

The Treatment Action Campaign in South Africa: Threefolding and cultural power as engagement with globalization

SECTION 1

Introduction

This paper proposes a conception of globalization for developing countries of the South to make sense of some of the development challenges they face. A focus is placed on the role civil society plays, in the exertion of a third power, cultural power, to balance the dominating forces of business and economy. This theme is explored through the example of South Africa as a country, and some of the issues linked to globalization that South African society faces. A particular conception of globalization, namely threefolding, is presented and placed in the context of South Africa and globalization. A particular case study is presented of a civil society-based social movement in South Africa, the Treatment Action Campaign. This movement's interaction with globalization and its use of cultural power is then discussed as an example of threefolding.

Developing countries and developed countries

Contrary to the expectations of the groups gathered at Bretton Woods in 1944, the income gap between the North and the South has moved further apart and not closer together. The United Nations Development Program reported that in 1960, 'the richest twenty percent of the world had incomes thirty times greater than the poorest twenty percent. By 1998 this ratio had increased to eighty two times as much of a difference' (Raffer & Singer, 2001).

Approaching globalization

Engaging with globalization would require an interdisciplinary approach (Robertson, 1990:18). In particular it is necessary to separate some aspects of the structuralization of the world as a whole. The elements that have led towards the establishment of a singular world, with a modernistic homogeneity, like western imperialism and the global media system, should be separated from the global and general theme of cultural agency (Robertson, 1990: 22). This paper will examine the theme of cultural power in depth, in terms of conceptualizing globalization, as a unique role played by civil society. This should be distinguished from the 'cultural hegemony' that Gramsci proposes, where intellectuals dominate the masses, and culture dominates polity and economy, with an essentially capitalist view (Perlas, 2000:122).

Robertson proposes five phases of globalization as a skeletal structure to delineate the process to the present, emphasizing that the process has been culturally rich and complex. He does not comment on the interaction between cultural, economic or political institutions in this description:

Phase One – Germination phase: In the early 15th to mid 18th century there is a growth of national communities.

Phase Two – Incipient phase: From the mid 18th century to the 1870s there is a shift towards the idea of the homogeneous state.

Phase Three – Take-off phase: 1870s to 1920s global conceptions of a ‘correct notion of state’ emerge, global competitions begin.

Phase Four – 1920’s to 1960’s struggle for hegemony phase: Wars about power and control, the atomic bomb and the United Nations emerge.

Phase Five – 1960s to the present – the uncertainty phase: Global movements and institutions proliferate, societies face more problems of diversity and poly-cultural natures, and the global media system is consolidated.

Robertson’s Phase Five, suggested in 1990, preceded the rise and consolidation of the internet and electronic worldwide web; he suggests this in his ‘consolidation of global media’. The final state in which Robertson concludes this sequence is important to note, as it highlights an uncertain globalized space.

Stating the challenges

The challenges posed by globalization are myriad and complex. Since the 1990s the abovementioned global condition of uncertainty reigned. ‘Geo-political earthquakes’ as named by Robertson (1990:27), signalled an arrival in the political sphere of the postmodern condition. Globalization posed a challenge in the conception of the ‘form’ within which the world is unifying as this movement occurred across several different fields, in different ways (Robertson, 1990:18).

In order to demonstrate the conceptualization in this paper as relevant to grappling with globalization, three major challenges to the countries of the south will be highlighted as drawn from the literature. The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the challenge posed to developing countries by HIV treatment will also be discussed briefly.

1. Economic challenge: Recovering from structural adjustment

The Washington Consensus was a key declaration in the economic history of the world. It consists of a set of economic prescriptions that dictates to developing countries certain conditions for much-needed aid. At the centre of the design of the consensus the basic principle is that democracy and free trade go together.

This consensus was implemented through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank structural adjustment programmes (Nederveen Pieterse, 2004:11). These consisted of providing high-interest loans to developing countries, with extremely restrictive conditions, impacting on the local policies of the countries dependent on the loans.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) became a framework that overarched the implementation of these structural reform strategies. The IMF became a debt collector that weakened countries in the global South (Nederveen Pieterse, 2004: 12). Regardless of the projects and programmes driven by the World Bank, the actual impact on global poverty has been evaluated to be zero. Most developing countries are economically much worse off after engaging with structural reform than they were before (Nederveen Pieterse, 2004: 14). This presents a significant economic challenge to the developing countries of the South. Some countries and regions drafted plans to deal with the severe challenges they face. NEPAD is an attempt of African governments to reduce poverty with a comprehensive plan (Kanbur: 2002).

2. Political challenge: Establishing good governance and leadership

In the globalization process multinational entities emerged that assumed global authority. As stated by Przeworski (1997:11, in Rosenau, 2000): ‘We have these bodies that are not accountable to anybody, anywhere’. Globalization hereby poses challenges for democratic governance. How countries enact their own valid political societies in a world where more powerful external forces impact on their political governance became a significant challenge (Rosenau, 2000:167).

A key challenge is the assumption that state authority should be the fundamental and central focus of international relations analyses. Even where the activation of civil society and the decay of state authority are acknowledged, it is seen as peripheral to the central stability of state authority (Rosenau, 2000:168). In other words, governance had become a term that referred to the activities of national governments (Rosenau, 2000:168). This excluded the potential of civil society and business to have an impact on these policy-driven decisions. Rosenau raises the point that for a majority of International Relations scholars, particularly in the United States, a notion of a world-wide and world-responsible governance structure would only be a system of existing states placed in an appropriate hierarchy. The thought that global civil society could play a governance role does not seem realistic or worth considering (Rosenau, 2000:170).

The notion that governance can exist outside government has however been proposed by several authors (Rosenau, 2002; Perlas, 2000). While the world faces major global challenges, and the South mostly carries the effects of confronting or not confronting them (Raffer & Singer, 2001), their potential mitigation might not lie in a global state, or one world government, regardless of the attempts of modernist neo-liberal corporations to 'brand the world'. Another more diverse approach might be more realistic, where these global problems, like environmental pollution, corruption, HIV and AIDS, terrorism, mass migrations and the international drug trade might not be addressed by countries alone, nor by one global entity, but 'piecemeal and incrementally by diverse types of collectivities' (Rosenau, 2000). This perspective draws on the view that the world order is a diverse collection of decentralized spaces and entities in which state-centralized systems are but a set of players. This notion does not lend itself to a hierarchical or hegemonic design for governance (Rosenau, 2000; Rosenau, 1990).

These collectivities pose the problem to governance of being complex, adaptive systems, where causality is a contested debate at all times. One policy shift or step does not necessarily have the intended effect. On the other hand, certain qualities emerge from a complex system, as a quality unique to that system, and not to be replicated by adding or subtracting any one of the elements of the system. (I will examine this emergent quality of a complex system as a notion in the case discussed below, where the civil society movement represents more a complex system that adapts and moves in unpredictable ways rather than a coherent and organized system with a clear hegemony in place. This is in fact one of the key advantages that civil society possesses.)

A major theme that could be drawn from Rosenau (2000:196) is that governance is an important element to be considered by the global South and it is important to recognize that it is not necessarily limited to the realm of governments.

3. Cultural challenge: raising the voice of the voiceless: effective partnerships between government, business and civil society to reduce poverty

A significant challenge to developing countries is the reduction of poverty (Kanbur, 2002:87). The South African government has attempted to establish key plans and programmes within Africa with the aim of reducing poverty. It is useful to note that poverty has been recently defined as being a state of voicelessness. This is relevant to the case study below, where civil society represents the voice of those unheard by both government and business (Kanbur, 2002:93).

Working regionally as partners in Africa, South Africa has formed part of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). (Kanbur (2002:90) points out that NEPAD has a strong focus on

democracy and governance. A notable feature of NEPAD is the comparative advantage it has of representing a regional institution that contains democratically elected governments (Kanbur, 2002:94).

Kanbur (2002:95) proposed three criteria as a key assessment for considering NEPAD:

- *Are NEPAD's programmes well suited to regional organizations, duplicating the efforts of other regional efforts?*
- *Is the institution acting as authority firmly rooted in democracy?*
- *Will these programmes directly and indirectly benefit the poor?*

Some of the sectoral actions laid out in NEPAD have not done very well in terms of the abovementioned criteria, but health does quite well. Table 1 lays out the declarations of section B2 from NEPAD.

Table 1: Health priorities in NEPAD

- Strengthen Africa's participation in processes aimed at procuring affordable drugs, including those involving the international pharmaceutical companies and international civil society, and explore the use of alternative delivery systems for essential drugs and supplies.
- Mobilize the resources required to build effective disease interventions and secure health systems.
- Lead the campaign for increased international financial support for the struggle against HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases.
- Join forces with other international agencies such as the WHO and donors to ensure support for the continent is increased by at least US \$10 billion per annum
- Encourage African countries to give higher priority to health in their own budgets and to phase such increases in expenditure to a level to be mutually determined
- Jointly mobilize resources for capacity building in order to enable all African countries to improve their health infrastructure and management.

(Kanbur, 2002:97)

One of the many aspects that are posed as challenges in the fight to combat HIV and AIDS is the restrictions imposed by international free trade agreements on the selling of generic drugs that are cheap and accessible, in the interest of placing as many people living with HIV and AIDS as possible on anti-retroviral treatment (Kaiser Network, 2008a). This problem is strikingly represented by Figure 1, below.

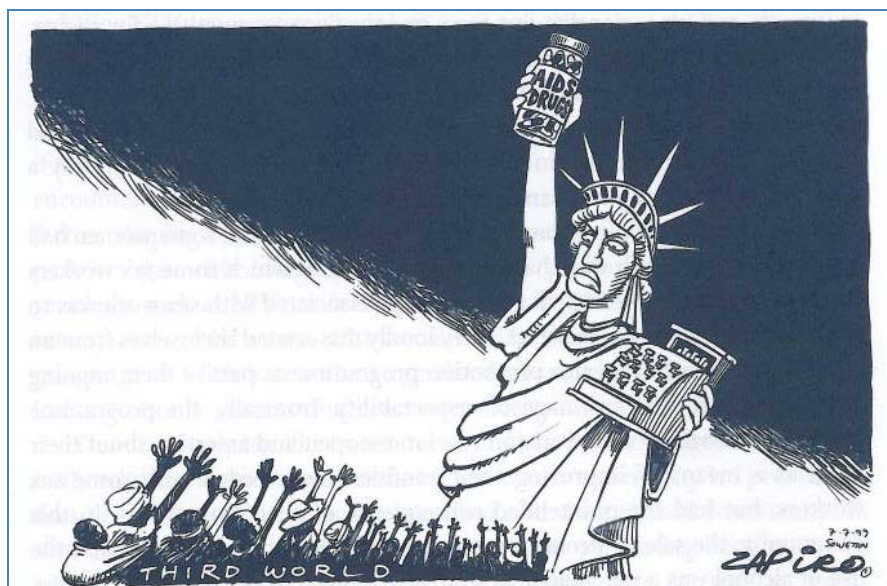


Figure 1: Illustration by Zapiro in *The Sowetan*, 7 July 1997

In 1997, the South African Minister of Health attempted to put forward measures to provide cheap generic drugs to the people living with HIV in South Africa. International pharmaceutical companies threatened to sue the South African government as they claimed that this measure was in contravention of international free trade agreements. Another voice of opposition to the Minister's efforts arose from labour, where the people working in pharmaceutical factories objected to the cheaper drugs being imported from India. The claim was that 'globalization' was threatening their livelihoods (ILRIG, 1998: 1). There were, in other words, two voices of opposition to the provision of cheap and accessible treatment. A brief overview of the necessity of providing treatment is provided below. This is placed as a concrete example of a challenge a developing country faces in terms of globalization, and the case study in Section 2 of this paper describes a response to this challenge.

A brief overview of the availability of and necessity for HIV anti-retroviral treatment

In 2007, UNAIDS reported that the HIV prevalence in Southern Africa was the highest in the world. The prevalence rate in South Africa was estimated at 18.1% in 2007. HIV Prevalence in 2003 is shown in Figure 2 in a data-derived map drawn from Worldmapper (2008).

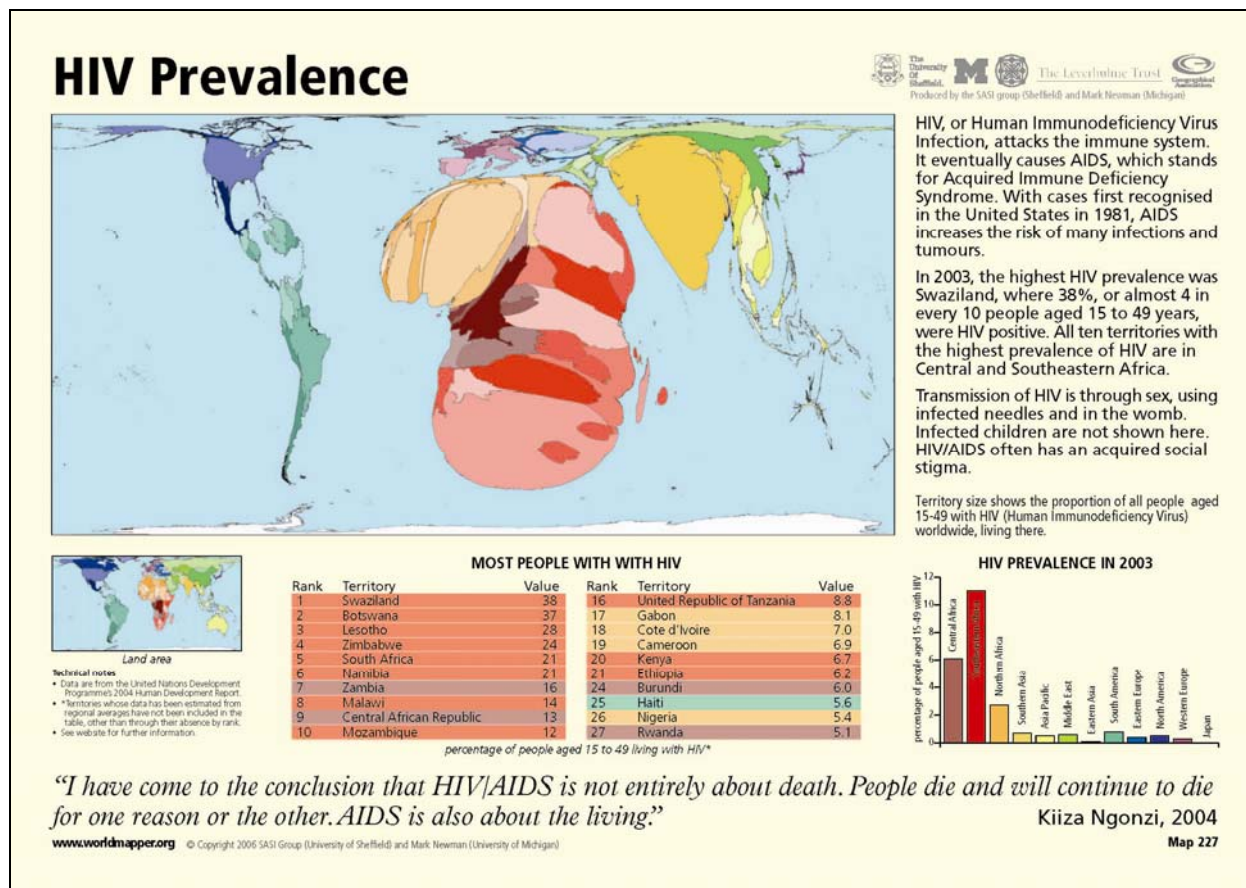


Figure 2: Global HIV prevalence mapped proportionally

Of the 33 million people living with HIV globally the efforts of advocacy and collaboration between civil society and governments have achieved the treatment level of reaching 3 million people. Notably these efforts have been driven by People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA). Of the 3 million estimated people on treatment in 2007, 2.1 million were from sub-Saharan Africa as shown below in Figure 3. The number of people living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa is estimated at 23 Million (UNAIDS, 2008). In other words, less than 10% of PLWHA in sub-Saharan Africa were on treatment by the end of 2007.

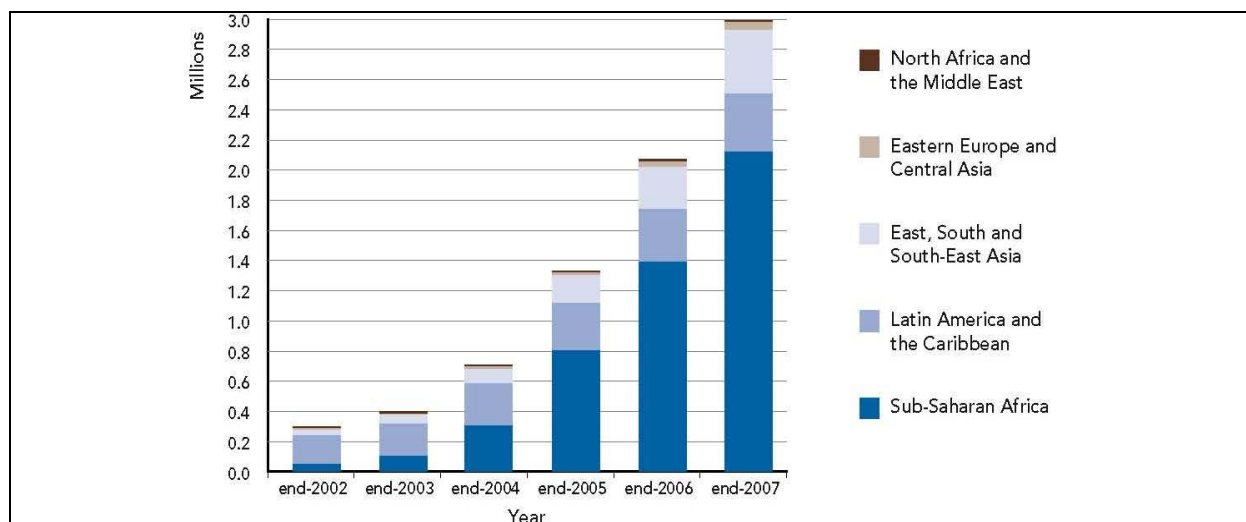


Figure 3: Number of people receiving antiretroviral drugs in low- and middle- income countries, 2002-2007 (UNAIDS, 2008:17)

It would seem logical that the countries with the highest HIV infection and prevalence have the least progressive policies in place, as the policy environment would allow better provision of services such as treatment. This is a complex problem, in the true sense of the word, with multiple fields and elements interacting and impacting each other in unpredictable ways. It is problematic to highlight distinct elements and their relationship to each other, as the causes of certain emergent qualities are not necessarily directly observable (Rosenau, 2000:180). However, for the purpose of this discussion, it is valuable to highlight an apparent contradiction in this scenario of treatment availability and policy.

As seen above, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest HIV prevalence in the world, at more than 20% average for the area. Yet, when one looks at Figure 4 below, which represents policies that block effective services like treatment, sub-Saharan Africa seems to be quite progressive in its policies. This perception is augmented with the case presented by Kanbur's analysis of NEPAD above. In the concluding sections of NEPAD, HIV and AIDS and other communicable diseases, TB and Malaria are prioritized as a key programme to be focused on by participating governments (Kanbur, 2002:91).

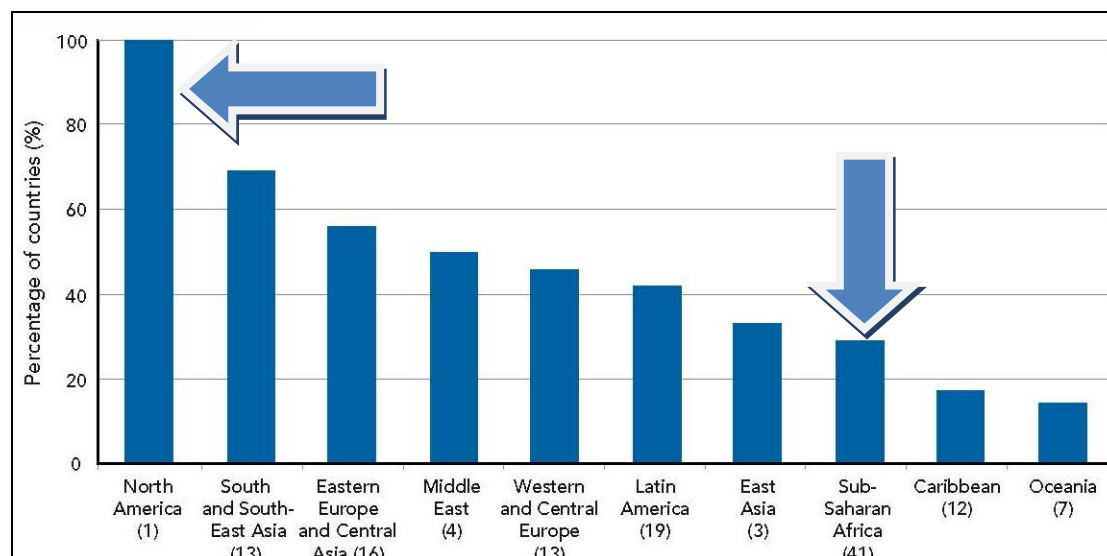


Figure 4: Percentage of countries reporting laws, regulation or policies that present obstacles to services for most-at-risk populations

The chart raises an interesting question in terms of globalization, if one compares the highest bar on the chart, North America, to the lowest, amongst them sub-Saharan Africa. How do the policies developed domestically in North America impact on the provision of services in the countries represented with relatively few policy blockages? In other words, is there a link between the high level of policy obstacles to HIV services in North America and the high level of HIV prevalence in sub-Saharan Africa? This question will be discussed further in the case study below. An example is presented of a social movement that responded to some of the mechanisms through which this globalized influence would operate, especially the mechanisms of international aid and free trade agreements. I present this case as an example of a voice that has been raised effectively in response to the pressures exerted globally by governments and business. Before the discussion leads to the case I propose that a useful conception of globalization for developing countries would be the notion of *threefolding*. I present this approach since a central theme in threefolding is the role that civil society plays. Civil society takes on a powerful voice to engage and influence the private sector and state governments towards sustainable development (Perlas, 2000).

Presenting the threefold approach

The term ‘threefolding’ refers to a particular process of organizing the different institutional powers in the world. In this paper I draw extensively on the descriptions and applications developed by Perlas in his book *Shaping Globalization, Civil society, Cultural Power and Threefolding* (2000). The approach as

interpreted by Perlas was developed and implemented as a key aspect of the Philippine Agenda 21 process.

Threefolding is well understood as a process that engages three institutional powers, representing a tri-polar world. Before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 the bi-polarity of the economic power of capitalism and the political power of communism dominated the world. After the fall of the wall it seemed that a neo-liberal world based purely on the economy and capitalist values would be the future. Economic powers increasingly began to dominate the activities of democracy. The establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) is an example of the creation of an economic entity with more power than the political structures of single countries. Then on 30 November 1999, at the WTO meeting in Seattle, a global coalition of civil society protested and demonstrated effectively their opposition to the WTO and its policies and programmes (Perlas, 2000:75). Civil society had entered the global platform, and in so doing had emerged as a third and distinct institutional power, with the economic and political spheres representing the existing two forces. Civil society had of course existed before this event, but Perlas points to this 'Battle of Seattle' as a key moment that civil society became visible on the world stage as a global network.

Two factors have to be understood to contextualize the meaning of threefolding. Firstly, there should be recognition that there are three institutional powers that contend in the world: business, civil society and government. Civil society creates a space for autonomous cultural life, within wider society. Secondly, as recognized by several social scientists, there are three subsystems in social life, namely the cultural, economic and political (Mann, 1986; Cohen & Arato, 1994; Sklair, 1995; Steiner, 1985, all cited in Perlas, 2000:108). The interactions between these three subsystems are important. When the three systems support each other and work towards a mutually beneficial goal, society is healthy. When one or two of the systems dominate, society becomes unhealthy.

Perlas suggest that these two aspects of the three institutional powers and the three subsystems in society interact in that each societal subsystem houses a particular form of power. Businesses have economic power, governments have political power and civil society has cultural power.

Table 2 below names the key terms used in the description and understanding of threefolding.

Table 2: Institutions, institutional forms of power and social subsystems

Institution	Civil society	Government	Business
Social Subsystem	Cultural	Political	Economic
Institutional form of power	Cultural power	Political power	Economic power

This leads to the explanation of the concept of threefolding. With one of the definitions Perlas (2000:6) states that ‘threefolding means the autonomous interaction of the three subsystems of society, through any of its three institutional powers or three key institutions to advocate for or to achieve genuine or comprehensive sustainable development’.

Perlas (2000) distinguishes between unconscious autonomous interaction and conscious autonomous interaction. *Unconscious* autonomous interaction between the three institutions takes place when civil society is activated, and enters the field in order to establish a threefold system. This creates a *de facto* autonomous interaction where civil society activism has an effect on the liberation of cultural life only by being engaged. *Conscious* autonomous interaction between the three institutions occurs where each is aware of the distinction between itself as an institution, the institutional power it can mobilize, and the social subsystem within which it functions best (Perlas, 2000:7). This means, for example, that government is aware that its source of power is political power, its social realm is politics and it is a key institution of the political subsystem.

In the case of unconscious autonomous interactions, the three institutions mobilize their power to achieve conventional sustainable development. Sustainable development that is defined as ‘conventional’ by Perlas (2000) refers to development that aims only to achieve sound environmental practices by economic institutions. This leaves out the roles played by government and civil society in terms of establishing a political support for sustainable development and acknowledging the cultural role that civil society plays. He introduces the term ‘comprehensive sustainable development’ to refer to the whole social system, including the cultural and political. A range of types of development are therefore included within the notion of comprehensive sustainable development. These are: economic, political, cultural, social, ecological, human and spiritual (Perlas, 2000:8).

I conclude the introduction to threefolding with another direct quote from Perlas (2000: 10) that positions threefolding as a process that leads to substance:

No abstract program (substance) can be created by any one institution of society. In threefolding, the concrete program is created in conflict, dialogue, or partnership, that is, in active processes between the three institutions of society. Out of these processes will come the concrete measures needed to achieve genuine or comprehensive sustainable development.

It is important to realize that threefolding is primarily a social process. The actual practical policies and practices that represent threefolding emerge from the social process. In this paper I have discussed the challenges faced by developing countries in terms of globalization, specifically highlighting the challenge posed by providing treatment for HIV. The case study I present below is of a social movement that took the responsibility of pushing back some of the encroaching limits that economic and political institutions were imposing, by utilizing their respective economic and political powers.

Before we enter the examination of the Treatment Action Campaign, I will consider a key term introduced by Perlas, namely ‘cultural power’.

Cultural power

The term ‘cultural power’ forms an important part of Perlas’s argument for the role of civil society (2000:141). This term can, however, be challenged. As Robertson (1990:28) points out, the banner of ‘cultural studies’ might be a way out of acknowledging the structural challenges presented by a complex world system, particularly the unpredictability of the world system (Robertson, 1990:18). According to Archer (1988), ‘culture’ and ‘agency’ are two terms that should not be conflated. The notion of ‘cultural power’ as presented by Perlas could be seen to have this nature, in that it joins two distinct fields. Archer (1988:xv) suggests that these two fields interplay with each other and affect each other, but are nevertheless distinct. Another confusing term might be ‘cultural hegemony’, that Gramsci refers to, where culture dominates in the form of an intellectual elite (Perlas, 2000:122).

In an in-depth explanation of the term ‘cultural power’, Perlas (2000) clearly states that this is different from the political power that government utilizes, and the economic power that might even buy political power. Cultural power has its own quality that is defined by culture being a space in which meaning and identity are generated. These two concepts of meaning and identity are inherently related to and dependent on each other. The elements in a society that control the generation of meaning have immense

power in that society. The defining factors of cultural power are therefore the ability to generate meaning and maintain or develop the identity of a society (Perlas, 2000:143).

Several examples of the *use* of cultural power are cited. The media are named as one particular form of cultural power, through which millions of people can be reached and respond to messages. Governments and businesses have a keen eye on what appears in the media, and adjust their strategies and use of power accordingly. Demand is also shown to be the Achilles heel of corporations. It is the economic expression of factors that have their origin in the cultural space, where tastes and preferences are formed. Civil society organizations have an impact on what people believe is desirable or not. This presents a potential lever for exerting cultural power. Another way in which demand can be utilized by civil society organizations as a form of mobilizing cultural power is in mass consumer boycotts, such as the boycott of Nestlé that forced them to improve their powdered infant milk products (Perlas, 2000:145).

Another example of cultural power is the Zapatista movement in Mexico. At the same time of the ratification and launch of the WTO the Zapatistas declared war on the Mexican government. It is interesting to note that after a vote of national confidence from the Mexican people they (the Zapatistas) did not wish to run for political office. They were adamant that they were conducting a cultural revolution and that they had to protect the unique quality and value of that cultural space (Perlas, 2000:110).

In terms of impacting the political realm, the legitimacy of government depends on civil society and the cultural forces that generate support or approval of government policy or leaders. Cultural power impacts the economy in terms of consumers buying products, and the political environment in terms of citizens voting for parties. In both these cases the initial intention of the person depends on the cultural power they are exposed to or are involved in generating, as it concerns the very meaning they give to their actions.

The key elements of cultural power are therefore the following:

- The ability to control demand through consumer preference or boycott
- The ability to confer societal legitimacy on government policy and procedure
- The number of people represented and mobilized by civil society
- Potential speed in mobilizing support

These elements will be used to discuss the case of the Treatment Action Campaign of South Africa, in terms of utilizing cultural power. I aim to discuss threefolding and cultural power as relevant terms in the endeavour to provide a notion of globalization that is useful to developing countries, in terms of the challenges they face as stated above. This is exemplified by the successes of the Treatment Action Campaign in attempting to provide cheap, accessible treatment to as many PLWHA as possible.

SECTION 2

Introduction

The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) in South Africa is a social movement that has frequently been cited as a potential model for other social movements. The core purpose of the movement is to campaign for affordable treatment for PLWHA (Friedman & Mottier, 2004). The TAC had significant success in raising its voice as a civil society movement and impacted the business and government institutions relevant to its cause. In this regard it is a good example of the use and mobilization of cultural power by an institution that understands the role of civil society and its identity.

The challenge globalization posed to the Treatment Action Campaign

Patents on Anti-Retroviral Medication (ARVs) prevent cheap generic drugs from becoming available to people living with HIV and AIDS globally. These patents are often protected by free trade agreements established by multinational entities. In 2001, the WTO adopted the Doha Declaration on Trade-Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). This declaration tries in some regard to mitigate the effects of pharmaceutical patenting, for example by introducing compulsory licensing as a way to set patent laws aside for medicines and allow competition from generics. Some trade agreements however have added intellectual property chapters that are very restrictive. One such measure introduced is called data-exclusivity, where the drug regulatory agency of a country signed on in a trade agreement becomes co-opted as a 'patent-police' in that it cannot register generic versions of drugs if they are patented (Kaiser Network, 2008a). These free trade agreements present a clear threat to public health from globalization, especially from the business realm of society, in preventing access to cheap drugs, for the sake of international profit.

The TAC was established initially with the aim of working with government as a partner, and focused on targeting these pharmaceutical companies' policies and the effects of pharmaceutical patenting that prevent access to treatment. Against their expectations the South African government resisted the roll-out of ARVs and the TAC was placed in a position where it had to take on the challenge of adjusting the policies and actions of government also. The case referred to here is when the actions of demonstrators, mainly the TAC, succeeded in pressurizing the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association (PMA) to withdraw court action against the government in 2001. The court action was intended to prevent the import of generic ARVs. Following this success, government failed to respond. They did not begin the roll-out of ARVs. This prompted the TAC to engage government to provide ARVs to PLWHA on a

national scale. In this endeavour they succeeded. Towards the end of 2003 the government supported a plan to distribute ARVs to PLWHA (Friedman & Mottier, 2004).

An extensive examination of the range of issues the TAC has managed to respond to, and the methods it has used, lies beyond the scope of this paper. Several papers have been written about the efforts of the movement, their challenges, successes and approaches (Friedman & Mottier, 2004; Meldrum, 2007; Geffen & Gonsalves, 2008). Beyond advocating for treatment for PLWHA, the TAC has also played a significant role in other issues like advocating for the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission, and mobilizing effectively against xenophobia in early 2008 (TAC, 2008).

The cultural role played by the TAC

In the discussion that this paper presents, the TAC is examined through the lens of threefolding, as defined above. The descriptions and examples of the TAC serve to highlight the use of cultural power by a civil society institution towards sustainable development; in other words, a civil society organization that actively engages in the process of threefolding, with substantive results.

The strategies implemented by the TAC

In order to assess the mobilization of cultural power, as proposed by Perlas (2000), and summarized above, the strategies that were mainly implemented by the TAC should be set out. The organization utilizes several strategies to support campaigning. Those most frequently utilized are:

- Civil disobedience
- Street demonstrations
- Court action
- Utilizing low-tech media such as posters, pamphlets and t-shirts
- Letter writing

Two activities that they implement combine service provision with political purposes:

- The treatment project provides much needed treatment to TAC members and communities served by the TAC, while simultaneously providing an example of how treatment can be rolled out, potentially to play a role in the national government roll-out of ARVs.
- The treatment literacy campaign provides information to people administering or receiving treatment, and also raises awareness of treatment.

The TAC has also been known to combine civil disobedience with service provision, for example when it imported cheap medication, against pharmaceutical patent laws (Friedman & Mottier, 2004). Officials within the TAC itself insist that their strength does not depend on their numbers, even though they are able to mobilize large numbers of people in a short time – between 8 000 and 15 000 people have been known to participate in TAC marches.

In an article, the international magazine *The Economist* coined two phrases that are relevant to the compromise of the role of civil society: GRINGOs and BINGOs. A non-governmental organization (NGO) that receives government funding is called a Government-Related NGO, or GRINGO. A business-funded NGO that compromises its values is called a BINGO (*The Economist*, 2000, in Perlas, 2000). Both of these cases represent civil society compromising its essential cultural power and the institution it is intended to uphold. In the face of these threats the TAC clearly avoid both by not accepting donations from the government, pharmaceutical companies or official donors such as USAID. Moreover, the TAC does not belong to, or support any particular political party. Members support several parties (Friedman & Mottier, 2004:5).

In this example the TAC begins to demonstrate that, as a social movement acting on behalf of civil society, it has a grasp of cultural power, and the means to retain the unique type of power this social subsystem represents. It does not retreat under pressure from business or government; neither does it become co-opted into these subsystems. It does not attempt to wield political power by joining or creating parties that stand for office, neither does it attempt to wield economic power by making profit from cheap ARVs it assists in importing or facilitating. It holds its role as a culturally driven social movement, focusing on raising the voice of civil society.

The key elements of cultural power to be utilized by civil society, as drawn from Perlas (2000), are matched against actions by the TAC, as described below.

The ability to control demand through consumer preference or boycott

There is clearly a difference between the choice of fashion accessories and their preference, and the need to buy life-saving medication. The role civil society can play in impacting on the Achilles heel of business, namely demand, might be easily implemented when, for example, consumers choose to boycott a specific clothing label.. Boycotting the sale of ARVs presents a totally different dilemma. Choosing not to buy a specific kind of medication, in contexts where this choice might translate into going without medication, might hold a life-threatening risk. This was also a different scenario as PLWHA did not have access, and consequently could not even exercise consumer boycotting. The TAC managed, however, to

manipulate consumer preference on another level than the individual. By popularizing the idea of cheap, generic drugs, the TAC raised the awareness of PLWHA that they can and should insist on more access to ARVs. By their advocacy the TAC supported the government's efforts to import cheaper generic medicine, boycotting on that level the trade in expensive, patented ARVs, and secondly importing cheap ARVs themselves. This led to the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association withdrawing court action against the importation by the government. This was an application of cultural power that engaged with the demand that business depends on. It also was a form of the application of cultural power that supported an action by government which was seen to be beneficial for the poor and affected people of the country.

The ability to confer societal legitimacy on government policy and procedure

To their own surprise, government did not follow through with a plan for roll-out of ARVs (Friedman & Mottier, 2004:3). The TAC highlighted the societal illegitimacy of this inaction. This sparked a long-term engagement of debate, challenge and conflict between the TAC and the government, which led to several concessions by government, notably the sanctioning of a plan by late 2003 to distribute ARVs to PLWHA. This was a clear use of cultural power, where the TAC as civil society organization exerted their power to confer societal legitimacy on government's actions.

The number of people represented and mobilized by civil society

Officials from the TAC insist that their strength does not depend on numbers. In early 2004 the number of PLWHA in South Africa was estimated to be five million. Membership of the TAC was estimated between 8 000 and 9 500 at this time. TAC officials concede that they cannot depend on organized strength to win all issues. Beyond membership the TAC does, however, represent a significant voice in South Africa for civil society. The movement is linked to the Confederation of South African trade unions (COSATU), and is flexible in the range of issues to which it can actually respond, such as xenophobia and PMTCT, beyond ARV roll-out for PLWHA (Friedman & Mottier, 2005:4). In this regard the TAC is able to exert cultural power by mobilizing people for a cause.

Potential speed in mobilizing support

The ability of the TAC to mobilize support speedily was well demonstrated by their response to the xenophobic attacks in early 2008. Financial resources were utilized for the essentials of relief camps and basic services needed by refugees and victims of attacks. The TAC rallied civil society partners and government departments to engage with the problem speedily. The practice of cultural power was

implemented in this case for direct service provision, and involved all three institutions of society: business, government and civil society (TAC, 2008).

Based on the above comparison I hold that the TAC social movement in South Africa represents a sound example of the practice of cultural power by civil society. The importance of retaining the identity and meaning of being a cultural organization is clearly demonstrated in the examples where the TAC could be co-opted or bullied by either government or business. In addition to the application of cultural power that the TAC represents as a way to engage with globalization, two practices of the movement are worth mentioning in their value to achieve high impact.

High impact practices utilized by the TAC

An evaluation of practices implemented by non-profit organizations to achieve high impact highlighted six practices that certain non-profits share, when they achieve a high impact (Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2007:21). These six practices are matched in Table 3 below with actions the TAC have been implementing.

Table 3 High Impact Practices and TAC

High impact practices (Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2007: 21)	Example of action taken by the TAC
1. Combining advocacy and service provision	The treatment and treatment literacy projects are concrete examples of combining service provision with lobbying goals, proving that treatment works, by doing it, and raising the consciousness of potential lobbyists.
2. Find ways of working with business	In spite of ferociously challenging practices and decisions by pharmaceuticals that could mean less access to quality treatment, the TAC recognizes useful development and research of much needed new forms of medication where appropriate, and publicly lobbies to have this research completed without obstacle (Geffen & Gonsalves, 2006).
3. Maximizing the use of volunteers	The TAC's ability to utilize volunteers has also been well recognized. The diverse ways in which they use volunteers range from mobilizing participants for marches, to having overseas volunteers do internships that aid the research and database of the organization (Friedman & Mottier, 2005).
4. Supporting the growth of non-profit networks	The organization is aligned with other movements such as COSATU, and is represented at a local level on multi-disciplinary task teams.
5. Adapting to changing circumstances	As mentioned above, the organization has a core focus of providing cheap, accessible treatment to PLWHA, but it adapts and responds

	surprisingly well to different challenges, such as motivating for PMTCT and responding to xenophobic attacks.
6. Sharing leadership throughout the organization	Contrary to the fact that the TAC leadership raised concern about a gap between the leadership and the grassroots branch leaders, the organization has put measures in place to assist grassroots members to ascend to positions of leadership, like training and 'parallel hiring'. A few examples of similar cases have been cited in the literature (Friedman & Mottier, 2005:7).

I propose that the TAC has achieved a high impact in their ability to have government make concessions, and their ability to affect decisions by pharmaceuticals, because of all these practices. Further, as expressed through the use of cultural power, I suggest that these practices are ways for civil society organizations to take up the unique institutional role of acting for culture, in autonomous interaction with business and government.

Threats to engaging meaningfully with globalization

For civil society from developing countries to find a useful conception of globalization, there are a host of pitfalls and threats, presented by business and governments. I highlight two that come from the ranks of civil society itself, which urge the global force of civil society to examine its own practices along with the usual advocacy towards and critique of governments and business.

Universal Action Now! and the Virtues of Disorganization

The rallying call and theme of the seventeenth International AIDS Conference in Mexico City in August 2008, was: 'Universal Action Now!' Speaker after speaker at plenary lectures called for the urgent action that is required immediately of governments, business and civil society in order to provide more treatment to more PLWHA in need and to prevent more infections. This theme is clearly meant to refer to the rallying call of treatment activists worldwide to establish universal access to treatment for HIV. A new theme that emerged from this conference was that prevention should also be constituted in a combination package of prevention techniques. Towards the end of the conference week several of the speakers vehemently critiqued simplistic, blanket approaches to prevention that seem to provide the magic bullet for preventing HIV. The well known 'ABC' (Abstain, Be faithful, Condomize) approach was mentioned

several times as a failure of the US government to stem the epidemic. The importance of context and contingency was highlighted. The ABC approach was shown to be irrelevant to low income earning women in oppressive relationships, on all three counts, for example (Kaiser Network, 2008; Woods, 2008).

In terms of the discussion above on globalization and modernization, the ABC approach is a clear call for a one size fits all solution. It highlights an interesting problem of globalization, where the outcome desired is a seemingly clear and simple solution to a very complex problem worldwide. As the TAC demonstrates in its efforts so far, establishing treatment for as many people as possible is a slow and deliberate process, with no easy simple solution. It requires a multidisciplinary approach and strategy to have success. The challenge to swing the epidemic's growth can be met with a globalized effort that combines the three forces of the social, economic and cultural spheres in the threefold approach as set out above. This matches the findings of several speakers at the conference, and supports a diverse approach, that is not as organized as one might expect.

On a national level, the TAC has met its successes with a relatively unclear definition of itself in terms of organization. It is recognized as a social movement, and membership is not clearly distinguished from volunteering or participating. If the suggestion by Robertson (1990:18) made earlier in Section 1 of this paper holds, namely that the challenges of globalization will be met by an interdisciplinary approach and a diverse set of incremental actions, I would suggest the TAC is an example of engaging with such an approach. To translate this to the global scale, with the massive challenge of rolling out treatment to the 30 million people still in need, it would be achieved, not by a transnational entity with an organized project plan, like the US-driven PEPFAR (Presidential Emergency Plan For Aids Relief) funding stream only. If universal access were to be achieved, it would be with a complex, incremental movement of several kinds of role-players acting in their particular different spaces. This refers to business that acts in the economic realm, governments that act in the political realm and civil society that acts in the cultural realm. The pitfall civil society might step into in this case is that of becoming too organized, and losing the unique voice it represents.

The case for rational activism

A potential pitfall in the use of cultural power, as set out by Perlas (2000), and applied to the case of the TAC, is that people are mobilized and advocacy is applied without a sound evidence base. The TAC issued a paper in 2007 citing several examples of advocacy that had negative effects on HIV prevention and treatment, due to messages and campaigns that were ideologically driven, as opposed to scientifically driven (Geffen & Gonsalves, 2008).

The term ‘pharmanoia’, coined by Cohen (2006, in Geffen & Goncalves), highlights the effect a sensationalizing approach has on the actual goal the advocacy is meant to achieve: by overemphasizing unproven wrong-doing on the part of pharmaceutical companies, attention could be drawn away from the actual misdeeds that need to be exposed. The example of the case against the South African government by 39 pharmaceuticals in 1998, where the attempt was made to prevent the government from making generic drugs is a good one, where the attention of the media was focused on Gilead, a pharmaceutical company that was actually doing legitimate clinical trial work, while a real threat was posed by the pharmaceutical companies’ court actions (Cohen, 2006, in Geffen & Gonsalves, 2007).

The danger, in this specific example of providing effective HIV prevention and treatment, is that the actual progress in the important work of developing effective and desperately needed drugs is hampered by the misdirected use of cultural power, through advocacy and community mobilization (Geffen & Gonsalves, 2007).

If the framework provided by Perlas (2000) were to be applied to this example, the civil society organizations that mobilized against pharmaceutical companies, for the sake of mobilizing, could be seen to be a case where civil society dominates the other two institutions, namely government and business. Civil society in this case particularly attempts to tread within the realm of business and oppose business based on an ungrounded perception of nefarious deeds committed by business. Ironically, once again, if business actually had a nefarious agenda to undermine human rights for the sake of profit, these efforts by unguided and impulsive civil society would aid business in its programme.

Perlas (2000) comments in this regard that civil society should be able to move beyond tolerance of business, and government towards active acknowledgement and appreciation of the roles that these two institutions play. He insists that civil society activists should have a clear and sound knowledge of their own intentions and motivations, to prevent the occurrence of examples such as those mentioned above. He takes the point as far as equating the misinterpretation of business or government actions by civil society to psychological projection, where the perception of the activist clouds an objective critique of what is actually going on (2000:107). The threat to cultural power here is that civil society’s use of power will be lessened.

Conclusion

Comprehensive sustainable development as defined by Perlas (2000:8) includes the dimensions of economic, political, cultural, social, ecological, human and spiritual development. I would assert that the TAC has played a role in working towards the cultural, social and human dimensions of development,

contributing to comprehensive sustainable development. This comprehensive sustainable development would only be achieved should the autonomous interaction of all three institutions be consciously implemented.

I therefore suggest the example of the TAC in South Africa has provided a case where a social movement engaged in autonomous and conscious interaction towards comprehensive sustainable development. This is the definition of threefolding provided by Perlas (2000:6). In the assertion of Perlas (2000:7) that conscious threefolding refers to civil society being aware of the distinction between itself as an institution, the power it wields and the social subsystem within which it functions, my analysis is that the TAC is an example of conscious threefolding, as it demonstrated this awareness in several of the examples cited above, where it had opportunities to lose this focus.

I believe the organizational strategy and practice represents an example of the effective use of cultural power. The organization effectively countered forces of globalization that threatened the well-being of the poor in South Africa. These forces were enacted by government and business, and the TAC remained a civil society organization wielding cultural power.

In conclusion I therefore propose that threefolding is a useful framework for institutions in civil society, government and business in developing countries to grapple with the challenges of globalization and that it is a practical and applicable tool for progress towards the sustainability of society.

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