a specialist staff or the extension and diversion of existing staff from other, often more project-related, tasks. For some NGOs in Oaxaca, as is undoubtedly the case elsewhere, a range of resistant practices have emerged to counteract the burdensome requirements of accountability. NGOs might keep two sets of financial books: one organized to satisfy the funding agency, and another reflecting the way finances actually were disbursed. While NGO staff may become experts at complying with their funders' assessment and evaluation requirements, they can at the same time run the daily activities along quite different, and locally specific, lines. Nor is it unusual for NGOs to shy away from a particular INGO if it is perceived to require an especially onerous level of accountability. On the

other hand, it is possible that particular NGO staff may desire a certain evaluation regime in order, say, to reinforce their own positions within an organization or network. In these and other ways, NGOs do not merely accept the norms of accountability as promoted in managerialism but rather rework them as they put them into practice (or not).

(b) *Defining the organization*

A formal and legally recognized institutional form often is a base requirement for NGOs seeking to participate in networks—especially those centered around funding relations with INGOs. Though requirements vary nationally, the legal incorporation of an NGO typically brings expectations of standardized account keeping and compliance with audits, tax laws and codes, and so on. This implies that NGOs must have access to credentialed professionals (such as notaries, lawyers, and accountants) with expert knowledge. Such professionals are typically clustered in urban areas, and the spatial distribution of NGOs might be expected increasingly to mirror this urban bias as managerialism spreads through NGO networks and as NGOs face pressures to formalize their status in order to participate in networks. In many places, such professional networks tend to be populated by men more than women, adding a gender bias to the urban bias already noted. In addition to these more legalistic and structural elements, contemporary discourses of managerialism, as found throughout INGO and NGO documents, stress a specific approach to defining an organization through its *central focus* and *coherence of values* (Borren, 2000). In the language of managerialism, this is often described as defining the organization's *vision*, an idea that has direct roots in the North American corporate management literature (Roberts, 2003). As one manual puts it, "[y]our NGO's vision describes your desired picture of reality," adding "your vision also is dynamic and changes as the needs of the groups you serve and the environments you work in shift" (Pezzullo, 2000, p. 13). In addition to a vision statement, each organization is expected to develop a *mission* statement: "Your mission communicates your NGO's purpose, its reason(s) for being" (Pezzullo, 2000, p. 13; see also Hailey, 2000). Although stated abstractly in the language of managerialism, the actual task of defining a mission is a highly politicized one for many NGOs. Who is included in the creation

of the mission statement and how much it should be tailored to appeal to potential funders are issues that can potentially be quite divisive and controversial for an organization.

According to managerialist principles, an NGO's mission is developed and refined through recurring rounds of *strategic planning*. Strategic planning entails conducting *situational assessments* of key threats and opportunities in the organization's environment. Often, emerging associations of NGOs will be useful in assembling data on NGO activity in a particular region or sector, for example in the form of a directory, in part to assist member NGOs in their situational assessment exercises (Meyer, 1997; Stremlau, 1987; and see Children & Youth Foundation of the Philippines, 2000; FOCO, 2000). Situational assessment is followed by *planning exercises* (often through focus groups) that help identify an organization's key issues, goals, and strategies over a certain time period, say three to five years (see, e.g., *Fundação Abrinq*, 1999; IYF, 2000; Pezzullo, 2000). Such planning activities typically involve not only NGO staff but also members of stakeholder groups (identified in part through situational assessments) and INGO consultants, and can be quite elaborate. Deciding who is going to be counted and included as a stakeholder can, of course, engender serious discussion and even struggle within NGOs and NGO networks, and between NGOs and the communities they serve. In order to participate in planning procedures, as in accountability practices, stakeholders may be expected to themselves become professionalized. For example, one of the WWF's goals in Mexico is to help rural environmental NGOs in the rainforests of Chimalapas, in the State of Oaxaca, "develop the skills and tools to work effectively" by providing "technical assistance in the areas of organizational assessment, strategic planning, financial resource development, and community outreach and participation methods" (WWF, 2001).

Another aspect of managerial logic that suffuses the external relations of NGOs is *image creation*. Formulating a *corporate identity* is a task linked with defining a coherent vision and mission (see above), but can be as equally geared toward promoting the NGO to state agencies or corporate interests as to its constituencies (Moore & Stewart, 1998). As it is being circulated in the NGO sector through, for example, national and international conferences of NGO operatives, the managerialist dis-

course highlights the importance of public relations, the promotion of NGOs and their projects, and other attempts to raise and maintain the visibility of NGOs. Techniques from marketing, such as branding, are employed very effectively by many NGOs in establishing and solidifying their image. One of the most successful examples of NGO branding is the WWF's panda image, which is used systematically and strategically throughout the organization. WWF's *Bosques Mexicanos* uses both the panda and a locally resonant symbol—the jaguar—on its promotional materials.

Whether they possess a professionally designed logo or not, NGOs seeking to participate in relations with professionalized clearing-house NGOs and INGOs are likely to engage in public relations activities. Typically, NGOs have staff members devoted to the production and dissemination of a variety of printed publicity materials (booklets, reports, newsletters, etc.) and websites. Such materials may be incorporated into organized *campaigns* (Chapman & Fisher, 2000; Jordan & van Tuijl, 2000; Leopold, 2000) and advocacy programs (Anderson, 2000; Nelson, 2000). Among the better funded NGOs these materials are often in several languages and of a very high quality—reflecting a significant cost outlay for graphic design, translation services, printing, and so on. In addition, NGOs seek to publicize their organization through radio and television spots, videos, newspaper feature stories, and special events (ceremonies, prizes, exhibitions, seminars, workshops, and so on; see, e.g., Children of Slovakia Foundation, 1999; *Fundação Abrinq*, 1999). As in the case of accountability, the practices associated with defining the organization and publicizing its achievements are time consuming and expensive. Some NGO staff may feel that these sorts of practices are diverting scarce human and financial resources away from their actual on-the-ground projects.

A final aspect of organizational definition is *sustainability* (Bebbington, 1997a, 1997b; Schoner, 1997; van Tuijl, 1999). As used in the managerial literature, this term refers to the long-term viability of an NGO and its projects. This is a narrower definition than some others that have been posited (see, e.g., Cannon, 2002) and relies upon a conflation of financial sustainability with organizational sustainability (Pezzullo, 2000, p. 8). Financially, sustainability is understood as resting on an organization's ability to raise funds from a changing range of sources (a major reason behind many NGOs

involvements in networks to begin with). Within the organizational definition, sustainability immediately raises questions about an NGO's missions and objectives. If an NGO is set up to accomplish a narrowly defined mission that it subsequently achieves, it could be said to have succeeded, but then there will no longer be a reason for it to exist. Sustainability therefore requires that this sort of success is never achieved, or that successful NGOs change their missions in order to be sustainable. The contradictory logic of sustainability in NGO managerialism runs parallel to the broader history of development practices in the global south, wherein serial policy failure becomes the "fate and fuel of all policy" rather than cause for its rethinking or abandonment (Dillon & Reid, 2000, p. 13; see also Ferguson, 1994). Indeed, the concept of sustainability has to be seen within the wider idea of development, which itself necessarily implies change not stasis (Arndt, 1981; Cowen & Shenton, 1996).

(c) *Capacity building*

NGO managerialism also recognizes the importance of developing the attributes of an organization's staff. Thus, *capacity building* can be conflated with managerialist aspects of *human resource development*, emphasizing skills-oriented learning and in-house training for staff and/or their attendance at local and international workshops and courses in order to increase an organization's "ability to achieve an impact" (Fowler, 2002, p. 76). Though many NGOs are deliberately organized in nonhierarchical ways, with collective decision making, the rotation of positions, and team-oriented projects, much human resource development is based on models of leadership and efficiency that mirror more corporate and masculinist forms of organizational structure (Calás & Smircich, 1992). These models may assume that work is stratified according to organizational charts, with staff occupying stable and unambiguous positions in a hierarchy. Such models may also assume that there is a definable group within the wider NGO who are, or who want to be, leaders (Perrault, Bebbington, & Carroll, 1998)—people who engage in "the process of identifying and developing the management skills necessary to address policy problems; attracting, absorbing and managing financial, human and informational resources; and operating programmes effectively" (Umeh, 1992, p. 58). Organizational

theorists have pointed out that, in many cases, women tend to prefer different, less vertically stratified organizational structures, and tend to operate with more horizontal and face-to-face decision-making processes (Calás & Smircich, 1992; Hearn & Parkin, 1992). Moreover, without ascribing essentialized notions of difference to local or indigenous ways of organizing and building institutions, it can also be seen that in many cases by not recognizing alternative organizational styles, INGOs and donors may miss opportunities to synergistically build effective programs upon culturally congruent frameworks. In any event, it is the case that in some NGOs the sort of hierarchical structure assumed by much managerialism is at odds with the NGO's deliberate attempts to operate through a more horizontal, fluid, or democratic organizational structure.

Leaders, according to managerialism, are also supposed to develop responsive leadership techniques; skills that enhance *adaptability*, *flexibility*, and *innovation* in organizational cultures and practices (Fyvie & Ager, 1999). Thus, for example, "[h]aving leadership that is open minded and savvy to changes in the environment and able to rally staff to shift its program and services accordingly can be one of the more valuable characteristics of a viable NGO" (Pezzullo, 2000, p. 20). NGO leaders can take courses and learn techniques to build effective teams in their organizations, as well as to hone their communication skills—for use both within the NGO and in communicating with external constituencies. For example, the Vermont-based School of International Training offers a Masters Degree in NGO Leadership and Management, with courses on capacity building, intercultural communication, policy development, management systems, and leadership (School for International Training, 2004). Active *entrepreneurship* on the part of NGOs and their leaders is also sometimes presented as a theme in capacity building (Jeans, 1998; Meyer, 1995, 1999) within a more generally valorized corporate organizational identity (Fowler, 2000b; Moore & Stewart, 1998). Especially valued in such settings is one's ability to be entrepreneurial in identifying potential funders and in writing successful grant applications. The overall managerialist imperative, in terms of the way an organization is run and functions, can be summed up in the ubiquitous terms *efficiency* and *effectiveness* which are themselves captured by the more overarching concern for *good governance* (Edwards &

Hulme, 1996b; Hulme & Edwards, 1997; Manzo, 2000).

Capacity building, moreover, is often extended beyond the NGO and into the domains of community groups they work to assist (often couched in the language of *technical assistance*). For example, the WWF hires facilitators to work with a community NGO in Oaxaca's rainforests, "analysing [its] actual organizational structure..., consolidating its technical and administrative teams, and conducting the tasks of organizational strengthening necessary to implement both strategic and operating plans" (WWF, 2001). Yet top-down capacity building can come at a cost, as northern standards of management are imposed on southern NGOs and their target groups, resulting in what Fisher (1994) calls a "subtle paternalism." This sort of imposed managerialism circulates in the multinational management-consulting firm, McKinsey and Company. Their report, *Effective Capacity Building in Nonprofit Organizations* notes the resistance to capacity building on the part of NGOs: "All too many nonprofits focus on creating new programs and keeping administrative costs low instead of building the organizational capacity necessary for achieving their aspirations effectively and efficiently. [...] This must change; both nonprofit managers and those that fund them must recognize that excellence in programmatic innovation and implementation are insufficient for nonprofits to achieve lasting results. Great programs need great organizations behind them" (McKinsey & Company, 2001, p. 19). Such perspectives overlook not only the many diverse ways in which excellence, efficiency, and effectiveness might otherwise be formulated and realized, but also the gendered and culturally specific practices that such objectives underwrite. Given these disjunctures, it is not surprising that, in Lewis's terms, capacity building and the practices associated with it have: "brought NGO organization and management issues into focus more sharply than ever" (Lewis, 2001, p. 183; also Eade, 1997; Fisher, 1994; Fowler, Campbell, & Pratt, 1992; Lewis, 1998).

(d) *Spatial strategies and discourses*

Managerialism, as a set of changing knowledges and practices, does not emerge in any one site and then diffuse, unchanged, through any organization or network (see Thrift, 1998). Rather, it circulates, gets reworked or even rejected in complicated ways in NGOs

and in the spaces of flows that connect NGOs in networks. A potentially useful way to conceptualize this fluid set of social relations is by way of its spatiality. By this we mean the several ways in which managerialism, NGOs, and NGO networks are constituted spatially while at the same time contributing to the socio-spatial contexts within which they operate (Del Casino, Grimes, Hanna, & Jones, 2000).

Our framework attends to at least three ways in which contemporary forms of NGO networks are geographical. First, the networks themselves are enacting a geography—linking actors in often quite distant locales. In some cases, these geographies correspond to older geographies of north-south relations, but in other cases networks may deliberately or not undo some of these sedimented geographies and their asymmetries of power. Second, every NGO is a spatial actor with its own *spatial strategies*—whether explicitly stated as such or not (Mutersbaugh, 2002). These can vary in terms of: location and extensiveness of operation; the ratio of in-house visits *by* clients to outreach visits *to* clients; and the mix of people-based *versus* place-based objectives found in projects. Third, managerialism is implicated in the *spatial discourses* enacted by NGOs. These enactments include carving up the complex and overlapping social spaces "on the ground" into the discrete and abstracted spaces of projects, reports, and evaluations. They also include efforts aimed at scaling up or taking to scale (see below).

The spatial strategies and discourses of NGOs can be aligned with managerialism's technical rationality. Such a rationality implies a conceptualization of space that sees it in terms of discrete units, oftentimes decontextualized, and marked by quantitative attributes (as in Geographical Information Systems (GIS), for example—a mapping and data analysis technology that is rapidly spreading through the NGO sector). This can be seen in the cases when organizations rely upon nation-state definitions of social space, such as census units, to assess needs and target funding (Mitchell, 2002) or use official indices of marginalization based on municipal boundaries to define target areas, as is frequently the case in Oaxaca. It can also occur when the grids used to spatially reference environmental information derived from satellites are mapped onto census data, or vice-versa. Indeed, any mapping and analysis of spatially referenced information can lead to what Lefebvre (1991) termed "ab-

tract” space—an imaginary geography bleached clean of the messy spatiality of on-the-ground social relations. Such a “grid epistemology” (Dixon & Jones, 1998) can, for example, drive data collection and analysis in strategic planning exercises and project development in NGOs, leading to situations in which the segmentations of territories found in a GIS fail to match the relational flows of lived spaces among those that the organizations are attempting to help. The risks here include the underestimation of a project’s spillover effects; the inability to assess cultural or environmental differences within the spatial units employed, such as municipalities, which are often used to organize NGO projects in Oaxaca (even those that are not aimed at municipalities *in toto*, but rather at specific sites within them); the uncritical acceptance of an extant spatial classification while ignoring the socio-political processes that created it (e.g., the deliberate gerrymandering of indigenous territories into mixed municipalities in Mexico); and the reification of spatial units (e.g., “rural *versus* urban,” “Appalachia,” “District I,” etc.) that come to take on a life of their own simply for their utility within managerial knowledges and practices more generally.

Sometimes, organizational arrangements can parallel such hierarchical and state-centric spatial understandings and can engender a disjuncture between administratively convenient demarcations of territory and more malleable, historically contingent, and socially grounded spatial imaginaries that might be embedded in grassroots NGOs. Any such disjuncture between abstract divisions of space and on-the-ground social relations can not only rework an NGO’s internal operations, reconfiguring the social space of the NGO, it can also affect how “turf,” including competition for funding in specific locales, is negotiated in the complex relationships existing among grassroots NGOs.

In addition to these territorial issues, there is a distinctive explicit scalar language at work in managerialism. Central elements in the spatial strategies of INGOs and NGOs are processes known as taking to scale, scaling up, scaling down, and scaling out. The ubiquity of these terms has led Uvin and colleagues to investigate them and their relations to one another (Uvin, 1995; Uvin, Jain, & Brown, 2000; Uvin & Miller, 1996). They note the tendency for INGOs and NGOs to attempt to reproduce and extend are assessed as successful projects.

Thus, the IYF asks of NGOs with successful projects, “How do we expand and replicate their efforts? How do we take them to scale?” (Schubert & Little, 1996). Howes (1997) notes that scaling up dovetails with NGO managerialism’s emphasis on becoming sustainable. But Edwards and Hulme (1992) offer that scaling up by an NGO can skew the projects that it pursues and cause the organization to lose touch with its context in ways that might act to exclude certain groups, such as women (see also Ebdon, 1995; Markowitz & Tice, 2001). As Billis and MacKeith note, “scaling up is an organizational as well as a policy question” (Billis & MacKeith, 1992, p. 126) and, as has been argued above, the implications of this can occasion serious struggles within NGOs as they seek to orient themselves in relation to these elements of managerialism.

4. A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Table 1 serves as both an elaboration and extension of the framework presented above. In it, we stratify the four domains of managerialism by three general areas of organizational analysis: culture, structure, and projects. Each of these is highly pertinent to the work that NGOs undertake, and can be hypothesized in numerous ways to respond to and to impact the flows of managerialism operating within any given NGO network. More precisely, we conceptualize *as recursive* the relationships between accountability, organizational definition, capacity building, and spatial strategies and discourses, on the one hand, and organizational culture, structure, and projects, on the other hand. Thus, when asking how the aspects of accountability impinge on organizational culture within an NGO, we must simultaneously inquire as to the impact of that culture on the mediation and reconstitution of accountability.

The table is divided into two parts. The first page fleshes out what we take to be the key components of organizational culture, structure, and projects. The second and third pages connect each aspect of managerialism discussed above to these three aspects of organizations, specifying a common research agenda focusing on the recursive relations between them. Readers should have in mind the details on the first page when assessing the “recursive understandings” between managerialism and organizations found on the second and third pages. In addition, for each of the twelve intersections we offer

Table 1. *Impacts of managerialism: A framework for analysis*

Some key features of organizations	Organizational culture	Organizational structure	Organizational projects
	<p>—Decision-making environment: centralized <i>versus</i> decentralized; egalitarian <i>versus</i> hierarchical; democratic <i>versus</i> autocratic; routine <i>versus ad hoc</i>; pragmatic <i>versus</i> idealistic; radical <i>versus</i> conformist; conservative <i>versus</i> opportunistic</p> <p>—Personnel characteristics: rate of turnover; skill and reward levels; extent and impact of the valuation of social differences of education, training, age, gender, race, class, ethnicity, indigeneity, and sexuality</p> <p>—Work environment: nurturing <i>versus</i> hostile; stimulating <i>versus</i> boring; collaborative <i>versus</i> individualistic; cooperative <i>versus</i> competitive; patronage <i>versus</i> merit-based reward system</p> <p>—Resources: level of and differential access to technological and other equipment, funds, perks, etc.; differential abilities to marshal the organization's resources</p>	<p>—Formal structure: legal status; extent of external input through advisory boards and community participation; level of intra-organizational differentiation and task delineation; affiliation type (e.g., clearinghouse, partner, subsidiary, independent)</p> <p>—Operational structure: centralized <i>versus</i> “branch plant” <i>versus</i> dispersed operations; in-house provision <i>versus</i> outreach orientation; fixed <i>versus</i> flexible organizational form</p> <p>—Network structure: extensiveness of intersectoral linkages (e.g., with state and capital); degree of horizontal and vertical integration within the NGO network; stability of the network (long term or shifting relations); quantity and quality of resources, information, and personnel flowing through the network</p>	<p>—Establishing priorities: processes for defining sectors of action (e.g., health <i>versus</i> environment); spatial distribution (e.g., area selection, centralized <i>versus</i> dispersed); social content (e.g., indigenous peoples <i>versus</i> women); types of assistance (e.g., technical assistance <i>versus</i> service provision)</p> <p>—Projects: determined externally or internally; selected before funding secured or funding-driven; administered from center or from field offices; extensiveness and longevity of projects; place-, people-, or issue-based; single-source funding or multiple-source funding</p> <p>—Everyday activities: daily work schedules, including division of labor on projects, conduct of meetings, characteristics of field excursions, carrying out projects and assessment exercises</p>

Accountability (including compliance with principles of transparency, reporting and assessment requirements, and efforts to ensure sustainability)

—Recursive understanding of the relations between accountability and the various aspects of organizational culture listed above
 —Oaxaca example: One of WWF’s *Bosques Mexicanos* international funders, USAID, has strict policies regarding NGO compliance with specific tasks formulated in grant proposals; this has resulted in a conservative organizational culture within Bosques

—Recursive understanding of the relations between accountability and the various aspects of organizational structure listed above
 —Oaxaca example: The FCO and WWF’s *Bosques Mexicanos* have different models of accountability: the FCO’s clearinghouse model is more flexible, requiring only financial probity, while the WWF’s partner NGO has stricter standards of transparency, reporting, and assessment across all aspects of its programs

—Recursive understanding of the relations between accountability and the details of organizational projects listed above
 —Oaxaca example: The FCO is sustained by an Inter-American Development Bank’s program that requires it to continually identify new opportunities for technical assistance groups in the state’s rural villages; the FCO sometimes complies by constituting “communities of women working together” where none previously existed

Defining the organization (including specifying the organization’s vision and mission, undertaking strategic planning exercises, and building long-term sustainability)

—Recursive understanding of the relations between organizational definition and the various aspects of organizational culture listed above
 —Oaxaca example: The WWF network has broadened its mission to include social and economic factors as it pursues its environmental goals; the staff of the WWF’s *Bosques Mexicanos*, however, is composed solely of natural scientists; over the past decade they have had to implement programs reflecting the more inclusive goals of the international organization

—Recursive understanding of the relations between organizational definition and the various aspects of organizational structure listed above
 —Oaxaca example: The FCO’s hierarchical structure, when coupled with its independence as a clearinghouse, enables a few key actors within the organization to exert tremendous power, including control over strategic planning; here a small core of permanent staff act as gatekeepers for the content and form of managerialism as it circulates throughout the NGO’s network

—Recursive understanding of the relations between organizational definition and the various aspects of organizational projects listed above
 —Oaxaca example: The FCO publicly eschews projects that might be considered “political;” however, with the organizational structure described at left, the FCO’s key actors were able to recraft their mission statement in an application to an INGO seeking to fund projects on human rights abuses and on programs aimed at redressing the effects of neoliberalism

(continued next page)

Table 1—*continued*

Some key features of organizations	Organizational culture	Organizational structure	Organizational projects
<i>Capacity building</i> (including human resource development, leadership training, entrepreneurship, efficiency and equity, good governance)	—Recursive understanding of the relations between capacity building and the various aspects of organizational culture listed above —Oaxaca example: Cultural disjunctures can inhibit capacity building by alienating targeted personnel: in one Oaxaca conference of Latin American NGO professionals, the organizers, leaders of a large, US-based INGO, scheduled meetings to conform to the US workday and eating schedule, a faux pas that upset many attendees	—Recursive understanding of the relations between capacity building and the various aspects of organizational structure listed above —Oaxaca example: WWF’s model of inclusive or “participatory” decision-making converged with regional autonomy movements in the state’s rural areas; the result has been an increase in the capacity (e.g., skills, interpersonal networks) of community organizers—a partial outcome of WWF’s open organizational structure	—Recursive understanding of the relations between capacity building and the various aspects of organizational projects listed above —Oaxaca example: WWF sent a staff member to an Brazilian workshop aimed at helping local communities market certified wood (form sustainable forestry); this knowledge was embedded in the WWF’s local projects in the Sierra Norte—rather than attempt to end logging in the region, WWF produced a pragmatic compromise with local communities dependent on the forest resource
<i>Spatial strategies and discourses</i> (including spatial range of operation, spatial data collection, socio-spatial segmentation, definition of “community,” and developmental, nature-society, and other spatial discourses and the technological practices they work through)	—Recursive understanding of the relations between spatial strategies and discourses and the various aspects of organizational culture listed above —Oaxaca example: Two of the largest women-centered NGOs in Oaxaca City have vastly different spatial strategies; constituencies travel to the headquarters of the one whose leaders share an upper class background, while the less well resourced NGO conducts significantly more outreach through field-based projects	—Recursive understanding of the relations between spatial strategies and discourses and the various aspects of organizational structure listed above —Oaxaca example: WWF is explicitly organized around regions; its mapping of environmental “hot spots” identified four environmentally sensitive eco-regions, each focused around the preservation of particular flora and fauna; in this sense, Mexico’s biodiversity organizes the WWF—Mexico’s administrative structure	—Recursive understanding of the relations between spatial strategies and discourses and the various aspects of organizational projects listed above —Oaxaca example: The FCO applies a single model of project assessment to each community organization with which it works, regardless of sector, project type, or region; this one-size-fits-all strategy is reported to be reinforced at international workshops on program assessment led by a large INGO

a brief empirical example drawn from our ongoing work in Oaxaca, which is centered on two NGO networks in the state. The nodal point of one is a clearinghouse NGO, FCO, whose major current project involves technical assistance to micro-regions via a program funded by the Inter-American Development Bank. The other network is concentrated on *Bosques Mexicanos*, a unit of the WWF—Mexico, which is part of the WWF's global network headquartered in Switzerland. The *Bosques* office in Oaxaca works with other NGOs and community groups in the forested areas of the state; its major funding comes from WWF—Mexico, WWF—United Kingdom, and USAID.

5. CONCLUSION

The globalization of capital and of labor has been much investigated (Dicken, 2003; Hanham & Banasick, 1998; Harvey, 1989; Herod, 1997; Martin, 1994; Thrift & Leyshon, 1995; Sassen, 1998), and the relationship of the state to globalization has also been well-researched (Helleiner, 1994; Kapstein, 1994; Ould-Mey, 1999; Webber, 1998). Others have debated the ways in which civil society writ large is being reshaped under globalization (Gray, 1999; Hobe, 1997; Kleinberg & Clark, 2000; Vellinga, 1998; but see the critiques of Allen, 1997; Feldman, 1997; Ferguson, 1998). The spectacular growth in the number and significance of NGOs has been situated in terms of the almost-ubiquitous neoliberal downsizing of the state, and attendant emphases on promoting the NGO sector by international organizations such as the World Bank (Aitken *et al.*, 1996; Bond, 2003; Gwynne & Kay, 2000; Meyer, 1992, 1999; Pearce, 1997; Slater, 1999; Stewart, 1997; Watts, 1999). In studies of the globalization of the NGO sector, however, the growth in the sheer number of NGOs has sometimes overshadowed the major changes in the form of NGOs and of inter-NGO relations that are proceeding apace. These changes include the rise of a dense web of networks linking NGOs

with one another and with institutions in the state sector as well as with corporations. These networks comprise many nodes and are animated by flows of resources and knowledge. The transfer of managerial practices and knowledges in these networks is central to their working, and scholars are beginning to critically analyze their content, form, operation, meaning, and impacts (see Crewe & Harrison, 1998; Lewis, 2001; Mawdsley *et al.*, 2000, 2002).

This paper addresses the need for a generalized and coherent research agenda for the study of managerialism in the NGO sector. While we only scratched the surface of this agenda from an empirical standpoint, the research framework presented here aims to be a contribution to addressing this particular aspect of the NGO sector and its emerging networked form. While researchers and NGO operatives will necessarily have to contextualize the framework to fit their unique circumstances, since the literature demonstrates that similar processes of NGO managerial transfers are occurring in every continent, a general framework may be helpful in capturing their tension-filled dynamics.

Finally, as we have stressed at several junctures throughout this paper, managerialism's elements can differentially infuse the daily workings of NGOs, and do so in ways that create a range of orientations to them. We noted the ways in which tensions may arise within and between NGOs themselves as certain types of knowledge, and expertise, are concentrated and valorized. We also noted how managerial imperatives flowing through networks can be met with open resistance. Other examples point to how aspects of managerialism are reworked as they are put into practice in organizations. Many NGO operatives complain that managerial practices are burdensome and diversionary. More than this, though, the many tensions contained within and spilling out from the circulation of managerialism in NGO networks bespeak its deeply contradictory and political nature.

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