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Do-it-Yourself Aid: The Emergence of American Grassroots Development Organizations

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**DO-IT-YOURSELF AID:
THE EMERGENCE OF AMERICAN GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT
ORGANIZATIONS**

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**A DISSERTATION
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OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
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Abstract

The number of American-based international NGOs has increased tenfold since 1990. The growth is driven by GINGOs: grassroots international non-governmental organizations, or NGOs founded by amateurs with a personal tie to a developing country, and supported with volunteer labor and individual donations. The Americans who launch these organizations typically are middle-class college graduates, but have no training or professional experience in international development. Instead of being shaped by the norms of the professional aid field, these organizations are defined by the personal relationships and skills of the people who found them. They represent a counter-movement to the trend of professionalization seen in aid organizations and the nonprofit sector broadly.

This dissertation combines analysis of IRS records with fieldwork and interviews in Africa and the United States. I also create an original database of all known websites for international relief, development, and human rights organizations registered with the IRS in 2011, which is analyzed with topic modeling and content analysis of a random sample of 150 organizations. My findings show that globalization offers a tenuous opening for nonprofit organizations to bypass the isomorphic pressures of professionalization. And while supporting world society theory's claims about the ways individual agency and rationalism shape international organization, I show that the *expressive* possibilities of nonprofit organizations are critical in understanding GINGOs' emergence. I describe implications for development aid and for the American communities that support these groups.

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I am deeply grateful to the guidance and generosity of Princeton University faculty, and particularly my dissertation committee. It's not unusual for graduate students to work with brilliant faculty, but very few work with four people who are brilliant, wise, and kind. Thanks to Bob Wuthnow, Miguel Centeno, Paul DiMaggio, and Stan Katz. I have been uncommonly lucky to work with you these past seven years.

The leaders and volunteers of the organizations I write about here did me a great kindness in speaking frankly about their work, and in many cases inviting me into their homes. Although I critique some of their ideas and efforts here, I hope I have lived up to my promise not to be glib.

It's much easier to criticize from the sidelines than to do the messy work of trying to translate compassion into real improvement in the lives of the poor. The American volunteers I discuss here were doubly compassionate, first in their efforts abroad and second in making themselves vulnerable to the questions of an inquiring stranger. These people have my respect and gratitude.

Thanks, at last, to my husband Josh, who has supported my work in ways large and small. Without you these last seven years would have been twice as much work, and half as much joy.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The only ice cream shop in Butare, Rwanda is the offspring of a chance encounter at the Sundance Institute. The leader of a women's drumming group from East Africa fell into conversation with two restaurateurs from Brooklyn who had recently opened an ice-cream shop that was winning hearts of the city's foodies. In the space of a few months the plan emerged for *Inzosi Nziza*: an ice cream parlor in a Rwandan university neighborhood, funded by the Brooklyn restaurateurs, and staffed by the young women who played in the drumming group. The young women would receive training in English and business management while the appeal of ice cream on hot East African afternoons would eventually make the project self-sustaining. The three partners hired a former Peace Corps volunteer to oversee the training and launch of the shop in Butare, while in January 2011 the project was recognized as a tax-exempt public charity by the IRS; the Brooklyn restaurateurs were officially in the business of international aid.

Inzosi Nziza is one of over 10,000 new international aid organizations founded by Americans since 1990. Thanks to the world-shrinking power of globalization, Americans find themselves connected to distant communities in the poor regions of the world. Beneath the global exchanges of trade and the movements of a cosmopolitan elite, American citizens are more quietly forging global ties through immigration, tourism, volunteering, study, work, and adoption. These ties have shaped an important trend in international aid: the multiplication of grassroots relief and development organizations that operate independently of established development institutions. In 1990, there were just over 1,000 registered American relief and development organizations; more than 1,300 *new* organizations were established in 2010 alone,

for a total of 11,181 aid organizations by the end of 2010.¹ Today nearly 1/3 of U.S. counties are home to one of these international aid groups.

The U.S. nonprofit sector overall has grown in the last two decades, but the growth of U.S. based international aid organizations has moved at a far quicker pace. The number of new international aid groups registering annually with the IRS quadrupled from 2000 to 2010, compared with only 19% growth for other 501(c)3s. Charitable giving echoes the story: Americans gave \$15.7 billion to international organizations in 2010. That number represents a 15.3% increase over 2009, a jump greater than in any other charitable sector: 0.8% for religion, 5.2% for education, 6.2% for public benefit organizations, and 5.7% for the arts, culture, and humanities (Giving USA 2011).

To make sense of this organizational expansion, we have to understand that most of the 10,000 new American international aid organizations resemble *Inzosi Nziza* more than well-known NGOs like CARE or World Vision. These new groups rely largely on volunteer labor and donations from individuals rather than contract revenue or foundation grants. IRS records show that the median organization has an annual budget of \$25,000 or less, and three-quarters operate on \$134,00 or less annually. Only the top 8% of U.S.-registered international aid organizations draw annual revenue \$1 million or more.

These groups are typically personal projects launched by Americans with a college degree but no training or professional experience in international development. Adoptive parents want to provide extra help to their child's native town; MBA students want to try out an idea for improving small-scale farming; an immigrant wants to set up a school in his home country; a pastor wants to dig wells in arid African villages. Fifty years ago a few of these intrepid souls would have set off as Peace Corps volunteers or missionaries, but most of them would have sent

checks to large aid agencies. The “development project” has been one of the defining tasks of the post-World War II world, and non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, have had an expanding role in that project since the 1970s. What has changed is that the cheap travel and instant electronic communication of the last two decades have made it possible for amateurs and part-timers to launch their own development projects. Put another way, globalization has lowered the barriers to entry in the field of development aid.

I refer to these new organizations as grassroots international non-governmental organizations: GINGOs. The name acknowledges their similarity in purpose to international NGOs, or INGOs, while distinguishing them from that class of organizations that operates with greater size, scale, geographic reach, access to funds, budgets, and international visibility. The adjective “grassroots” signifies these organizations’ small scale and do-it-yourself flavor, and emphasizes that they typically work directly with recipients rather than through a long aid chain (cf. Swidler and Watkins 2008).

There has been substantial scholarly and policy attention to NGOs, and there has been no shortage of press coverage of individual charitable projects in poor countries—or better still, the projects of the much-in-vogue social entrepreneurs. Yet there has been no recognition by scholars or policy makers of GINGOs as a class of organizations. The story of these groups has hovered at the edge of largely parallel intellectual conversations about “the rise and rise” of NGOs, the ubiquity and legitimacy of voluntary action among Americans, the romance of entrepreneurship, and the budget cosmopolitanism of the globalization age.

This dissertation shows that the small-scale aid projects that are personally familiar to many Americans are part of a broader organizational movement. Elsewhere in the nonprofit world and in the field of development organizations, the trend is towards greater

professionalization: domination by managerial professionals and increasing emphasis on planning, strategy, and evaluation. Grassroots NGOs represent a counter-movement where the expressive dimensions of charity work are reclaimed. The founders of GINGOs are often teachers, accountants, doctors, IT specialists who spend their work days in other professionalized organizations. Their education, income, and professional connections afford them the opportunities to travel to developing countries, even as their work leaves many of them disaffected, wanting to do “something more” with their talents. Thanks to globalization, these Americans are able to travel inexpensively and communicate instantly and for nearly free to the global South, where they forge personal relationships and re-invent development aid as expressive personal charity. Grassroots NGOs borrow the purposes and legitimacy of traditional NGOs, but their motivating force, their destinations, their projects, their staff, and their resource base are all shaped by the *personal*.

This dissertation defines these aid projects, so far publicly discussed in anecdote, as a class of organizations that constitutes a new meeting of American voluntary action and development aid. While these groups are bolstered by the cultural, economic, and political forces that have supported other NGOs, these groups are defined by expressive rather than the instrumental action. They are defined by personal relationships and popular rather than expert notions of development, and as such are a countermovement to the professionalization of the nonprofit sector.

The rest of this introduction sets the stage for that argument. I begin by reviewing the emergence of NGOs as pre-eminent actors in the field of international development. Then I present theoretical perspectives that inform my argument: world society theory, arguments about the rationalization and professionalization of the nonprofit sector, and claims for the supply-side

orientation or expressive qualities of nonprofits. The section that follows explains the research questions and data for the dissertation, and I close with an overview of the chapters to come.

The “Rise and Rise” of NGOs as Actors in International Development

Non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, have played a role in relief and development aid for at least 70 years. The first baby boom of American NGOs came in the wake of World War II. The U.S. government leaned on CARE, Lutheran World Relief, and Catholic Relief Services and their ilk to provide relief to a devastated Europe after the second World War (Smith 1990, 1998). With this task complete by the 1950s, these organizations turned towards Africa, Latin America, and Asia, and Northern governments began to distribute bilateral aid for development.

The U.S. government became increasingly disgruntled with foreign aid in the 1970s. The Senate Foreign Operations Subcommittee, which held the foreign aid purse-strings, expressed frustration at the lack of fruit borne by aid sent directly to developing-country governments. The result was a plan in the 1973 Foreign Assistance Act to channel more aid through non-governmental organizations rather than through receiving-country governments (Babb 2009). The technocratic 1950s- and ‘60s approach to development had centered on developing infrastructure. The idea was that in Asia, Latin America, and Africa as in reconstructed Europe, (capitalist) industrial development would create a rising tide that would lift all boats. The shift from direct aid to NGOs in the 1970s thus also entailed a switch in tactics toward meeting the basic needs of the poor—food, water, health, education.

Two political developments in the 1980s fortified the growth of NGOs. The first was Reagan-Thatcherist politics, which whittled away at the role of the state in providing social

services. Nonprofits were increasingly relied upon—by design or default—to carry out the tasks that until recently had fallen to the government (Anheier and Salamon 1998). The second development was the perception that civil society was instrumental in toppling the Soviet bloc. Western leaders were encouraged by the success of the nascent third sector in Eastern Europe and eagerly poured millions of dollars in donations in an attempt to establish the civil society organizations they believed were crucial for stable democracy (Aksartova 2009, Hammack and Heydemann 2009). Donors' enthusiasm for civil society as a path to both democratization and development, again, carried over from Europe to the Global South. NGOs became an institution that both the political left and right could embrace. For the right, NGOs were a means of keeping governments small; for the left, NGOs were seen as a structure that could challenge existing power relations (Anheier and Salamon 2006). NGOs also expanded their roles in response to humanitarian crises. Media coverage of the 1980s Ethiopian famines was a turning point; the graphic images of children's suffering broadcasted on the evening news brought public outcry and support for humanitarian action. Forman and Stoddard (2002) note the role taken on by relief organizations in civil wars and other unstable situations in subsequent years. They argue that citizens of wealthy countries had little taste for casualties in "peacekeeping" or humanitarian emergencies, and so giving aid via NGOs became the "weapon of first resort" in these situations.

Huge sums of money now flow through these organizations. In 2011, \$19.3 billion in official development aid was budgeted to or through NGOs, or about 15% of all official aid from OECD countries (OECD 2013). For the United States, 23% of official aid went to NGOs. This excludes private charitable donations, which in 2010 totaled another \$14 billion for U.S. NGOs (Worthington 2013) and in 2011 \$32 billion for NGOs based in all OECD member countries

(OECD 2013). In other words, nearly half of all public and private U.S. dollars for relief and development system go now to NGOs.

Theoretical Perspectives on Nonprofit Organizations and NGOs

World Society Theory

NGOs rose to prominence in no small part because of the political opportunities I highlighted above. Third-world governments came to be seen as unsavory development partners. State provision of social services fell out of favor as neoliberal politics ascended, and NGOs were envisioned as the catalyst for civil society and therefore of democracy outside of the West.

Yet NGOs have been able to exploit these opportunities because of their particular cultural status. Hilhorst (2003) has argued that the title “NGO” is a “claim-bearing label.” To organize one’s efforts under this title is to make “claims that the organization is doing good for the development of others. The label has a moral component. Precisely because it is doing good, the organization can make a bid to access funding and public representation” (p. 7; quoted in Watkins et al. 2012 p. 290).

World society theory explains the moral legitimacy of NGOs along similar lines. NGOs sit at the fortuitous convergence of two post- World War II trends: the emergence of “world cultural” (Meyer et al. 2007) values that underpin the development project, and movement towards modern organizations as a way of structuring collective human action. From this theoretical perspective, the end of World War II with the victory of the Anglo West and the establishment of the UN and international financial institutions marked a crucial moment. To borrow an aphorism, legitimacy is written by the victors; the legitimated actors that emerged from World War II were the nation-state, the rational individual, and the non-governmental

organization. The “world cultural” values of democracy, human rights, science, and social development emerged as legitimate as well (ibid.). Meyer and his colleagues argue that, in a process of normative isomorphism, national elites adopted the form of the nation-state and its structures and ideals, along with the “model social problems” found in the gap between those modern ideals and present realities (ibid.). The result is a world of nation-states that are remarkably alike in goals and structures, tutored by global networks of scientific experts and non-governmental organizations (Boli and Thomas 1997).

World society theorists argue that globalization demands and facilitates the “organizational reconstruction of much social life” (Drori, Meyer, and Hwang 2006). This global trend towards organizational elaboration is seen in the rising number of organizations (government bodies and units, private corporations, nonprofit organizations), the variety of life domains controlled by organizations, and the growing degree to which extant organizations are structured by formal roles and scripts. Neo-institutionalist theory rejects the functionalist argument that this elaboration is a rational response to increased complexity and global competition (cf. Jacobson 1984). Instead organizations respond to a broader social and political environment rife with pressures of legitimacy apart from efficiency considerations (Pfeffer and Salanciek 1978, Powell and DiMaggio 1991, Scott et al. 2000). Neo-institutional theories, informed by phenomenological notions of action, understand actors to be culturally constructed and embedded, taking cognitive and ontological models from their environments. From this perspective the global expansion of organizations has its cultural underpinnings in the expanding mutual awareness of actors across the globe, that crucial dimension of globalization described by Guillen (2001). This theoretical strand helps us understand why charity towards the poor—a

feature of human society that has taken many forms over centuries—is increasingly handled by formal organizations.

Two of the mechanisms linking globalization to the expansion of organization identified by world society theorists are also important to the story of grassroots aid. First is the rise of the global as the relevant social horizon. To imagine a “world society” is to recognize problems in health, security, or economy that exceed the scope of individual nation-states and which must be addressed, in the absence of a super-state, by agreement on terms of coordinated action. But if a sense of global problems and possibilities gives nation-states more to do, it also weakens their exclusive claims over their citizens. Individuals can claim rights and moral agency above familial, ethnic, or national structures (Drori et al. 2006, Frank and Meyer 2002). Arguments for a cosmopolitan notion of citizenship go further still, asserting that the borders of states are irrelevant for defining moral obligations to fellow humans (Linklater 1999, Pogge 2002). The right of individuals to confront problems beyond the horizon of one’s kin or nation gives legitimacy to voluntaristic action—most commonly through associations (Boli and Thomas 1997). This, too, contributes to the cultural status of NGOs.

The global trend towards rational planning based on scientific knowledge also encourages organization. Not only are problems global, there are now globally “correct ways to bring about health, schooling, economic development,” and these solutions are carried “by social scientific professionals whose instructions have widespread and rapidly increasing authority” (Drori et al 2006, p. 37). The worldwide expansion of formal education is both a response to and a carrier of the dominance of scientific authority (Frank and Meyer 2007). Scientific expertise is understood to be universal rather than local, and therefore the basis for any properly trained

expert to execute a scientific solution wherever it is needed. This opens legitimate arenas for organizing (Drori et al. 2006, p. 14).

In sum, world society theory points to social dynamics that bolster the emergence of nongovernmental organizations: the tendency to channel social action through modern organizations, the widespread legitimacy of rational, scientific action, and the rise of the global as the relevant social horizon.

Professionalization and Rationalization

The themes of organizational formalization and the moral agency of the individual emerge, albeit in different terms, in analyses of the nonprofit sector and voluntarism more broadly. Historical, theoretical, and empirical accounts have all described the increasing rationalization and professionalization of the nonprofit sector (Smith and Lipsky 1993, Karl 1998, Skocpol 2003, Grønbjerg 1993, Putnam 2007). Hwang and Powell (2009) observed Bay Area nonprofits using management consultants, strategic planning, independent financial audits, and data for program evaluation—all techniques common to the for-profit (and in some cases the government) sector. They found that these techniques were more likely to be used when the nonprofits were funded by foundations, had full-time staff, and had executives with professional degrees (particularly MBAs or other training in management). In other words, being a full-time, “professional” organization rather than a part-time, volunteer driven group, means relying on data and expert advice, and using formal processes for planning and evaluating outcomes. Hwang and Powell saw professionalization infiltrating a range of social domains, including those that were once homely and intimate; even “the sage advice of grandmothers has been supplanted by a wide array of child development experts and agencies” (p. 268). Forman and Stoddard

argue that this trend is a dominant force in the field of INGOs. Paralleling Hwang and Powell's sentiments, they write that "the era of well-meaning amateurs has given way to an epistemic community of well-trained professionals" (p. 270). They predict a "homogenization" of NGOs driven both by professional norms and stiff competition among NGOs for external funds.

This trend towards rationalization and professionalization is true of government aid agencies, as well (Lancaster 2009, Honig 2014). Meyer and Bromley (2013) observe a "blurring" between government, for-profit, and non-profit sectors. What were once very different structural models now look increasingly like each other, as these entities borrow features and techniques from one another. They trace this convergence to the emergence of "organization" (rather than bureaucracy or corporation) as a characteristic way of structuring human action, driven by the same macro-cultural principles of scientific rationality and individual agency that have shaped NGOs.

This theory goes a good distance in explaining the emergence of GINGOs. It provides an account of why living conditions that were once humanity's common lot are now labeled as "underdevelopment"; it suggests why even individuals on the other side of the world would feel empowered and even compelled to act; and it clarifies why rationalized organizations are designated as appropriate ways of structuring the action. But the image this theory offers is of formalized groups that would defer the experts in the field, and that would be rationalized and isomorphic.

By contrast, GINGOs are diverse, improvised, and expressive. What world society theory minimizes in its account of NGOs is that nonprofit organizations are often imprinted with the passions and capabilities of the people who launch them. Nonprofit theorists have recognized this in discussions of the expressive or supply-side characteristics of the sector.

Supply-Side and Expressive Theories of Nonprofit Organizations

Economic theories about the origins of the nonprofit sector first focused on questions of demand. Weisbrod (1977, 1978) argued that people are likely to found nonprofits in situations of excess or differentiated demand for services. Situations of differentiated demand are apt to arise when market niches were small or went unaddressed by the state, which maximizes appeal to the median voter. Thus nonprofit organizations offer Montessori schools or Catholic hospitals. James' (1987) innovation was to introduce supply-side explanations. She argued, first, that the level of "nonprofit entrepreneurship" was associated with the size of the nonprofit sector, and second, that the ambition of religious groups to maximize adherents drove them to be nonprofit entrepreneurs. She used the cases of Japan, the Netherlands, India, and the United States to argue that that societies with large and diverse religious populations were apt to have vigorous nonprofit sectors.

Chaves (1998), in turn, made two useful improvements to James' theories. Using a number of historical cases as evidence, he claimed that religious motivations can drive nonprofit entrepreneurship even without an explicit goal of winning converts (or as James called it, maximizing adherents). He also usefully interjected organizational theory to argue that religious organizations often operate with a "garbage can model" (Cohen, March, and Olson 1972). Since preferences are contested, organizational technology is poorly understood, and individual participation in religious organizations are fluid, religious groups tend to work with "solutions in search of a problem." Put another way, many forms of religion provide a compulsion towards some sort of "this-worldly activism" (Chaves 1998, p. 61), but it is not evident what form that activism should take. Chaves argued, "Thus is religious energy—whether oriented to

evangelism or not—directed into the creation of nonprofit organizations that meet excess demand for any number of services” (p. 62). The energies or motivations of nonprofit founders are a critical force that determine the growth of the nonprofit sector.

Rose-Ackerman (1996) argued that the interests of nonprofit founders would affect not just the size of the nonprofit sector but its variety of flavors. She argued, following Weisbrod’s theory of differentiated demand, that the nonprofit sector was hospitable to “ideological entrepreneurs” who wish to provide services inflected by a particular set of values. Nonprofits attract charitable individuals who, “rather than simply wanting to ‘help others’ or ‘support culture’ in a generalized way, [have] particular beliefs about the best way to do these things” (p. 716). Nonprofit organizations are sites for entrepreneurs to support their own ideas of human flourishing. With less regulation than government and without the strict profit accounting of the market, in the nonprofit sector “both experimentation and sheer oddity can be accommodated so long as the entrepreneur is independently wealthy, can attract donations, or can break even serving the public” (p. 724).

Peter Frumkin (2009) argued that this potential for individuals to use an organization to express their ideas of the good life is in fact one of the constitutive qualities of the nonprofit sector. Nonprofits, in other words, serve *expressive* functions. Volunteers can derive satisfaction from the very act of supporting a chosen cause—the arts, youth empowerment, the advancement of one’s alma mater---regardless of the outcome (p. 23). While an instrumental assessment of the nonprofit sector values the maximally efficient delivery of services, an expressive perspective sees distinct value in the way that volunteers can experience fellowship or satisfaction even if efficiency is sacrificed. From this perspective the nonprofit sector is unique

not just because of the variety of services it can offer, but because of the delivery of the services offers emotional and moral possibilities unavailable through the state or market.

These expressive possibilities can be a powerful motivating force for volunteers, even when the nonprofit falls short of its instrumental goals. This is one of the insights of Nina Eliasoph's (2011) study of the highly motivated volunteers for a vague and ineffectual youth empowerment program. David Suarez (2011) and Wenjue Knutsen (2013) have written about some of the ways contemporary nonprofits adapt their organizational structures to maintain these expressive functions amid other pressures because people value them so much. Ironically, this literature shows that the case for an expressive nonprofit sector can be made either expressively or instrumentally. One could argue that the feelings of brotherhood, efficacy, and generosity that donors and volunteers receive for their efforts are human goods that should be encouraged. One could also argue that even if it is selfish for nonprofit supporters to expect these goods, it gets the dollars in the bank and volunteers in the aisles. From this angle, warm and fuzzy feelings are nonprofits' price for private support.

The Expressive Impulse Meets Globalization

Globalization has expanded the scope for expressive charitable action. My argument is that grassroots aid is about more than the diffusion of rational, liberal values from global North to South. I depart from the world polity perspective by arguing that GINGOs, which constitute the bulk of new relief and development NGOs, are defined by expressive qualities. These expressive qualities are not new, but what is historically novel is the geographic scope over which they are exercised. Globalization has defined networks, or channels for movement, and it

is through these channels that aid relationships form and Americans can transmit their notions of progress—including notions that are less rational and formalized than we might assume.

The historical development most important to grassroots aid is the ability of Americans to communicate with and travel to the global South with relative ease. Thanks to the end of the Cold War and various civil wars, whole swaths of Africa, Central America, and Asia opened up to tourists by the 1990s. This was also at the moment when the price of airline tickets was declining in real dollars and the income of white-collar Americans was increasing. The 1965 immigration reform had swelled the population of highly educated Chinese and Indian immigrants who by the turn of the millennium had the means to travel back and forth to their countries of origin. Immigrants and tourists alike could communicate with acquaintances abroad as the reach of the internet and mobile phones extended first to cities and then to rural provinces.

Grassroots aid organizations emerge from Americans' travel to the global South. Most often the travel is related to tourism, study, or volunteer work through existing partnerships with universities or civic groups. In other cases Americans return to visit their native towns, or those of their adopted children or immigrant spouses. Aid projects are started to provide assistance to specific communities that Americans encounter during these travels. This is a critical point: grassroots aid does not trickle down from a national development scheme, nor is it broader aid interventions in search of apt "sites" for implementation. Instead aid emerges in a personal, relational context.

GINGOs: High Organization, High Expressiveness

While world society theory and organizational theories account for rational, voluntary organizations to address poverty, they do not account for fact that NGOs serve expressive

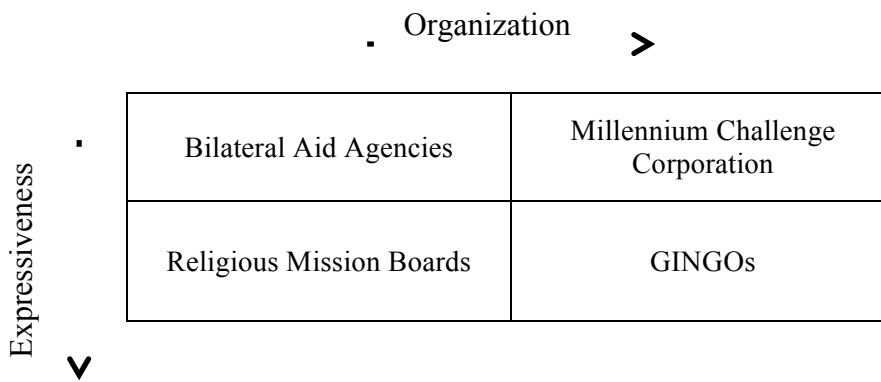
functions. Supporters find emotional satisfaction in being involved, and in executing their own notions of development, even if those ideas diverge from expert advice. (That the advice of experts on development has so often changed provides further encouragement to “common sense” approaches.)

The theory I have just outlined suggests that international aid organizations are shaped both by forces of *organization* (in the neo-institutional/Meyer sense; i.e., different from bureaucracy or corporation) and *expressiveness*. The table below shows how GINGOs differ from other aid organizations on these dimensions. Older bilateral aid agencies, like USAID, are public bureaucracies—low on both qualities of modern organization and expressiveness. Nineteenth century religious mission boards, run by denominations, were hierarchical Victorian bodies, but they were driven by private, expressive ideas about how particular religious beliefs would improve lives in poor countries. George W. Bush’s pet Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) operates according to publicly-agreed upon strategies and is low on expressiveness, but is very much a contemporary organization with its use of public-private partnerships and strong mechanisms of accountability. World society theory would likely describe most NGOs as being more or less like the MCC, but my argument is that GINGOs are distinctive because of the strong place of expressive qualities.

It is my argument that the distinctive qualities of GINGOs come from this tension between high organization and high expressiveness. They operate in the same development field as traditional INGOs and government aid organizations and borrow some of their technologies for raising funds and executing projects. The founders of GINGOs are largely employed in other modern organizations—following Bromley and Meyer, the sorts of techniques they use as accountants, doctors, or IT professionals carries over to their work with NGOs. But they are also

shaped by the emotional ties of relationships with people in Southern communities, by their desire to meaningfully contribute blood, sweat, and tears, and by their conviction that their own stories of socioeconomic mobility can be useful in the South. Contrary to Forman and Stoddard (2002), I argue that a new wave of “well-meaning amateurs” is now working in parallel (and sometimes at odds) with the “epistemic community of well-trained professionals” (p. 270).

Figure 1.1 Qualities of Expressiveness and Organization in Aid Organizations



Research Questions and Data

The aim of this dissertation is to explain why this new class of nonprofit development organizations has emerged at the turn of the 21st century in response to the opportunities of globalization and in opposition to the drive of professionalization in the nonprofit sector and the field of international development. In so doing, I provide answers for the first time to descriptive questions about these organizations’ locations in the U.S. and overseas, their projects, their recipients, and the roles that American supporters play.

This dissertation explores how the Americans who start GINGOs understand the problems of under-development and how they characterize solutions and Americans' roles therein. I consider how GINGOs are distinct from other aid organizations, focusing on how the personal, expressive character of these organizations shapes both their impact as development actors and as civil society organizations in the United States.

To address these questions, I use macro-, meso-, and micro- levels of data. The landscape in which this these data are situated is the listing of 501(c)3 organizations coded by the IRS as International Relief, Development, or Human Rights Organizations. Choosing this landscape excludes what Watkins et al. (2012) call “free-floating altruists,” individuals doing aid work without a registered organization, as well as social enterprises that aim for some public benefit but are incorporated as businesses rather than nonprofit entities. Were there some systematic way of finding and counting these individuals and groups, the grassroots aid movement would be even larger in numbers and more varied in scope than I describe in this dissertation. As it is, the IRS data, published by the National Center for Charitable Statistics at the Urban Institute, included records for 10,624 U.S.-based relief, development, and human rights organizations by the end of 2011. The first part of the dissertation uses the IRS's Business Master File (BMF), which contains for each organization an address, a date of tax-exempt recognition, and the most recent year's revenue and assets. The organization's U.S. address, which includes a FIPS (county) code, allows me to match the organization to Census and other contextual data on the county where it is headquartered.

The meso level of analysis, uses NGOs' own websites. Because the IRS does not track where NGOs work outside of the U.S. or the projects they undertake there, the most accessible source of this data is NGOs websites—but unfortunately, there is no central database for the web

addresses. So I built one, with help from several hundred workers on Amazon Mechanical Turk. In approximately six weeks I was able to locate webpages for 6,749 organizations, or nearly 2/3 of all active NGOs listed in IRS records. This quantity of websites was too large to analyze by hand, so I used two analytic strategies. The first was to “scrape” the text of all the websites and apply *topic modeling*, a new algorithm-based technique that allows researchers to glean themes or “topics” from large corpora of text. The second was a traditional, in-depth, hand-coded random sample of 150 websites.

Finally, to get at the deeper questions of how GINGO leaders understand their work and the ways they mediate between communities in the U.S. and the Global South, I selected five NGOs to analyze as case studies. For each organization I interviewed the founder and current board members, reviewed organization documents, and visited their project sites abroad. This involved trips to Michigan, Texas, Massachusetts, and Minnesota, and nearly a month in East Africa, yielding a total of 43 interviews.

My project contributes to the literature on nonprofit organizations by providing basic information about a large and fast-growing part of this field—the whos, wheres, whats, and whys. It contributes to theory by showing that globalization has provided space in the nonprofit field to resist professionalization, and corrects world society theory’s over-emphasis on rational values in NGOs by showing that expressive objectives play a crucial role in motivating and structuring these groups.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 of the dissertation describes my data and research methods. I explain the rationale for drawing the universe of organizations from the IRS database of tax exempt

organizations. I outline my sources of data and explain the process for selecting the five groups that serve as case studies for the dissertation. **Chapter 3** provides extended vignettes introducing each of those groups.

Chapter 4 is the dissertation's first analytic chapter. In it I examine whether contextual characteristics (in the American community) can account for the expansion of development organizations. Although founding a NGO demands a healthy dose of entrepreneurial initiative, I hypothesize that the context in which a would-be voluntary entrepreneur lives and works matters. Individuals who are surrounded by immigrants, in communities rich with civil society, in close proximity to state or national government may be more apt to make global connections and to solidify them in the form of a development organization. This analysis relies on additional data on religious congregations, other civil society organizations, and county-level Census variables for income, education, population size, racial composition, and immigrant composition. (This chapter is a modified version of a paper that has appeared in the May 2015 issue of *Social Problems*.)

Chapter 5 provides a description of the foreign location, modes of action, targeted recipients, and roles for U.S. supporters of American NGOs. The chapter draws on a content analysis of 150 websites randomly selected from the roster of active NGOs in IRS records. By design this sample includes older NGOs and GINGOs. Describing the work of both older and newer NGOs allows for analysis of the distinctive qualities of GINGOs in the chapter that follows.

Chapter 6 analyzes how GINGOs understand the process of development and how those understandings shape the ways they carry out aid work. I argue that GINGOs cannot be understood simply as junior members of the broader NGO field. Thanks to their small budgets

and volunteer labor force, GINGOs are insulated from the normative pressures of professionalized aid. While professionalized aid agencies are guided by social scientific experts' prescriptions for development, GINGOs are guided by a popular narrative of development that prizes Americans' personal knowledge and experience. The popular narrative depicts development as changing societies one person at a time, using the blueprints provided by Americans' own histories of social mobility.

American NGOs carry out aid according to three basic models. GINGOs are especially likely to approach aid as the delivery of goods and services or as the reforming of skills and subjectivities of aid recipients. These aid approaches are satisfying for the Americans involved in these NGOs because they can observe that material needs have been met or that aid recipients have acquired new educational credentials or work skills.

Chapter 7 considers the role of religion in grassroots NGOs. Religion has long had a prominent role in American private development aid, both through missionary organizations that provided material assistance and through dedicated relief and development organizations that were associated with religious denominations. GINGOs differ from older religious providers of aid that had clear denominational identities; they are the projects of entrepreneurs who draw on multiple identities and resources. I show that the leaders of GINGOs selectively draw on religious frames for explaining and justifying their work; modes of voluntary action from people's religious lives; and networks of people situated in congregations and denominations that provide the resources that small-budget groups need to survive. I show that religion affords important resources to a large share of GINGOs, including many that do not label themselves as "religious" or "faith-based." (A modified version of this chapter is under review as a journal article.)

The personal networks of globalization make GINGOs viable, and **Chapter 8** elaborates how relationships between GINGO founders and a) associates in aid-receiving communities and b) friends and family at home in the U.S. have profound consequences for the establishment, maintenance, and influence of grassroots NGOs. Loved ones in the global South often provide the motivation for Americans to set up GINGOs, and these trusted associates often become the lens through which Americans assess local development problems and opportunities, and gauge the impact of their work. Meanwhile, American NGO leaders draw on their social networks for resources to support the NGO, and in these interactions transmit their ideas about poverty and development. Given most Americans' scant knowledge of the global South, GINGO leaders' arguments have particular credibility; their accounts are trusted by family and friends, and moreover, they've "seen it with their own eyes." One of the most important consequences of the growth of GINGOs is their grassroots influence over Americans' understanding of global poverty.

Chapter 9 summarizes the findings and concludes the argument.

I turn next to a discussion of my methods for studying this new organizational form.

Chapter 2

Data and Methods

Trying to make sense of a new social phenomenon bears resemblance to the Indian fable of the blind men who tried to describe an elephant. One man, grasping the tusk, said the elephant was like a plowshare. Another touched the tail and declared the elephant to be like a rope. A third who touched the belly described it as a wall, and others, grasping different parts, said the elephant was like a fan, a pillar, or a tree branch. In the happy version of the fable, the men share their knowledge and establish a picture of the entire beast. By a series of close-ups they are able to “see the elephant.” My approach to making sense of GINGOs has been slightly different. Rather than using a series of close-ups, I have taken snapshots at different focal lengths: the close-up, the medium-range view, and the landscape. Each “snapshot” relies on a different source of data, each representing a different tradeoff of detail and scope.

The landscape perspective is the IRS Business Master File, with the location, revenue, and age of each organization, which I use in greatest depth in Chapter 4 and which constitutes the sampling frame for the other analyses. The meso-range view is a sample of NGO websites, analyzed with topic modeling and with conventional content analysis; the close-up comes from interviews and observation of five case studies.

In the remainder of the chapter I describe in more depth each source of data and the research methods applied to each. I start with the IRS data and discuss their virtues and limitations, continue with a description of the web analysis and the nuts and bolts of topic modeling, and then explain my method for selecting the case study organizations.

IRS Data

In a researcher's ideal world, every NGO would be registered with some international entity and would provide it with information on the location and aims of its projects. No such international entity exists, and NGO directories maintained by developing country governments are notoriously incomplete, contradictory, and outdated (Ahmed and Potter 2006, Brass 2012, Barr et al. 2005). Sociologists interested in NGOs (Beckfield 2003, Boli and Thomas 1997, Frank 1997) often rely on the Union of International Organizations' *Yearbook of International Organizations*. This publication has the advantages of historical recognition by the UN (Boli and Thomas 1997) and data on organizations' members and operating locations. While it covers international organizations for a range of purposes—industry, science, and sports groups are dominant—the Yearbook's shortcoming is that it defines “international” organizations as only those operating in three or more countries. This definition fits with certain theoretical notions of “global” or “international” movements, but is unnecessarily restrictive for my purposes by excluding aid groups that are based in one country but operate in (only one) other. The Yearbook excludes most of the U.S.-based aid organizations recognized by the IRS.

The IRS' Business Master File contains descriptive information for all active organizations that have registered for tax-exempt status with the IRS and is updated several times a year. Two BMF files are available: one for all 501(c)3 public charities and private foundations, and another for all other tax-exempt organizations under other 501(c) subsections, such as trade unions and chambers of commerce. All of the NGOs in this study fall under the 501(c)3 designation.

An organization that wishes to operate as a non-profit is required to file with the IRS for tax-exempt status if it has more than \$5,000 in annual revenues. The major exception is religious

congregations or their full subsidiaries.¹ Until 2008, only private foundations and nonprofits with annual gross receipts of \$25,000 or more were required to file an annual Form 990 return. Since then, organizations that collect less than \$25,000 (again, with the exception of religious congregations) are required to file a 8-question Form 990N online, known as an “e-Postcard.” (Beginning with tax year 2011, the ceiling for filing the e-Postcard increased to \$50,000.) Organizations that fail to file for more than three years can be stripped of their tax-exempt status. The three-year window from the implementation of the law ended in May 2010, meaning that the 2011 BMF files reflect the winnowing of the organizations that did not comply (many, though not all, of which are presumably defunct). The result is that the BMF represents a database of organizations that have at least had an organizational (if not programmatic) presence in the last three years. Parts of my analysis that require the full population of organizations ever registered with the IRS (Chapter 4) draw data from older BMF files that include organizations whose tax-exempt status was revoked in 2010 or later.

The BMF file includes data on the location and finances of each organization, along with its unique Employer Identification Number (EIN). The BMF also lists the month and year that an organization registered with the IRS, as well as the most recent dollar amount of gross receipts from Form 990 filings. Of particular importance for analyzing environmental conditions for organizational founding, the BMF gives each organization’s address and FIPS code. The address allows organizations to be plotted using GIS software, and the FIPS codes allow for easy matching with other contextual data at the county level. In Chapter 4 I describe at greater length

¹ Historically the most common beneficiaries of this “full subsidiary” rule have been parochial schools. Although they are not required to do so, many religious congregations register with the IRS; in 2003, the BMF contained 130,000 religious congregations, or about one-third of the total estimated number of congregations in the U.S.

the use of data from the Census and from decennial studies of church membership conducted by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB).

When an organization applies for tax-exempt status with the IRS, it is given a code from the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities according to the charitable purpose it declares on its application. NTEE codes were created in the 1980s and laboriously revised in the 2000s to increase efficiency and to better align with North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) that was implemented by the federal government in 1999. Based on each code's detailed description in the NTEE-CC handbook and analysis of a sample of organizations with the relevant codes, I include organizations with the following codes in my sample:

Q30-39: International Development and Relief

Q70-71: International Human Rights

Web searches of a random sample of organizations with these codes revealed that organizations labeled as "human rights" organizations and those labeled as "development" were carrying out very similar work. For example, a group doing women's microenterprise might be coded as Q30 or Q70 depending on whether the mission statement highlighted women's empowerment. These codes exclude international organizations without an aid mandate: international cultural exchange or study programs, groups interested in security or non-proliferation, and international trade groups.

The shortcoming of this system is that organizations doing relief and development work are occasionally categorized according to the sector of their project. For instance, an organization called Development in Gardening, which does urban agriculture projects in Africa and Latin America, has code C42 (Garden Clubs). This false-negative error will conservatively bias my total count of grassroots NGOs but can be assumed to be geographically random. My

analysis of the BMF found that false-positive errors—non-development organizations mistakenly categorized as development organizations—were rare, about 2%.

NGO Websites

The second, meso-level source of data is the NGOs' own websites. The BMF does not register organizations' websites and there is no other central clearinghouse for these addresses, so I created a database of NGO websites with help from Amazon Mechanical Turk² (MTurk) workers. MTurkers were provided with the organization's name and address from the BMF and searched for a matching website. To ensure the quality of the results, each organization was assigned to three MTurkers, with a research assistant resolving any conflicting findings. Of 10,684 organizations registered with the IRS by the end of 2011, web addresses were found for 6,749, and after manually removing dead³ sites, the total number of sites suitable for analysis was 6,564. To obtain a true "snapshot" of these sites and avoid analyzing a moving target, I captured the text from each site using an automated software program, yielding a corpus of thousands of text-only documents. For the sample of 150 sites, the text documents were supplemented with PDF copies of each site. PDF files preserve most of the formatting of the original page and so are easier to read, and provide the additional context of photographs and other graphics that are stripped away when a website is reduced to text.

Topic Modeling

² Amazon Mechanical Turk is a clearinghouse to outsource large numbers of small tasks that require human intelligence. For an overview, see <https://www.mturk.com/mturk/help?helpPage=overview>. For a discussion of the quality of data generated with Mechanical Turk, see Kittur et al. 2008.

³ i.e., sites that returned a 404 Error message or posted an "Under Construction" message with no other text.

The first approach used to analyze these data is computer-assisted topic modeling (Blei et al. 2003), an inductive technique that uses computer algorithms to analyze patterns of words in large corpora of text for topics, or themes. Traditional techniques of textual analysis used by social scientists rely on counts of individual words or the co-presence within documents of particular words pre-selected by researchers. These approaches unfortunately demand that the researcher knows what he or she is looking for, and have the effect of treating all instances of a word's appearance as being equal in meaning. Topic modeling, on the other hand, creates lists of words that appear together in the text and allows words to appear in more than one list. Words can then indicate their multiple meanings depending on the context in which they appear. Topic modeling is consistent with the principle of relationality—the idea, held by linguists and cultural sociologists, that the meaning of a word is established in relation to its context (Bakhtin 1982; DiMaggio et al. 2013; Mohr and Duquenne 1997; Saussure 1977). Topic modeling not only allows words to be classified into topics, but documents to be represented as a mixture of topics and then classified by the mixture and prevalence of particular topics (DiMaggio et al. 2013).

Topics are formally defined as distributions over terms (words⁴) in a fixed vocabulary. Terms are assigned to topics on the basis of co-presence within a document at higher-than-expected frequencies. Several topic modeling algorithms can be used, depending on the nature of the data and the researcher's purposes. I use LDA, which creates topics based on a hierarchical analysis of the text. (For a technically detailed explanation of LDA, see Blei, Ng

⁴ In the technical language of topic modeling, “term” refers to a signifier as it is assigned to lists of topics, while “word” refers to particular instances of the signifier within documents. Thus the signifier “home” might appear as a word five times within a given document, but it would appear only once as a term within a given topic assigned to that document. Since a topic is a distribution over terms, a term may appear only once in any given topic, but may appear in more than one topic.

and Jordan 2003). While regression analysis operates on the assumption that observed data are deviations from some idealized distribution, LDA operates on the assumption that documents are created by an (imaginary) generative process. The generative process is imagined like this, where k is the number of topics, d is the number of documents, and n is the number of terms.⁵

- Assume that topics are vectors of word assignments β_k drawn from a Dirichlet distribution $\text{Dir}(\eta)$ that has as many dimensions as there are terms.
- For each document:
 - 1) Choose a vector of topic proportions θ_d from a Dirichlet distribution $\text{Dir}(\alpha)$ that has as many dimensions as there are topics.
 - 2) For each term in the document,
 - a) choose a topic assignment $Z_{d,n}$ from a multinomial distribution conditioned on θ_d
 - b) choose a word $W_{d,n}$ from a multinomial distribution conditioned on $Z_{d,n}$ and β_k

Put in simple terms, each document is composed of different proportions of topics. Within a document, each word is drawn from a topic, while those topics are drawn in proportion to their distribution within the document (Blei 2012; DiMaggio et al. 2013).

In this imagined generative process, the only observed variables are the words in the documents. The composition of the topics, the distribution of topics over documents, and the distribution of words within topics within a document are the “hidden structure” that the algorithm must infer. The task of the algorithm is to use the observed or prior distribution of words over documents to compute the posterior distribution of this hidden structure in the text (Blei 2012).

⁵ My explanation here draws strongly on Blei’s own explanation of LDA’s imagined generative process given on pp. 78-79 of Blei (2012).

This analysis uses the open source *lda-c* software package created by Blei.⁶ Because the frequency of words' occurrence in the text relative to other words is the crucial observed variable, the text is stripped of *stopwords* that occur with high frequency but have no substantive meaning (such as conjunctions and articles). The number of topics in the corpus that the software will generate is determined by the researcher. When the purpose of topic modeling is to explore thematic properties of a text corpus, there is no test for determining an optimal number of topics. The object is not to find the right number of topics but to choose a number of topics k so that the topics themselves are distinctive and interpretable. Selecting a higher number of topics can have the effect of corralling “noise” in the text into its own topics and leaving other topics “cleaner” and more interpretable. (This was a particular concern where the corpus of data was text scraped directly from websites.) Other published applications of topic modeling have examined newspaper or journal articles (Blei and Lafferty 2007; DiMaggio 2013; Marshall 2013), Senate speeches (Quinn et al. 2006), Congressional bills (Gerrish and Blei 2011), and dissertation abstracts (Ramage, Manning, and McFarland 2010). Websites are noisy texts by comparison. Fortunately, setting a high k -value for the number of topics allowed most of the website “noise” to be distilled into its own topics. I selected a 70-topic solution for the corpus of 6,575 websites with 24 of those topics being substantively meaningful. The rest of the topics capture website “noise”—advertisements and terms having to do with the navigation or organization of the site.

As I show in Chapter 5, these substantive topics reflect themes found on the organizations' websites: education projects, religious orientations, appeals to donors to give money or travel as short-term volunteers. I use the relative prevalence of the topics, paired with the hand-coded analysis of a sample of sites (described in the next section) to describe the project

⁶ The software and documentation are available at <http://www.cs.princeton.edu/~blei/lda-c/index.html>

areas and religious orientations of the universe of organizations. Future publications will examine whether the topics in websites for grassroots NGOs differ than for larger, big-budget NGOs, or whether the grassroots NGOs combine topics in ways that are novel. In sum, the topic modeling approach is useful because it captures the universe of websites and allows me to match themes with one another and with other organizational characteristics such as revenue and age. But for more fine-grained detail, I rely on a hand-coded content analysis of a sample of websites.

Hand-coded Content Analysis

IRS records say nothing about where international aid organizations work or the projects they undertake. These are also questions that would be very difficult to answer through topic modeling and other automated approaches to analyzing websites. For that reason I made an in-depth analysis of a randomly selected sample of 150 of the 10,684 organizations registered by the end of 2011. I used a random-number generator to sample organizations from the BMF, skipping organizations without a website until I arrived at the desired sample of 150 websites.⁷ Each website was saved as a PDF file and imported into ATLAS.ti. The simple coding tasks were to determine where each NGO was working, what sort of projects it does, and what roles are played by volunteers and other supporters. The more complex tasks were to code the discourse used by the NGOs about their recipients, their work, and the interaction between Americans and the purported beneficiaries. (I discuss these aims further in Chapter 5.) Each website was analyzed with the inductively generated codes listed in Appendix 1. The codes fall into seven main categories.

⁷ It is not possible to see how organizations without websites differ from those *with* websites on the very dimensions that the websites are being used to analyze, i.e. project location, project sector, religiosity. Organizations with websites are on average slightly younger and have higher revenue than those without.

Aid context codes highlight text where the NGOs describe the place in which they work. These codes emphasize the ways the geographic, economic, and political landscape of the communities being aided are depicted.

Donor codes flag the ways that existing or prospective donors and volunteers to the organization are referenced in the text—particularly the sorts of donations that are solicited, such as money or volunteer trips abroad.

Mode of action refers to the projects the NGOs undertake. Codes include types of projects (e.g. clean water) and ways of talking about the projects (efficient, sustainable, etc.).

Network codes refer to the other organizations, such as congregations or government agencies, with which the NGO interacts in some way.

Rationale codes highlight text where the NGO explains why it is doing what it is doing.

Recipient codes refer to demographic qualities of the recipient of aid (e.g. women, orphans) or qualities of those people (hardworking, living in deprived conditions) as they are depicted in the text.

Volunteer codes are applied to text that describes the people who run the organization. (They are typically, though not always, unpaid). This text usually comes from sections of the website entitled “About Us,” “Our Board,” etc.

In Chapter 6 I elaborate three models of aid based on these qualitative codes. I developed these models with a two-stage inductive method. My qualitative coding had assigned each organization to a primary project sector such as clean water, education, small business, etc. (A complete list of these sectors appears in Table 5.1). I first tallied the frequencies of codes for Rationales, Recipients, and Roles for U.S. Supporters by primary project sector. Based on the relative frequencies of organizations within the project sectors to those categories, and using

judgment based on a holistic reading of groups within those sectors, I clustered the organizations into three models of aid: Goods and Services, Skills and Subjectivities, and Social Relations. I describe at greater length the qualities of each aid model in Chapter 6.

The website data, applied to both topic modeling and the hand-coded sample discussed here, are at the heart of the analysis in Chapters 5 and 6. These data elaborate what NGOs do, where they do it, and how they frame their action for public audiences. But websites can say little about the organizational history—especially false starts and failures along the way—about the different perspectives of the group’s members, or about how nascent groups learn or make decisions. To answer these questions I turned to in-depth studies of five grassroots NGOs.

Case Studies

This dissertation draws on interviews, observational field notes, and documentary evidence from five organizations that I selected as case studies. For each of these organizations I carried out 6-13 in-depth interviews with the founders, board members, key staff or volunteers, and a small number of the organizations’ beneficiaries. I was able to meet most of the interview subjects face-to-face, either in U.S. city where the organization is based or else in the foreign community where the organization was working. The remaining two of the 43 interviews were carried out by Skype. The typical interview lasted 90 minutes and was digitally recorded and transcribed.

In choosing the organizations I would study in depth I looked for variation on several characteristics. These were the project type, or the sorts of programs the organizations carried out abroad; the target recipients; the organization’s religiosity (I wanted both explicitly religious and non-religious organizations represented); the size of the organization, in terms of revenue and

staff; and finally, the “founding narrative” of the organization. In my preliminary analysis of new NGOs I had found that organizations were typically started by one of four types of people:

- 1) a person who had done previous volunteer work abroad, and in time decided to “do more” by starting an NGO;
- 2) a “wonk,” who in many ways resembles the volunteer, but who brings some professional expertise which is at the heart of the organization or project (often businesspeople, medical professionals, engineers, etc.);
- 3) “missionaries,” whose goals include the explicitly religious aims of proselytizing, training clergy, or church planting, and who typically have training from seminaries or Bible colleges;
- 4) “immigrants-made-good,” or individuals born abroad who come to the United States for work or study and then set up an organization to aid their home community.

As the research progressed I learned that these categories were more fluid than I had anticipated and that they did not represent the most important distinctions in the way that aid was carried out. However, at the beginning of my research I sought variation on these founding types, and had one organization each from the “missionary” and “immigrant” types, two from the “wonk” type, and one from the “recommitted volunteer” type.

What all of the organizations I ultimately selected had in common was the world region in which they operate. All five work in East Africa: one in a slum of Nairobi, Kenya; two in Rwanda, with most operations in the capital, Kigali; one in a large town in Uganda; and the last in a village 30km from a provincial capital in Tanzania. The (relative) proximity of these organizations allowed me to spend a month in fall 2012 visiting each organization, observing their projects, and talking with their staff and beneficiaries. During those visits most of the conversations were in English, but a few were in local languages (Swahili or Kinyarwanda)

translated on the spot into English by a native speaker. During my short time with each organization, my goal was not assessing the impact of their work but rather getting a sense of the setting and the relative size and prominence of the NGO within the field of other development actors. I was able to see how professionalized each organization was---were there shiny air conditioned offices, or thatched huts? Were the local employees or volunteers among the national elites? How did these local volunteers talk about their American colleagues and donors or short-term volunteers that came from the U.S.? How closely did my observations match the depictions of the NGO leaders back in the U.S.? This month of fieldwork was part of the strategy of triangulating the story of grassroots NGOs.

While choosing one geographic region made fieldwork possible on a dissertation budget, it had the drawback of limiting my in-depth analysis to organizations in Africa. Political regimes and colonial trajectories, local resources, and language all vary geographically and provide important context in which NGOs function. My research strategy prevents me from speaking meaningfully to those differences in this dissertation. Yet I found, to my surprise, that NGO leaders also have surprisingly little to say about the contextual specifics of where they work. Websites typically do not emphasize the historical or political particularities of NGOs' target countries; instead, as I explain in subsequent chapters, narratives emphasize the serendipitous connections that brought the NGO founders to that certain place. In the interviews I found that NGO volunteers know little of the history or even the contemporary political circumstances of the places they work. On the websites I observed that of the 45% of organizations that provided descriptions of the countries in which they worked—which often included a capsule history---only two made any mention of colonial history before independence.

A summary of the five case study organizations appears in Table 2.1, below. Four of the five organizations are depicted with a pseudonym; the fifth, Indego Africa, preferred that I use its real name⁸. Unless noted, all individuals are quoted using fictitious names. Two of the GINGOs have incomes below the IRS reported median of \$25,000 or less⁹ in 2011. Activate Tanzania is below the 75th percentile income of \$134,000, while Wellsprings of Hope is just above it. Indego Africa has the highest revenue of the case study organizations and has begun to assume some of the financial and organizational qualities of traditional NGOs. However, its emergence mirrors that of other GINGOs, and the way that GINGOs develop into more traditional NGO forms—or not—is an empirical question.

Table 2.1 Case Study Organizations

⁸ The chairman of Indego Africa agreed to the use of true names for the organization, himself, and co-founder Ben Stone because of previous published accounts of the organization—in particular a Harvard Business School case study that quoted both men under their true names. When quoting Indego staff members other than Mitro or Stone, I use pseudonyms.

⁹ 501(c)3 organizations with less than \$25,000 in revenue were not required to report an exact amount to the IRS with their annual Form 990-N filing through the end of 2010, which includes the records for most organizations here. Their revenues are recorded by the IRS as \$0.

Organization Name	U.S. Base	Inter-national Base	Founding Type	Project Type	Explicitly Religious?	Annual Revenue¹⁰
Activate Tanzania	St. Paul, Minnesota	Village in Tanzania	Immigrant	Secondary school	No	\$79,498
For Kenya's Tomorrow	Rural southeast Michigan	Nairobi, Kenya	Committed volunteer	Sanitation, micro-enterprise	No	~\$20,000
Wellsprings of Hope	Suburb of San Antonio, Texas	Large town in Uganda	Missionaries	Mission, schools, clinic	Yes	\$189,888
Rwanda Ultrasound Initiative	Boston	Rwanda	Wonk	Ultrasound training for Rwandan doctors	No	~\$10,000
Indego Africa	New York	Rwanda	Wonk	Micro-enterprise	No	\$457,297

In Chapters 6 and 7 of the dissertation I use data from these case studies to enhance my description of aid activities and models of aid. Chapter 8 discusses how organizations draw on the networks and resources of American communities, and how GINGOs shape Americans' understanding of the global South. That discussion relies heavily on my analysis of these five organization. In the next chapter I offer a descriptive introduction to each of these groups.

¹⁰ The revenue figures here were from given to me in interviews by the presidents of For Kenya's Tomorrow and Rwanda Ultrasound Initiative.

Chapter 3

Introduction to Case Study Organizations

Grassroots NGOs are defined by personal relationships and private ideas about the path of development. The cases below describe relationships that emerged from migration, marriage, and religious missions, while the development programs range from microenterprise to medical technology.

These five organizations were established between 2000 and 2010 by Americans with ties to Africa that varied in duration and intensity. The founder of the first group I describe was born in Tanzania and migrated to the U.S. in his twenties, and in his thirties launched an NGO to aid his native village. A second group was launched by an American who had spent several childhood years West Africa, but went on to start an NGO Rwanda. Three of the groups were started by Americans who had done short-term volunteer work in Africa, sometimes in countries other than those where they launched their NGO.

If the ability to be a short-term volunteer is one of the novelties of aid work—19th century missionaries were understood to have committed for the remainder of their lives—another novelty is the ability to do aid work part time. Three of the organizations were launched as part-time ventures, and the leaders of the remaining two, Indego Africa and For Kenya's Tomorrow, have scaled back to part-time involvement since 2012. Aside from accounts of volun-tourism (Alexander and Bakir 2010, Brown 2005, Vrasti 2009), studies of aid organizations focus on full-time aid workers oriented towards the organizational field of development aid (Mosse 2011). But the leaders of these GINGOs have kept one foot in the world of their American careers and personal networks, and the other in the world of their African friendships and projects. Both the innovations and tensions from this dualism emerge in these vignettes.

Case Study Organization 1: Activate Tanzania

Until Activate Tanzania started work in 2004, you could count on your fingers the number of people from Muyinga¹ who had gone to secondary school. One of those was Erasto, who then became the first from the village to attend college in the United States; and after marriage, two children, and a steady job in software engineering in Minnesota, he set out to open a secondary school in his home village. Erasto and his American wife Kate quickly found support in Minnesota. One of the legacies of German colonial rule in Tanzania was the presence of Lutheran churches, which through the 20th century grew with support from European and American missionaries. These Lutheran ties linked St. Paul, Minnesota, to Erasto's home region of Tanzania through a sister-church relationship beginning in the early 1990s. Through friends, Erasto was introduced to a Lutheran pastor who had traveled several times to Tanzania; they soon discovered that the pastor had not only visited Erasto's village, but had met his mother.

The objective of Activate Tanzania from the beginning was narrow and specific: to open an independent secondary school in Muyinga. As an immigrant who had made good, Erasto had for many years been seen as a patron of his village, and in time he wanted to do something other than ad hoc donations in response to individual requests. Students in Tanzania are admitted to secondary school on the basis of competitive examinations and even in public schools must pay fees. For Erasto, being admitted to secondary school was the turning point in life, and he believed that better access to education would do more good for the village than anything else he could contribute.

Starting in 2004, Erasto and Kate approached their friends, colleagues, fellow church members, and her large extended family for donations to build the school. Erasto's boyhood

¹ Pseudonym

friend, still living in Tanzania, brokered a deal with the village leadership: the school would take possession of several empty buildings and a tract of land owned by the village government, and in exchange the school would provide 10 full-tuition scholarships each year for village children. Within about a year, Erasto and Kate had raised \$80,000. Renovation on the buildings began—with the money being wired through the Saint Paul Lutheran Synod, since Erasto and Kate had not yet set up a 501(c)3—and the Musinga Secondary School opened for its first students in 2006.

Back in Minnesota, the school project had attracted particular interest from working and retired teachers. Consensus emerged among Erasto, Kate, and the newly-formed board that the Musinga school should exceed typical Tanzanian standards of education. While adhering to requirements of the Tanzanian national curriculum, the school should instill the American educational qualities of creativity and problem solving. The board believed that good facilities like a library and science lab were needed if students were to do more than learn by rote, and in addition good teachers needed to be lured with competitive salaries. Erasto played the middle man, having final say on issues of spending and personnel in Tanzania, trying to relay the American board's vision to Tanzanian school leadership while also sensitizing Americans to long-held Tanzanian ways of doing things.

Board members and other supporters made two trips to visit the school between 2006 and 2012. While there they assisted in the English class and offered in-service training to the Musinga teachers. Three recent U.S. college graduates have now served as volunteer teachers for a semester or more at the school. The school has posted strong test scores on the national exam and has been able to attract highly-qualified teachers who had taught in other private schools in Tanzania. Now that the school has two hundred students and about two dozen employees,

Activate Tanzania has to bear all of the challenges of operating a selective private school (teacher complaints about salary and living space; parents tardy to pay tuition) as well as operating a 501(c)3 that can continue to appeal to volunteers and donors to raise the tens of thousands of dollars the school requires in excess of tuition receipts to stay open each year. These responsibilities obligate Erasto to spend late-night hours on the phone to Tanzania several days a week. He jokes that he is “a programmer by day but teacher by night.”

Case Study Organization 2: For Kenya’s Tomorrow

For Kenya’s Tomorrow is the product of the extraordinary energy of a 32-year-old Pentecostal woman from rural Michigan. After a childhood in a church that supported several missionaries and taking a religious volunteer trip herself to Malawi as a 15-year-old, Natalie was living in Florida, in a young marriage that was dissolving, and wondering if she could “get Africa out of her heart.” An acquaintance at her church in Florida gave her the name of a man working with a church-based community organization in the Nairobi slum of Kawangare, and in 2008 Natalie flew to Kenya to see what she could do there. Natalie’s previous volunteer work in Malawi had given her the idea to work with AIDS orphans or street children, but on this trip she had a visceral reaction to the sanitary conditions in the slum and decided that she would focus her work there. She explained this shift in focus as divine intervention:

I just had this vision flash before my eyes of just a place that didn’t exist at the current time. It was, you know, pure streams where sewage was running and where there was trash everywhere. . . And so when I got that vision it literally like slapped me on the back of the head because I had never, never envisioned doing anything like that. My heart was really to be with AIDS orphans, and street children, and all that. And so since obviously my relationship with God plays into this a lot, I really just started seeking God and said, “What does this look like to you? Where did this come from? Because I don’t know what to do with it.” And then I just really got some clarity with addressing the sanitation issues and what that looked like with toilets and with new shower rooms and recycling centers,

and addressing water issues and all of that. And then I just started kind of heading in that direction.

Having no professional training in development work generally or sanitation specifically (she had left college before completing a degree), Natalie returned to the U.S. and began her research at a Barnes and Noble bookstore and on the internet. In the same period, she recruited several peers to serve on the organization's board of directors: her sister, two childhood girlfriends (one who worked at a bank, another with a degree in engineering), and two friends from her Florida church. To raise money, Natalie sent out a letter to friends and family explaining her project and asking for support. This sort of letter was not unusual among her circle of acquaintances—she had sent out a similar letter in the past, asking for financial support for her religious mission trip, and her family regularly made small contributions to others making similar requests. She gave a speech at the Michigan church she had attended as a girl, and which her parents still attended, and the congregation agreed to add her to its roster of sponsored missionaries and make regular contributions to her work.

Natalie continued to travel to Kenya for a few months a year, seeking out partners for her sanitation projects. She made a crucial connection in the form of a Kenyan woman pastor who had founded a Pentecostal church in Kawangare that drew a few dozen worshippers each Sunday. Ruth, the pastor, also was the head of a community-based-organization. This was crucial for Natalie's entrée into the community, and for meeting Kenya's legal requirement that foreign NGOs partner with a local CBO. The other important consequence was that Natalie eventually came to date Ruth's son, David, a musician, and the two married in 2011. Ruth and David's family and close friends became the trusted network upon which Natalie built the organization's

work in Nairobi, even as her own family and close friends provided financial and administrative support in the U.S.

The sanitation projects moved slowly. Eager to see some tangible results, Natalie used a \$10,000 donation to set up a workshop where a handful of Kawangare women could make beaded jewelry. This idea was modeled loosely on what Natalie had seen at fair trade shops in the U.S., and in particular a Kenyan company called Kazuri Beads. Natalie took on the tasks of purchasing the beads, creating the designs and teaching them to the woman workers, and taking the bracelets back to the U.S. for sale. There was no grand scheme for the sale of these bracelets; they were sold a few at a time to friends, and Natalie and some of the board members approached shops that they knew of and asked if they would carry them.

While the women's craft shop began operations and Natalie continued research on sanitation projects, she regularly began accepting "mission teams," or groups of short-term volunteers, from her Michigan church. These groups would participate in church services and Bible studies with Ruth's congregation and offer special prayer meetings in Kawangare; they also volunteered with the Saturday children's "feeding" at Ruth's church. Though these teams' work was not connected intimately to the development project's that Natalie envisioned for For Kenya's Tomorrow (FKT), Natalie encouraged the trips because travelers often became committed supporters of the organization.

Despite the deep personal religiosity of Natalie and David and their families, and in spite of the critical roles that religious congregations and networks play in sustaining FKT, Natalie and the board of directors do not classify FKT as a religious organization.² Natalie recognized that some funding bodies would not fund explicitly religious organizations, and she was wary of

² I discuss this tension at length in Chapter 7.

the “connotations,” in her words, of being a religious NGO. She felt that some Christian organizations were not a “true representation” of the Christian faith, and moreover that she did not want potential supporters to feel excluded on the basis of their religion. She explained, “Whether or not you are a Christian or a Muslim, or a Jew or whatever, I wanted it to be an open door for people to come and serve.”

In 2012, FKT built its first two biogas toilets in Kawangare. The women’s workshop was producing a small quantity of jewelry that was being sold in the United States, and FKT paid for and staffed a “feeding,” or lunch and playtime session each Saturday at Ruth’s church. Natalie and David, by then parents of a baby girl, worked full-time for FKT and split the year between their families’ homes in Nairobi and Michigan. Much of the day-to-day work in Kenya was carried out by Martin, a childhood friend of David’s. FKT is pursuing a small grant from the Rotary Club, but continues to rely on a handful of Pentecostal congregations in the U.S. and the individual donations of family and friends for its operating funds.

Case Study Organization 3: Wellsprings of Hope

Founded by a Baptist who describes himself as a “cowboy-pastor,” Wellsprings of Hope is Christian organization operated in Uganda by a group of five pastors and in the U.S. by a cadre of volunteers drawn from Baptist, Methodist, and evangelical churches in suburban San Antonio. Shared religious faith is at the heart of the organization. The partnership began when Pastor Bill Smith visited Uganda with a delegation of Baptist preachers, and the initial goal was to provide financial support for the “ministry” of five Ugandan pastors that he met there. Influenced by larger religious “ministries” in Uganda that were catering to earthly needs, the five pastors shared with Bill their ambitions that extended beyond preaching the gospel: schools, clinics,

youth programs. Bill's U.S. congregation agreed to send money, and soon the volunteers followed. By 2006 teams of volunteers from Bill's congregation and from the town's United Methodist Church were coming to Uganda for multi-week stints.

Uganda has been heavily evangelized in the last three decades, particularly by conservative Protestant groups, but the town where Wellsprings of Hope is based maintains a slight Muslim majority. Surprise at the harmonious relationships between Christian and Muslim Ugandans was a recurring note in my conversations with the Texas volunteers. With the steady financial contributions of the Texans, Wellsprings of Hope now operates two elementary schools, a clinic, men's and women's ministries (which include Bible teaching and vocational training), and a farm. The five pastors serve as directors for all of these programs and oversee the nurse who runs the clinic and the headmasters of both schools. (This is a source of some tension, because nurse and headmaster in Uganda are prestige positions, and the pastors have less education than these professionals.) Most of the American board members of Wellsprings are retirees from long careers in related fields—nursing, teaching, accounting, and construction—and as a result they have strong ideas about how the organization should operate in Uganda. These ideas are borne out in what the board members believe should be minimal material standards in the clinic and schools and priorities in how money should be spent. But differences in opinion between the American and Ugandan leadership are smoothed by the mutual good feelings engendered by the frequent (yearly or twice-yearly) visits of many of the board members to Uganda, and by what both Ugandans and Texans explain as common purpose that emerges from their shared faith.

Wellsprings' most consistent source of revenue is monthly "sponsorships" of individual children in the manner of Save the Children. Wellsprings introduced this model after seeing it

gainfully used by Africa Renewal Ministries, another evangelical NGO based in San Antonio and operating in Uganda. American sponsors contribute \$35 to \$50 a month, with the bulk of that providing for school fees and uniforms, and the rest kept in a reserve fund to pay for medical expenses or other family difficulties. The approximately 150 child sponsorships organized by Wellsprings are one of the major channels through which some relationship is forged between Ugandans and Americans. Sponsored children are required to write letters to their sponsors at least twice a year, and the younger students (for whom English is a second or third language) do so with the help of a teacher or social worker. American sponsors receive a photograph of their sponsored child every year, and in some cases, copies of the students' school report cards. The American coordinator of the sponsorships, Frances, explains,

[I send] any piece of information I can get because I want the sponsors to know their kids as individuals, not just a name. I want them to know what their struggles are and whether they're doing well in school or not, and what they need to be praying for for that child.

The sponsorship program is therefore not just a reliable source of revenue for the school, but a key site where ideas of Ugandans are shaped and transmitted by the organizations to American supporters.

These personal relationships and shared faith are what Wellsprings of Hope's supporters value most in the organization and see as the qualities that distinguish it from other development organizations. But as the organization approaches 200 sponsored children and 75 Ugandans on the payroll—from the pastors down to the janitor of the clinic—the financial and organizational demands of the NGO are prodding it towards increased formalization. The Ugandan pastors have been trained to keep financial spreadsheets and to submit them each month to the U.S. treasurer. American volunteers treasure the fact that most of the money they raise goes directly to Ugandans, but the burden of voluntary labor is heavy. One former board member explained,

With an all-volunteer organization I think that's tough as well because we're a working board, it's not a board that gets together once a month. . . and I think that takes a toll on the volunteers. I've often felt we needed to have a full-time bookkeeper/fundraiser/all accompanying company person, but we don't have the funds to support that and we don't want to take out of our sponsorship dollars because they're doing such a vital need in Uganda. . . I know it's being spent for the ministry. They're not buying cars and they're not buying all fancy stuff. They're all living pretty humble lives. And when you get to see the kids first hand it's a big difference.

Wellsprings' primary challenge as of this writing is maintaining the close "personal relationships" that American volunteers emphasized repeatedly in interviews in spite of the logistical realities of a complex aid organization.

Case Study Organization 4: Rwanda Ultrasound Initiative (RUI)

If shared religious faith is at the heart of Wellsprings of Hope's work in East Africa, the shared vocational identity of "physician" is at the heart of the Rwanda Ultrasound Initiative. The project uses American doctors to train their Rwandan counterparts to use ultrasound as a broad diagnostic tool. While the ultimate beneficiaries are Rwandan patients, the immediate targets of RUI's work are doctors. During their training visits, American doctors have little contact with Rwandan patients; they perform few medical procedures themselves, but instead observe and coach Rwandan doctors using the American model of clinical medical education.

From the beginning, RUI collaborated with the Rwandan Ministry of Health to devise a curriculum that would fit into the ministry's broad national scheme to improve medical education. The Rwandan health care system is centralized and so doctors are assigned by the Ministry of Health to hospitals or clinics. RUI not only had to seek certification for its curriculum, but had to reach consensus with the government over which hospitals would be

targeted for training and the amount of in-service time that the doctor-trainees would be granted. RUI convened 18 Rwandan physicians for a two-week intensive training in Kigali in fall 2012. In the following five months, pairs of American doctors came to Rwanda in two-week shifts to supervise the doctor-trainees using their new diagnostic techniques. Most of the American doctors came from emergency medicine departments and had been learned about the RUI volunteer opportunity through the email lists of the American College of Emergency Physicians. RUI provided some teaching materials and local cell phones; it was up to the American volunteers to finance the rest.

The Rwanda Ultrasound Initiative was launched by two American emergency medicine residents. Megan brought the Rwanda connection; she had studied there for several months as part of a medical school exchange. Tamara, a resident physician at Massachusetts General and Brigham and Women's hospitals in Boston, had been part of several overseas medical volunteer trips—including a relief mission to Haiti just after the 2011 earthquake. Ultrasound machines were available to the medical teams there and were used to diagnose a variety of injuries in the absence of a laboratory and more sophisticated medical imaging. Tamara returned to the U.S. convinced that ultrasound, which was also being increasingly used in American emergency departments, could be a useful diagnostic tool in places where medical infrastructure was limited. She approached her supervising physician at Mass General Hospital, Julia, who was active in the professional groups to bring point-of-care ultrasound into broader use in American hospitals. Julia connected Megan and Tamara and put them in touch with an international ultrasound project, WINFOCUS, which became a source for some of the training materials that RUI would eventually use. While Megan used her connections in Rwanda to negotiate with the Ministry of Health, Tamara also traveled to Rwanda to assess the ultrasound equipment that was available in

the district hospitals and how it was being used. She found that most of the district hospitals had ultrasound machines, but that they were being used only for obstetrics or not at all: “I found these machines, these two beautiful brand new machines off in some side room. I would be using that every second of the day, but if they don’t know how to use it then it’s totally wasted, and it’s this amazing technology.”

In the remainder of 2011 and in the early months of 2012, Megan tended to the nuts and bolts of the organization. She found a group of law students at the University of Pennsylvania who were willing to file the paperwork to have RUI recognized as a tax-exempt 501(c)3. Another emergency medicine physician friend of Megan’s was part of a web startup, Good Works Global, that aims to connect potential donors with international nonprofits. RUI raised some funds through the site but found most of their donations by reaching out to friends and family through letters and Facebook posts. Megan secured a \$10,000 grant from a small foundation in spring 2012, and both doctors’ hospitals offered them small donations to offset their travel expenses. Both Megan and Tamara continued their back-breaking work schedules as residents while navigating a back-and-forth with Rwandan officials that barely concluded in time to launch the training program in September 2012. In early 2013, Julia told me that they considered the fall 2012 training to be a qualified success. Whether they would continue to offer training programs, however, depended on better cooperation from the Rwandan government as well as the activities of larger, better-funded medical education projects. Brigham and Women’s hospital—where Julia and Tamara were based—had just been named a recipient of a multimillion dollar grant from the Doris Duke foundation aimed at improving medical training in Rwanda, which threatened to make RUI’s projects redundant.

Case Study Organization 5: Indego Africa

The last organization I discuss at length, Indego Africa, is the most formalized of the five. While the bead bracelets crafted by For Kenya's Tomorrow's artisans are sold by the founder's sister to her co-workers at the Outback Steakhouse, Indego has landed retail contracts with Ralph Lauren, Nicole Miller, and J. Crew. Indego's sleek website displays jewelry, home accessories, and handbags crafted by six artisan co-ops in Rwanda. The New York office is run by an MBA as well as lawyer with experience in the fashion industry, plus a host of interns. The Kigali office employs a Rwandan country director who was educated in Switzerland and the U.S., three other Rwandan college graduates, and its own crop of American interns. "Social enterprise" was not part of the founder's vocabulary when he made his first moves to set up Indego in 2006, but the organization has come to be designated as such. Indego was a semifinalist for a grant from Echoing Green, a funder of social entrepreneurs, and in 2011 the organization was the subject of a Harvard Business School case study.

The \$48 baskets being sold in Indego's online store are woven by middle-aged Rwandan women who come up to six days a week to the concrete block buildings that have been built or rented by their cooperatives. The women sit straight-legged on mats on the floor in the common African fashion and weave the baskets while they chat in Kinyarwanda. A baby or toddler might accompany its mother, but one of the benefits of the Indego partnership that the women artisans happily report is an income sufficient to pay school fees for their children. Part of Indego's approach is to offer the artisans fair-trade pricing for their products. The NGO's high-end marketing strategy allows them to charge premium prices for the handicrafts, but the major difference between Indego and a traditional production contract is that Indego pays the artisans

half of the anticipated profits when the order is placed. This transfers much of the risk away from the Rwandan women—the party least able to afford it—and on to Indego and its retail partners.

This is the basic scheme imagined by Indego’s founder, Matt Mitro, when he took the first steps to establish Indego in 2006. Matt had spent ages 4 to 7 and 11 to 14 in Lagos, Nigeria, where his father worked as an economist for an oil company. The issues of poverty and economic development were regular topics of conversation in Matt’s expatriate family. After completing law school in the U.S. and working for two years in a Washington DC firm, Matt was listless about the practice of law and made his first inquiries with family and friends about starting a non-profit in Africa. Matt was favorably inclined towards entrepreneurial models of aid after encountering successful artisan projects in Africa and because of the influential perspective of his economist father. In Matt’s view, projects that facilitate entrepreneurship are financially more sustainable than “service delivery” models, and are also more apt to transform the beneficiaries:

I think that the actual conduct of economic activity in business is really healthy. . . I think that’s a good experience for people’s confidence. Obviously it’s good for them in terms of being able to support themselves. . . Taking risks I think generally is like a healthy thing for people to do. We thought this was the most easy way to facilitate that.

The early members of Indego’s board included Matt’s father and a family friend with a strong professional network in Rwanda. Though Rwanda strictly regulates the work of NGOs, the government is favorably disposed towards business approaches to aid and to foreign investment generally. The family friend’s connections proved useful during a fact-finding trip to Rwanda, and Matt and the nascent Indego board decided to launch operations there. Soon after that 2007 visit, Indego had signed agreements with the two artisan co-ops, and Matt set out to locate retail buyers for the products. Consumed by the demands of setting up the retail

partnerships, Matt soon approached a college friend, Ben Stone, also an attorney, to handle the legal requirements of an import business-cum-non-profit. The work was demanding and but also more appealing to Ben's professional interests than his work with a New York firm had been. But Ben's supervisors at the law firm were eager to support Indego, and so they offered Ben a year's paid leave and continued use of office space. Ben held the role of Indego General Counsel, and for periods, COO and CEO, through July 2012.

The Indego board quickly came to realize that fair-trade pricing was not enough to help the artisan co-ops thrive as businesses. When Indego first established partnerships with two cooperatives in 2007, the sophistication of the groups differed widely. The Kigali-based group included women with some formal education and years of working together—they already had accounting schemes in place, although their management needed improvement. The other group, comprised of older women in a rural district, was a far looser configuration. Many of the women were illiterate and none had any experience with bookkeeping. Indego developed training materials adjusted for each group—basic literacy, numeracy, and bookkeeping for the less sophisticated organization, and more advanced training in cooperative governance, English, and computers for the more sophisticated group. The delivery of the training programs constituted another social benefit. Indego partnered with Orphans of Rwanda (now Generation Rwanda), an NGO that offered college scholarships to genocide orphans and other vulnerable youth, to provide the training. The Orphans of Rwanda teaching interns received a stipend and marketable experience, while Indego gained talented and locally-competent trainers for its programs. Two of the teaching interns were eventually hired as full-time staff in the Kigali office.

By the end of 2012, Matt and Ben had left full-time management of Indego in favor of a successor but remained as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board, respectively. Traditional

fundraising contributed half of Indego's \$457,000 in revenue in 2012. The organization hosted successful fundraising events in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Washington DC, and its products were featured in *In Style*, *Marie Claire*, and *Architectural Digest*. But the sustainability of the organization depended on the continued willingness of highly-educated staff to work for salaries well below the market rate. And while much of the popular appeal of Indego is its social enterprise model, Matt conceded that the approach was complex and expensive:

I think this is one of the biggest challenges that we face it's like we're kind of running like four organizations at once. Like we're running a business in the U.S., definitely, like a sales business in the U.S. We're running a nonprofit and fundraising operation in the U.S. We're running a business supply chain operation in Rwanda. And we're running like a university in Rwanda. I mean, so doing that profitably and lucratively for people that work there, that may never work to be honest. So I don't count on the success yet because I don't know that that's ever going to really work.

By the standards of grassroots NGOs, Indego has been extraordinarily successful in its impact on beneficiaries, its fundraising, and its public recognition. The founder of the organization remains committed to Indego's hybrid model, even as he questions whether its complexity and high costs make the organization's success sustainable.

Conclusion

The case study snapshots offered here foreshadow several of the patterns and themes I elaborate on in the rest of the dissertation: the role of personal networks in the launch of new NGOs; the value placed on perceived intimacy between giver and receiver; organizations' emphasis on providing not just goods, but new skills and subjectivities to their recipients. The

analysis of NGO websites expands these themes by detailing precisely what sorts of projects NGOs undertake, where they operate, and how they describe their recipients.

But before taking these medium-range and close-up views, the next chapter offers landscape perspective. I use the IRS listing of all international relief, development and human rights organizations to see how the number of U.S.-based international aid organizations has increased in the last two decades and where in the United States those organizations are based. I consider whether new international aid organizations are like other nonprofit organizations in the contextual predictors of their founding. Before considering the nature and effects of new aid organizations, I first analyze their remarkable growth since 1990.

Chapter 4

The U.S. Locations of Grassroots NGOs

Where in the United States are grassroots NGOs based, and what accounts for their growth and dispersion? GINGOs multiplied much more quickly than other sorts of nonprofit organizations in the decades before and after the millennium, and the growth was not concentrated in the traditional headquarters for American NGOs.

The solid line in Figure 4.1 depicts the number of international relief, development, and human rights organizations registered each year with the IRS, and the dashed line represents the ratio of new relief and development organizations to all new 501(c)3 organizations registered each year. As the dashed line shows, aid organizations' tremendous growth in the last two decades is not an artifact of the overall growth of the nonprofit sector.

FIGURE 4.1 HERE

As striking as the growth in the number of U.S.-based NGOs is the geographic range of their founding. Today NGOs are headquartered in over 1,000 U.S. counties, representing every state in the union. Over time, the share of organizations headquartered in New York and Washington DC has shrunk; 20% of the organizations founded before 1990 were in those locations, while only 11% of the organizations founded since 1990 are there. Figures 4.2 and 4.3 depict the number of NGOs based in U.S. counties in 1990 and 2010. In 1990 American-based aid organizations were largely found in major cities, notably New York, Los Angeles, and Washington DC. By 2010, the aid organizations in those cities and in other urban centers—Chicago, Miami, and San Francisco—had multiplied, while there had been wide expansion in the rest of the country, notably in the upper Midwest and South.

FIGURES 4.2 AND 4.3 HERE

Since American aid organizations are no longer confined to the traditional hubs of Washington and New York, how do we explain the dispersion of these groups? Does what we know about the founding and dispersion of domestic nonprofits apply to international aid groups? These are the questions I take up in this chapter. Existing scholarship has tried to explain local differences in numbers of nonprofit organizations generally, but until now the numbers and dispersion of nonprofit international aid organizations based in the U.S. has been too small to investigate.

NGOs differ from domestic nonprofits in that they aim to transfer resources—material, and as world society theorists would have it, cultural—from the United States to needy communities in distant countries. At the heart of the world society argument is the idea that NGOs bring with them not just material resources but particular ways of defining people and problems. Yet if the sending ports of NGOs are becoming dispersed—if they are no longer centered in the hubs governed by norm-bound professionals—the sorts of influence these NGOs will export is up for grabs.

If GINGOs represent an important new development in American voluntarism, international aid, and globalization, as I argue they do, then understanding the circumstances of their formation is a key analytic task.

To generate hypotheses about the geographic predictors of new international aid groups I turn to studies of domestic nonprofit formation and voluntarism. These literatures offer a jumping-off point for the local predictors of NGO foundings, and will bring into relief the ways in which the founding of these international organizations is a distinct phenomenon. In the next section I review these literatures and develop six hypotheses, which I go on to test using cross-sectional and longitudinal regression models.

Theory and Hypotheses

Theories of nonprofit origins attempt to account for the varying sizes of the nonprofit sector in different geographies, or why nonprofit organizations rather than for-profit firms or government agencies would emerge to provide services in the first place. Empirical research on volunteering differs in that it typically takes the individual as the unit of analysis and is driven by concerns about civic engagement. Although these literatures take different units of analysis and are motivated by different policy concerns, they are both potentially useful to explain the founding of international aid organizations. According to IRS records, 57% of international aid groups report less than \$25,000 in revenue per year; for organizations three years old or less, that figure is 75%. These figures suggest that the founders of most of these nonprofits bear heavy burdens of voluntary labor. Therefore it is reasonable to expect that many of the antecedents of volunteering would also apply to the founding of new NGOs.

Theories of Nonprofit Origins

Demand-side theories of the nonprofit sector (Hansmann 1987; Weisbrod 1977, 1978) explain the presence of nonprofits by the inability of the state or for-profit firms to meet the demand of consumers for particular goods. From these perspectives, governments cater to the median voter, so nonprofits emerge in heterogeneous populations. For-profit firms cannot gain consumer trust for sensitive transactions like blood transfusions, so nonprofits emerge to fill these gaps. Some empirical work has supported demand-side theories. Corbin (1999) found that racial diversity is associated with higher numbers of social service organizations; a study examining New York counties found racial diversity to be associated with more educational

organizations but not other types of nonprofits (Ben-Ner and Van Hoomissen 2003). Cross-national research in Brazil, Egypt, Ghana, India, and Thailand found ethno-linguistic diversity to be positively associated with the size of the nonprofit sector (Anheier and Salamon 1998). Local need is also not a consistent predictor of the size of the nonprofit sector; in Indiana counties the level of poverty was found to be significantly associated with *fewer* nonprofits per capita (Grønbjerg and Paarlberg 2001).

Supply-side or entrepreneurship theories (James 1987, Rose-Ackerman 1996, Young 1983) account for founding of nonprofits in terms of the qualities and motivations of founders. Rather than assuming the shape of the nonprofit field is an efficient response to consumer demand, this perspective assumes that the preferences of “nonprofit entrepreneurs” shape organizations’ mission and form (Anheier 2005). James (1987, 1989) emphasized the role of religion, suggesting that religiously-motivated individuals start nonprofits to maximize adherents or particular religious worldviews. Chaves (1998) modified James’ theories, acknowledging that many religious nonprofits become “secularized” over time or perform non-religious tasks; in his view, though, religious commitment can motivate people to a “diffuse this-worldly activism” that finds form in nonprofit work. But nonprofit entrepreneurs need resources as well as ideology to found organizations. Other studies have established the socioeconomic resources that are associated with nonprofit activity. Guterbock and Fries (1997) and Grønbjerg and Paarlberg (2001) found local levels of education to be positively associated with the size of the nonprofit sector. Wealth (Jencks 1987; Wolpert 1999) and income (Bielefield 2000; Corbin 1999; Saxton and Benson 2005) have also been positively associated with the number of nonprofits in a community.

Volunteering

Studies looking to explain differential rates of volunteering have also analyzed the effects of religion, race, income, and education. For frequency of volunteering, like the number of nonprofit organizations in a community, education is a positive and reliable predictor (Forbes and Zampelli 2011; Musick and Wilson 2008; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2003). Education provides volunteers with stronger cognitive skills, awareness of social problems, and greater self-confidence; and crucially, according to Musick and Wilson (2008), it increases the size of one's social network. In their analysis of Independent Sector data, higher levels of membership and informal social interaction among the educated account for about half of the effect of education on the frequency of volunteering.

Studies of volunteers have also observed a positive relationship between income and volunteering (Day and Devlin 1998; Menchik and Weisbrod 1987; Pho 2008, Smith 1998), though rates of volunteering may decline for high-income people (Lee and Brudney 2010). At the very least volunteers must be able to forego the potential earnings of the time spent volunteering. The relationship between occupational status and volunteering follows a similar pattern, with professionals and managers volunteering most, followed by white-collar workers and then blue-collar workers (Reed and Selbee 2000; Musick and Wilson 2008).

Race and immigrant status are also significant predictors of volunteering. Whites are more likely to volunteer than blacks, Hispanics, or Asians (Foster-Bey 2008; Rotolo, Wilson, and Hughes 2010; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2003), though Musick and Wilson (2008) found that among people who do volunteer, whites and blacks contribute roughly the same number of hours. Immigrants are less likely to volunteer than native-born Americans (Foster-Bey 2008; Lopez and Marcelo 2008; Sundeen et al. 2007), though speaking English and duration

in the country increase an immigrant's likelihood of volunteering (Musick and Wilson 2008, Ramakrishnan and Baldassare 2004). Voluntarism is one of the outcomes involved in the contentious scholarly debate linking higher racial and ethnic diversity to lower social capital and civic engagement. Though Putnam (2007) argued that contextual racial and ethnic diversity have negative effects on several indicators of civic engagement (including volunteering), further research using Putnam's dataset that has examined types of associational membership and has accounted for effects of poverty and inequality has complicated Putnam's story (Portes and Vickstrom 2011). Other results linking contextual diversity and voluntarism are mixed. Rotolo and Wilson (2012) found a negative relationship between racial diversity at the level of the state and volunteering. In a secondary analysis of several U.S. datasets, Costa and Kahn (2003) found negative and null relationships between racial diversity and voluntarism or associational membership, while a study of 28 European nations showed no significant relationship between ethnic diversity and giving informal help or membership in voluntary associations (Gesthuizen, van der Meer, and Scheepers 2009).

We have substantial evidence that individuals who attend religious services more frequently are more likely to volunteer (Campbell and Yonish 2003; Herzog and Morgan 1993; Smith and Faris 2002). Several studies have shown that attendance increases volunteering by multiplying attendees' social ties (Becker and Dhingra 2001; Putnam and Campbell 2010). Musick and Wilson (2008) argued that not only are frequent religious attenders more like to be asked to volunteer (itself a strong predictor of volunteering rates), these individuals have more associational memberships and informal social ties. This is not surprising because churches are typically well-connected to other organizations in the community, with ties to educational, service, recreation, and political groups (Cornwell and Harrison 2004).

To apply these theories to a model of distribution of organizations *based* in U.S. counties but *working* in foreign communities, we must conceptualize counties as a meaningful entities from which organizations draw resources, but one from which connections can be made outward to points on the other side of the globe.¹ Unlike the domestic organizations that have comprised most studies of the nonprofit sector, the demand for NGOs comes from a different locale than the supply. Differences in *demand* for NGO services, however we would operationalize it, would not lead to differences in the distribution of NGOs in U.S. communities. These particular qualities of international organizations call for two theoretical adaptations when extending existing theory on nonprofit distribution. First, I focus on supply-side explanations; second, I introduce globalized links—operationalized here as immigrants and Rotary Clubs—as a necessary condition for the founding of NGOs in U.S. counties.

Hypotheses

High levels of education are typically associated with higher levels of volunteering and nonprofit activity, and the effect may be even stronger here as universities provide people with globalized connections through research networks, study abroad, and volunteer programs. Income is likely to be positively associated with the number of international organizations as with other organizations, particularly because these groups rely so heavily on private funding—Boris and Steuerle (2006) report that American organizations doing international work rely on private donations for 68% of their funding, a higher share than any other nonprofit subsector.

¹ I use U.S. counties as the geographic unit of analysis, since this is the smallest geography for which demographic and organizational data are reliably available. It is possible that NGOs may draw some of their resources from within the U.S. but outside of the county in which they are based. However, an examination of NGOs' IRS 990 forms (digitized on Guidestar.com) listing addresses for the Board of Directors typically put the majority of directors in the same county.

Therefore:

H1. A county's per capita income will be positively associated with the number of international relief and development organizations registered in that county.

H2. Educational attainment in a county will be positively associated with the number of international relief and development organizations registered in that county.

The literature discussed above suggests that racial diversity might be negatively associated with the founding of new organizations by two paths. Counties with high shares of non-whites, who are less likely to be volunteers, would also seem to have fewer voluntary entrepreneurs to start NGOs. Contextual effects could also be in play. If racial heterogeneity contributes to a lack of local social capital, there will be a negative effect on the founding rate of international aid organizations. I test this relationship with Hypothesis 3:

H3. Everything else being equal, counties with higher racial diversity will have fewer international aid organizations.

Religion might affect the rate of organization foundings in several ways. Religiosity might generate the “diffuse this-worldly activism” that Chaves wrote about—that is, increase the motivation of potential voluntary entrepreneurs—leading to more aid organizations. Moreover, since American religion is strongly congregational, relying heavily on local governance and the voluntary action of the members of the congregation (Wuthnow 1990)², membership in a religious congregation is likely to develop the skills and social networks that would support nonprofit action. These social networks provide opportunities for recruiting nonprofit collaborators and donors, and the recurring nature of religious involvement means that social

² Sociologists of religion have noted the tendency of non-Protestant religions to assume an increasingly congregational form as they are established in the United States (Ebaugh and Chafetz 1999).

pressure from fellow members to volunteer or make a donation is more likely to be effective.

Religion may also provide a sense of shared identity with individuals in the global South (i.e. co-religionists providing aid to one another), and religious structures may provide the global connections that sow the seeds of new aid organizations. The potential contributions of religious congregations to voluntary entrepreneurs' motivation, skills, and social networks suggest

Hypothesis 4:

H4. The number of religious congregations in a county will be positively associated with the number of international aid organizations.

Nonprofit entrepreneurs interested in the issues of global poverty do not approach the globalized world as a *tabula rasa*; individuals with a general concern with these issues but no specific ties seem more likely to give to or volunteer for an existing aid organization. Ties between Americans and communities in poor countries could be forged by travel, business, adoption, or immigration. Research by Portes (1999, 2000) and Levitt (2001) suggest that migrants actively forge links between their community of origin and their country of reception. These links then form the basis for flows of goods, money, information, and more migrants. Levitt notes that these links can be embedded in religious communities, with money flowing from the U.S. to poor countries to support churches in the sending town and traditional religious festivals. A larger share of immigrants in a community might directly increase the number of nonprofits if immigrants themselves found organizations to aid communities back home; a higher number of immigrants in the community might also signal globalized ties that are unobservable in this analysis but that are associated with the founding of aid groups. Therefore:

H5. The percentage of foreign-born residents in a county will be positively associated with the number of international relief and development organizations.

Existing international organizations have a potentially strong role to play in generating new global structures like GINGOs. Universities, international corporations, and civic organizations all might allow Americans to connect with needy communities across the globe. Here I test the effect of one common civic organization: Rotary Clubs, which were chosen for this analysis because of their ubiquity in the United States, their emphasis on partnerships between U.S. chapters and others abroad, and the small grants they offer to aid projects in developing countries. In 2010 there were 7,632 Rotary Clubs located in 2,340 U.S. counties. The final hypothesis, then, tests the effect of existing globalized organizations in a county on the founding of new NGOs:

H6. Net of other factors, greater numbers of Rotary Clubs will be associated with greater numbers of international aid organizations.

Data and Methods

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this analysis is the count of international relief and development organizations registered with the IRS per U.S. county. The data are drawn from the IRS's Business Master File (BMF). I include data for organizations in the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. As discussed in Chapter 2, I include organizations with the following NTEE codes in this study:

Q30-39: International Development and Relief

Q70-71: International Human Rights

While fluctuations in marginal tax rates since 1990 might make tax-exempt charitable giving slightly more or less advantageous in particular years, there have been no major legal changes in

this era that would provide financial incentives (or disincentives) for a new group to register for tax-exempt status.

Independent Variables

I use data from the Census and American Community Survey (ACS) to control for county-level demographic variables. In the models below I include variables for county population (in thousands), population density, and the county's per capita income, reported in thousands of dollars and inflation-adjusted to 2010 values. The educational attainment of the county population is measured by the percentage of residents who have attained a bachelor's degree or higher.

I use a modified Herfindahl-Hirschman index (HHI) to measure a county's level of racial diversity, drawing data from the Census and ACS. (Following the literature on community diversity and social capital [e.g. Alesina and La Ferrara 2000], I use *1-HHI* so that the index can be read as a measure of diversity rather than homogeneity.) In order to avoid artificially inflating counties' diversity when the number of possible categories increased in 2000, I calculate the index using the five racial categories available in the 1990 Census: white, black, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, and other. For 2000 and 2010, I re-aggregate the separate categories of "Asian" and "Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander" and include "two or more races" with "other." The index is generated according to the formula $1 - \sum_{i=1}^N s_i^2$, where N is the number of racial categories (five) and s_i is racial group i 's share of total population. The index ranges from zero to $1-(1/N)$; in this case, 0.8, since $N=5$. Zero indicates that the entire population belongs to a single racial group, and $1-(1/N)$ indicates that the population is equally distributed over the racial categories.

The counts of religious congregations in a county in 1990, 2000, 2010 are drawn from

decennial studies of church membership conducted by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB).³ For 2000 I use the “adjusted” congregation count, which uses correctives to include historically African-American denominations that were excluded in the original sample of 149 religious denominations. (For details on the adjustment procedure, see the file documentation in the Association of Religion Data Archives or Finke and Scheitle 2005). Counts of Rotary Clubs were furnished upon my request by the Rotary International membership office. I also include as a control variable the number of 501(c)3 public charities *other* than international relief and development organizations, drawn from the BMF.

The presence of immigrants is measured using percent of county residents who are foreign-born (and may remain citizens of their native countries or may have become naturalized U.S. citizens) according to the Census. Note that because of the shift to the short form for the 2010 Census, I have to rely on ACS 2006-2010 period estimates for population density, population, per capita income, and percent foreign-born.⁴ This will tend to underestimate the over-time effects of these variables, but will not have an effect on between-county comparisons. Following the literature on civic engagement and race I include a dummy variable for counties located in the South (former member states of the Confederacy). I also include a dummy variable for whether the county contains the state’s capital city (or the national capital, in the case of the District of Columbia).

To control for the possibility of local diffusion effects, I include a variable for the number

³ The data are publicly available online from The Association of Religion Data Archives, thearda.com.

⁴ ACS one-year point estimates are available for counties with 65,000 residents or more, but this comprises less than a quarter of U.S. counties. I substituted 2010 point estimates for the counties for which they were available as a robustness check in the models described below, and no substantively different results emerged. For more on ACS period estimates and their interpretation, see Mather et al. 2005.

of international aid organizations in all counties adjacent to the focal county two years prior to each wave (i.e. in 1988, 1998, and 2008). Adjacent counties are determined using the Census Bureau's county adjacency file. With the exception of these lagged adjacency counts and ACS period estimates, all variables were measured at 1990, 2000, and 2010, yielding three waves of data for 3,143 U.S. counties. Descriptive statistics for all variables are given in Table 4.1, below.

TABLE 4.1 HERE

Models

The simplest approach to predicting numbers of organizations in a county is to use a count model that employs county-level characteristics at the beginning of the study period to predict the number of organizations founded by 2010. Since the dependent variable is overdispersed, a negative binomial model is appropriate here, and I present these results for reference in Table 4.2.

But this modeling strategy has a number of weaknesses: it cannot parcel out the effect of exogenous change over time, and is apt to overlook unobserved heterogeneity between counties, particularly when we are only testing for the effects of a small number of theoretically-motivated variables. Longitudinal data allow the possibility of observing change within the same units over time. To avoid the constraints of a fixed-effects models—i.e., the exclusion of time-invariant covariates and cases for which there is no change in the dependent variable (here, nearly 2/3 of cases)—I instead use a mixed-effects random-intercept model that includes cluster means. I treat the outcomes and predictors from the counties measured at 1990, 2000, and 2010 as multilevel data clustered at the level of the county. The count of international organizations and predictor variables in a given year are treated as level 1, and the county is level 2. As in all multilevel

models, the outcome variable (here, the number of aid organizations) varies at the lowest level. Most of the covariates—including population, percentage of the population with a BA or higher, the number of Rotary Clubs—will vary at this level, meaning that even within the county they will vary over time. The South and capital city dummies are level-2 variables, meaning they are invariant over time and vary only at the level of the county.

A general random-intercept model (or *mixed-effects* model) uses both between-effects (i.e. between counties) and within-effects (within the same counties over time) to model the effect of each covariate, using the following equation:

$$\ln(\mu_{ij}) = \beta_1 + \beta_p x_{pi} + \zeta_{1j} \quad (\text{Equation 1})$$

The equation models the expected count of organizations in county j in year i (μ_{ij}), and ζ_{1j} represents a cluster-specific intercept that accounts for unexplained heterogeneity at the level of the cluster (in this case, the county). This model implicitly assumes that between- and within-effects are the same for a given covariate—for example, that the effect of an increase in one religious congregation between counties is the same as the increase in one religious congregation between time periods. Of course, there are many reasons to think this might not be true; a new religious congregation may not have established the deep networks that an existing congregation has, or may belong to one of the rapidly-growing denominations that are less likely to engage in outreach work than older denominations. Fortunately it is possible to relax the assumption that between- and within-effects are the same for a covariate by using the model

$$\ln(\mu_{ij}) = \beta_1 + \beta_p^W (x_{pij} - \bar{x}_{pj}) + \beta_p^B \bar{x}_{pj} + \zeta_{1j} \quad (\text{Equation 2})$$

In this equation $\bar{x}_{pj}$ is a variable's cluster mean while $(x_{pij} - \bar{x}_{pj})$ is a mean-centered variable. Therefore β_p^W can be interpreted as a within-county effect, while β_p^B is understood as the between-county effect (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2012). Note that when we set $\beta_p^W = \beta_p^B =$

β_p , Equation 2 collapses back into Equation 1. This model has the virtue of generating within-county effects as a fixed-effects model would, while not excluding cases with no change in the dependent variable over time. Moreover, the between-effects estimated here are not subject to the influence of county-level unexplained heterogeneity as they would be in an only between-effects model. Note also that introducing the county-level random intercept ζ_{ij} addresses the problem of overdispersion present in a cross-sectional model (ibid.), making a Poisson model sufficient where the cross-sectional model required a negative binomial model to deal with excess zeroes in the dependent variable. I run the model using the STATA command *xtpoisson*, specifying a normal distribution for the random intercept.

In Table 4.3 the level-1 (time-varying) variables are labeled as either (between), which should be interpreted as the variable's effect between counties, or (within), which is interpreted as the effect of the variable within a given county over time. The dummy variables for capital city and the South are time invariant and are understood as a between-county effects. I also include in the model dummies for the years 2000 and 2010 to allow for independent historical effects for those time periods relative to 1990, since we expect that the developments in transportation and technology in those periods were drivers of the growth of aid organizations. Missing data are dealt with by listwise deletion, resulting in the loss of three cases in the cross-sectional model for missing data on religious congregations in 1990. In addition to those three cases, the longitudinal model excludes 15 other hypothetical county-year cases because the county area was created or eliminated between Census waves. (This occurred in several rural areas of Alaska and in one county in Colorado. Counties were included in the longitudinal analysis if they existed in at least two Census waves.) Coefficients are given as incidence-rate ratios (IRRs). In Tables 4.2-4.5 the values for population density, religious congregations, and

other nonprofits are given in hundreds to make IRRs interpretable at three decimal places.

Results

Table 4.2 presents the results for the simple cross-sectional model. Note that the regression coefficients here indicate the effect of a variable for the entire study period, which is 20 years. Per capita income, population, the percent of a county population with a bachelor's degree or higher, percent foreign-born, and the county's number of religious congregations are all significantly and positively associated with a greater number of aid organizations. The predictors of racial diversity and number of Rotary Clubs are non-significant. The model offers some evidence for the effect of globalized connections; counties are likely to have 6% more international aid organizations founded between 1990 and 2010 for each additional percent of county residents in 1990 who were born outside of the U.S.

TABLE 4.2 HERE

The between-county results in the longitudinal model are similar to those from the cross-sectional model. Table 4.3 shows IRRs and 95% confidence intervals for the longitudinal model, while Table 4.4 shows the expected change in founding rates for a one standard deviation increase in each of the variables in the hypotheses, holding other variables constant.

TABLES 4.3-4.4 HERE

Taking the control variables into account, between-county increases in per capita income are associated with more international development organizations. Two otherwise identical counties that differed by one standard deviation of income would show a 57% difference in the number of NGOs founded over the course of a decade. However, the within-county (over time) coefficient is small but negative, revealing that growth in county-level income between 1990 and

2010 is actually associated with the founding of slightly fewer organizations.

The coefficients confirm Hypothesis 2, that education is positively associated with organization growth. The dramatic differences between the educational attainment of the population of U.S. counties predict similarly dramatic differences in founding rates. A between-county difference of merely 1% is associated with a 7.7% 10-year predicted increase in the number of organizations founded. Within-county increases over time are also positive and significant, with a 1% within-county increase yielding a milder 3.4% predicted increase in foundings.

The results here refute the predictions of the literature about a negative relationship between racial diversity and the founding of new non-profits. The between-county measure in fact shows a marginally significant ($p=.06$), *positive* relationship between racial diversity and new international aid organizations. A county that differed from another only with one standard deviation more racial diversity is predicted to have 9% more NGOs. The within-county effect is also positive but does not achieve statistical significance in this model. But in both cases, there is no support for Hypothesis 3.

Perhaps the positive relationship between diversity and the number of aid organizations is simply an echo of the immigrant effect being played out by second generation immigrants who are reflected in the racial diversity of a county but are not counted among the foreign born. To evaluate this possibility I ran nested models that added variables for percent Hispanic, percent non-Hispanic Asian, and percent non-Hispanic black, displayed in Table 4.5. (Coefficients for other variables are virtually unchanged and so are not presented in the table. Model A, the reference model, is the same as that presented in Table 4.3.) The positive effects for racial diversity and percent foreign-born persist as variables for percent non-Hispanic Asian and

percent Hispanic are added. Only when the variables for non-Hispanic blacks are added to the model does the positive effect for racial diversity on the rate of NGO foundings wash out. Still, the suggestion of the literature on voluntarism that greater diversity in a county would be negatively associated with number of international organizations is contradicted. The large and positive association between the within-county percentage of non-Hispanic blacks and the founding rate of NGOs suggests three possible interpretations: 1) Organizations are being founded by second-generation African or Caribbean immigrants; 2) Organizations are being founded by African-Americans; 3) Organizations are being founded by non-blacks in communities with large numbers of blacks. The former interpretations would mean that the volunteer patterns for blacks are different for international aid organizations than for different kinds of associations. If the latter interpretation is correct, contextual diversity does not discourage whites from being involved in international organizations in the way some researchers have argued that contextual diversity discourages other forms of civic engagement.

TABLE 4.5 HERE

The between-county effect of the number of religious organizations is strongly positive, and best seen in Table 4.4. A county that was identical to its neighbor except for having one standard deviation more religious congregations would have more than four times as many relief and development organizations at the end of the decade. The between- and within-effects differ in magnitude as an increase in congregations over time is associated with a much smaller positive effect on founding rates. This notable difference in effect size is probably because new and established religious congregations are not interchangeable; it likely takes new congregations time to establish the social ties that research suggests make religious groups such effective incubators for volunteers. It may also be that by virtue of their denomination

(Iannacone 1994)—newer congregations tend to be doctrinally conservative—or their newness that recently-founded congregations are “greedy” organizations that monopolize members’ potential volunteer time.

The effect of foreign-born residents between counties is significant and positive. A difference between counties of one percentage point is associated with a 5.4% increase in organizations. (The corresponding one standard deviation increase is 29%.) Here, the within-county test is positive but non-significant. Hypothesis 5 is partially confirmed—net of other variables, counties with more foreign-born residents were likely to see more international aid organizations founded there between 1990 and 2010.

Hypothesis 6 about the facilitating role of globalized organizations receives some support with the positive between-county effect of Rotary Clubs. Controlling for other variables, a one-standard deviation increase between counties in the number of Rotary Clubs is associated with a 35% increase in the number of international aid groups founded within a decade. The within-county effect does not achieve statistical significance.

Several of the control variables merit comment. Whether or not a county is home to a state capital is a significant predictor of how many organizations will be founded there. Net of other factors, capital counties are home to 84% more organizations over the course of a decade. This may be because state governments deal increasingly with the impacts of international trade (for example, by creating tax incentives for multinational corporations to keep jobs in their states) and providing social services to immigrants and refugees. Operating in a capital city might also provide an air of legitimacy to mid-size and larger organizations that seek government contracts or major donations.

The control variables representing local diffusion have no statistically significant effect

within counties over time but a very small, positive effect between counties. All other factors equal, for each additional aid organization present in adjacent counties two years earlier, a county is expected to be home to have .3% more aid organizations. These findings offer evidence that there is very little effect for diffusion of the founding of aid organizations between counties, net of other variables. Robustness checks using 1- and 3-year lags, not shown here, yielded nearly identical results.

The dummy variables for 2000 and 2010 can be understood to represent time changes specific to the decades preceding them, net of the other time-variant variables included in the model. The historical effect for 1990 to 2000 is nearly 300%, while the 2000 to 2010 historical effect (relative to 1990) is 846%. These figures square with the pattern of over-time increase of international aid organizations depicted in Figure 4.1, and remind us that broad technological change is a crucial driver of the growth of these groups.

Discussion

This chapter set out to connect the emergence of grassroots NGOs to theory on the origins and size of the nonprofit sector. As for other nonprofit organizations, the presence of international aid organizations is predicted by a county's level of income and education. These findings broadly concur with a supply-side theory of nonprofit organizations that understands these to be the projects of well-resourced voluntary entrepreneurs.

International aid organizations differ from some other nonprofits (and from the predictions of the voluntarism literature) in that they are no less likely to be found in racially diverse counties. The data here showed that diversity itself had no significant effect net of the positive effect of percent county residents who were black. These findings are consistent with the

argument made by Uslaner (2009) that an area's specific racial composition rather than generalized diversity is a determinant of civic engagement.

International aid organizations flourish in counties with more religious congregations. This study cannot distinguish the mechanism that links religious groups to the founding of international aid organizations, but existing literature tells us that the specifics of religious belief matter less for volunteering and other measures of civic engagement than the social ties that are nourished within religious congregations (Putnam and Campbell 2010). Congregations are nodes in networks of potential volunteers (who, conveniently, receive weekly reminders on the virtue of generosity). Moreover, immigrants to the U.S. are often quick to affiliate with religious groups (Ebaugh and Chafetz 1999, Hirshman 2004) and these relationships may flower into broader ties between the immigrant's sending and receiving communities. Therefore, religious congregations may facilitate the founding of NGOs both by encouraging voluntarism and by facilitating globalized ties.

The cross-national character of international aid organizations is what distinguishes them from the nonprofits that have been the object of most theory to date. The relationship between organizations and their environment must be re-conceptualized, acknowledging that these groups draw resources from the counties in which they are situated, but rely on globalized ties to do their work. Here immigrants are understood as human links that encourage "transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power" (Held et al. 1999). In the period 1990-2010, nearly 70% of foreign-born residents hailed from Latin America, Asia, and Africa. These immigrants, who are increasingly settling in the Midwest, South, and more generally beyond the usual "receiving sites" (Massey 2008), provide durable human links between U.S. counties and communities in developing countries. The literature on

transnationalism suggests that flows of people go on to become flows of goods, capital, and culture between the sites. Research that includes individual-level data is needed to determine whether the presence of immigrants is simply a contextual effect that is associated with the presence of international aid organizations, or whether the immigrants themselves are the voluntary entrepreneurs.

I also hypothesized that international relief and development organizations are more likely be founded outside of the traditional cosmopolitan hubs when there are existing cross-national organizational links. Here I looked at a group common to American civic life that has global ties: Rotary Clubs. The Rotary provides an organizational structure through which Americans even in otherwise isolated places can connect to communities in developing countries. The small grants provided by Rotary may provide an important boost to nascent NGOs. Even net of the number of other nonprofit organizations, counties with a greater number of Rotary Clubs were home to a greater number of international aid organizations, suggesting that Rotary Clubs are not just a signal of a county's overall civic engagement, but are themselves a facilitating factor in the formation of new globalized groups. I anticipate that this mechanism extends beyond Rotary Clubs to other institutions based in U.S. counties that facilitate travel and ties to the global South, such as international corporations or universities with study abroad and international research partnerships.

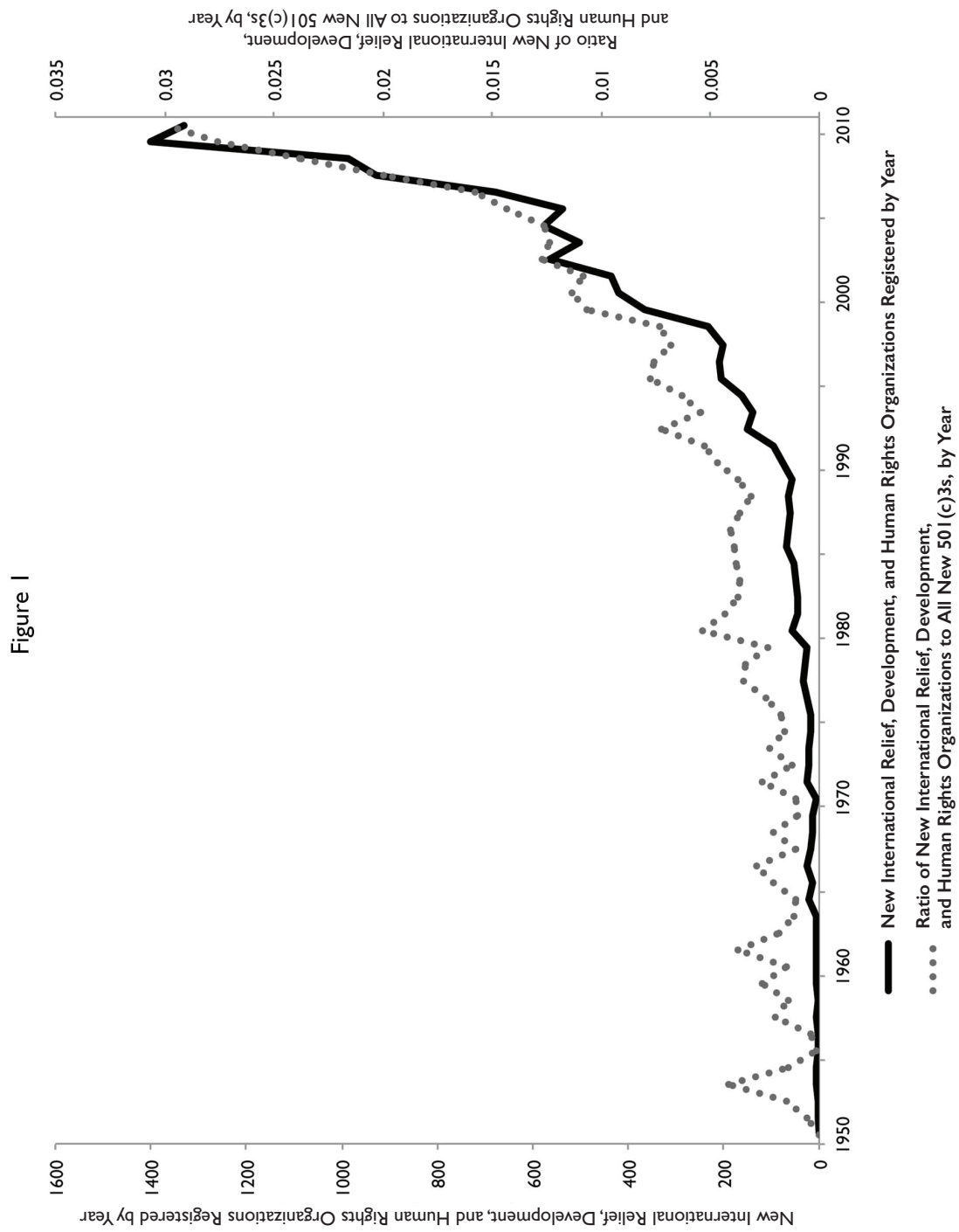
Between-county differences and the expansion over 20 years to areas beyond the "usual" homes for international organizations are part of the story. But also important is the within-county growth, less the product of over-time demographic changes within counties than the transformations in politics, communications and transportation that took place from 1990 to 2010 (captured in rough form in this analysis in period dummies). In this period, the end of the Cold

War and the decreasing cost of international travel made whole regions of the world more accessible to Americans than ever before. And communication was transformed, as long-distance phone service extended to more locations and became much cheaper. Most of all, the development of the internet—particularly the widespread free availability of email by the late 2000s—made it nearly as easy for someone in Brooklyn to communicate with a colleague in Butare as with one in the Bronx. The high costs of travel and communication that made ongoing collaboration possible only for resource-rich organizations had dramatically diminished by 2010. The regression analyses support the claim that these historical shifts figure strongly in the expansion of international relief and development groups in the last 20 years.

There are potential consequences to aid-receiving countries as aid becomes not just decentralized—a process that gained momentum during the “NGO decade” of the 1980s—but increasingly “voluntarized.” Aid from voluntary organizations is less likely to be shaped by security interests or by professional orthodoxy; yet it may repeat the failed experiments of the past, and it may be unsystematic in who it serves. GINGOs are free to reflect the particular skills and interests of their American founders—be those ice cream, entrepreneurship, or evangelical Christianity—and not all will be effective aid interventions. The burden on political leaders in the global South is apt to increase as they are obligated to coordinate with more aid actors.

If it is nearly as easy for someone in Brooklyn to contact a colleague in Butare as in another New York borough, what is the nature of the partnership and the conversation? IRS records tell us almost nothing about that. In the next chapter I turn to the qualitative coding of a sample of 150 NGO websites randomly selected from the BMF. Chapter 5 will describe the projects that U.S.-based NGOs engage in, where they work, what they ask of their donors, who they partner with, how they justify their work, and how they characterize the recipients of their

aid.



Source: IRS Business Master File via the National Center for Charitable Statistics

Figure 2. Registered International Relief, Development, and Human Rights Organizations by County, 1990

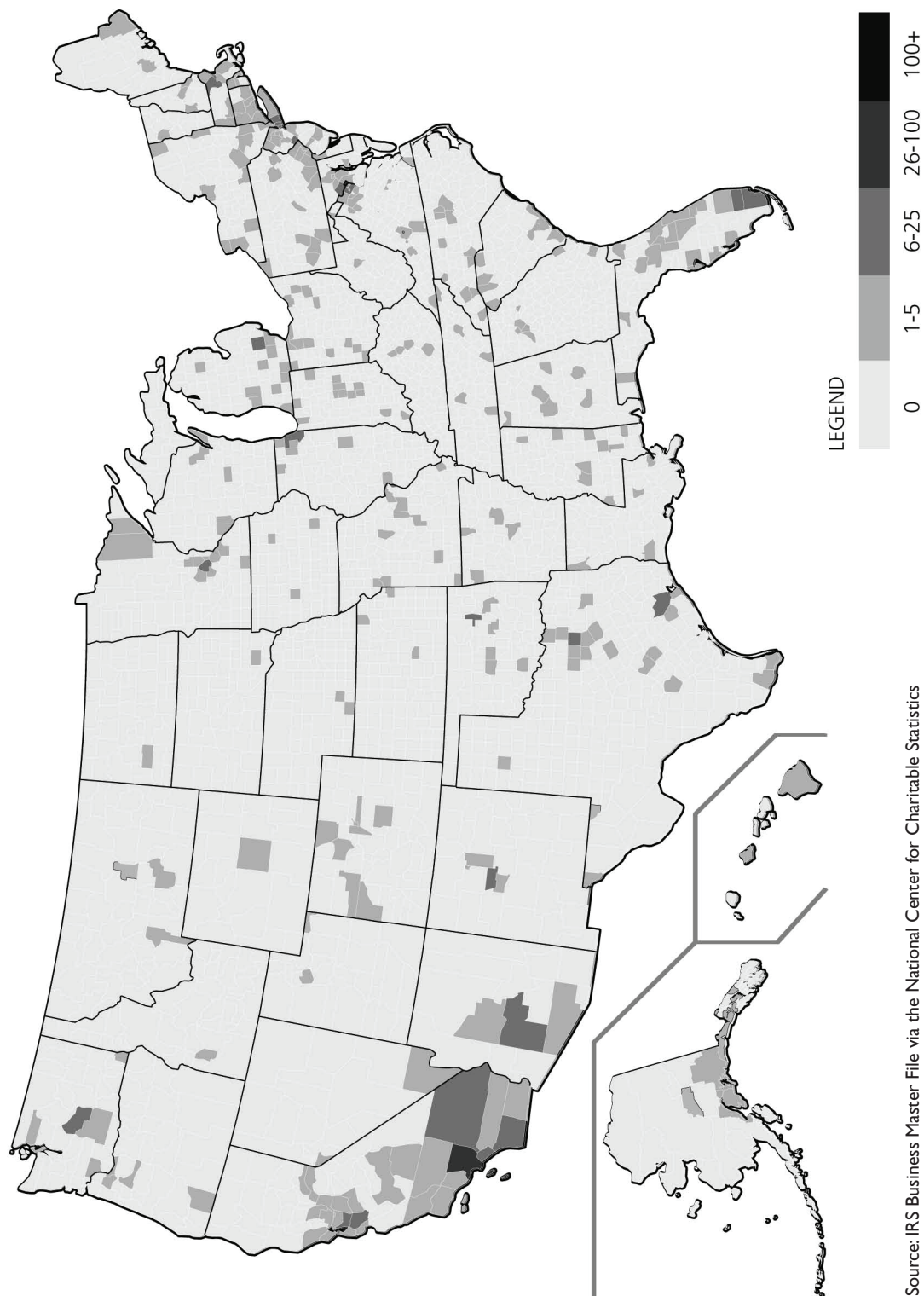


Figure 3. Registered International Relief, Development, and Human Rights Organizations by County, 2010

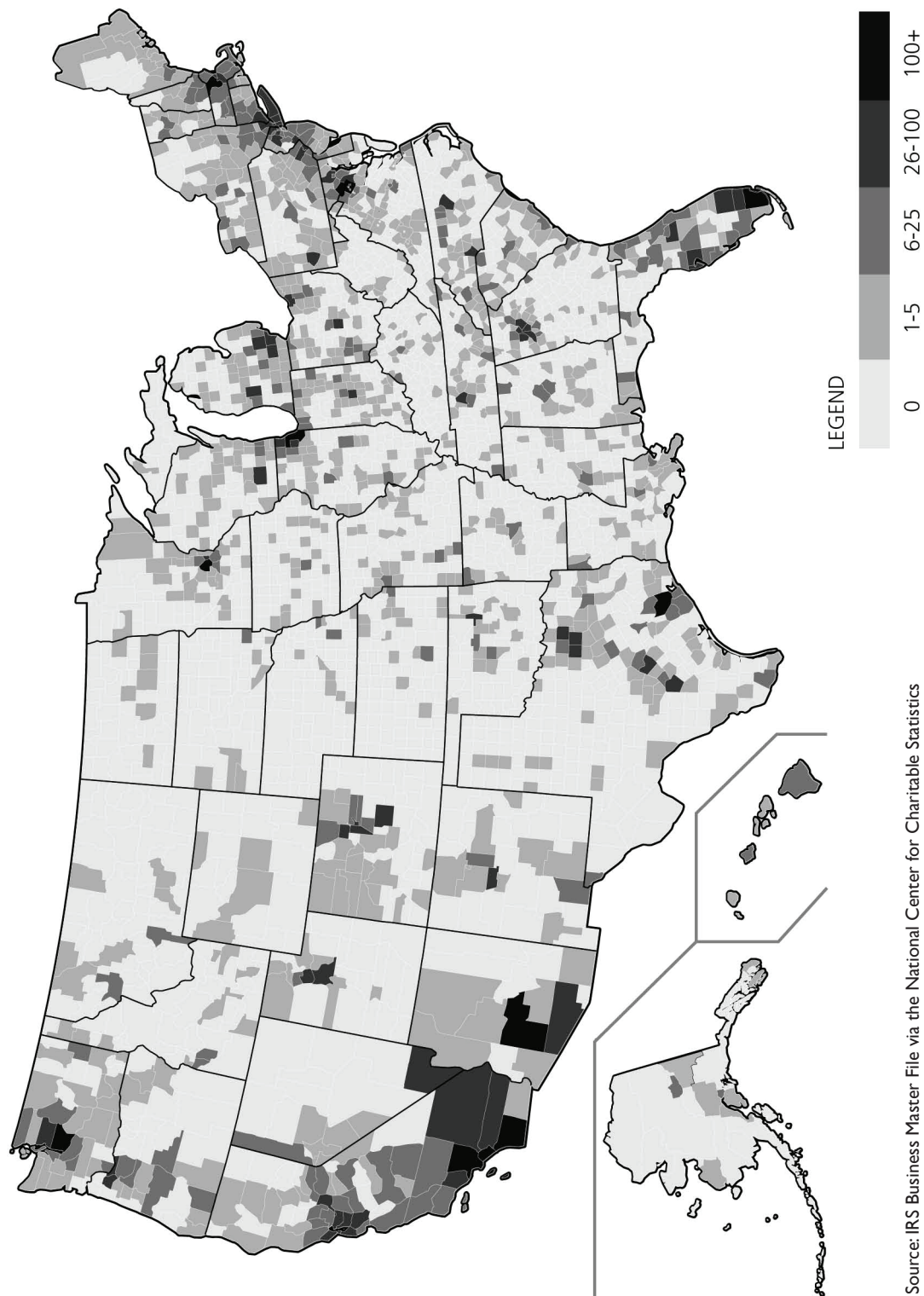


Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
International Development Organizations	1.64	11.62	0	488
Per capita income (in thousands, 2010 dollars)	21.68	5.33	6.01	64.38
Percent of population with BA or higher	16.36	8.04	0	70.96
Racial diversity	0.21	0.17	0	0.73
Number of religious congregations	92.19	164.90	0	5773
Number of Rotary Clubs	2.10	4.22	0	113
Percent foreign-born	3.36	4.86	0	72.24
Adjacent-county aid organizations	7.15	29.25	0	619
Number of other nonprofits	251.14	876.31	0	34,320
South	0.36	0.48	0	1
Capital city	0.016	0.13	0	1
Population (in thousands)	88.56	289.03	.041	9758.26
Population density	239.51	1607.07	0.039	69357.68
N= 9429 county-years				

Table 4.2 Rate of International Development Organization Founding for 1990-2010

	IRR	SE
Per capita income (thousands)	1.076***	(1.045 - 1.107)
Percent BA or more	1.057***	(1.036 - 1.077)
Racial diversity	1.394	(0.570 - 3.406)
Percent foreign-born	1.061***	(1.033 - 1.090)
Religious congregations (hundreds)	1.897***	(1.590 - 2.262)
Rotary Clubs	1.012	(0.988 - 1.038)
Population (thousands)	0.998***	(0.997 - 0.999)
Population density (hundreds)	0.999	(0.993 - 1.005)
Adjacent-county aid organizations (lagged)	1.005	(0.993 - 1.016)
Other nonprofits (hundreds)	1.054**	(1.018 - 1.092)
Capital city	1.460	(0.928 - 2.298)
South	1.049	(1.050 - 1.388)
Constant	0.00470***	(0.00273 - 0.00810)
Log likelihood	-1197.818	

N=3,138 county-equivalents

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, two-tailed tests

Negative binomial regression

Table 4.3 Rate of International Development Organization Founding by Decade, 1990-2010

	IRR	95% Confidence Interval
Fixed part		
(between) Per capita income (thousands)	1.094***	(1.072 - 1.116)
(within) Per capita income (thousands)	0.946***	(0.927 - 0.965)
(between) Percent BA or more	1.077***	(1.063 - 1.090)
(within) Percent BA or more	1.034***	(1.014 - 1.054)
(between) Racial diversity	1.653+	(0.979 - 2.792)
(within) Racial diversity	1.599	(0.680 - 4.140)
(between) Percent foreign-born	1.054***	(1.037 - 1.073)
(within) Percent foreign-born	1.009	(0.991 - 1.027)
(between) Religious congregations (hundreds)	2.521***	(2.273 - 2.796)
(within) Religious congregations	1.035**	(1.010 - 1.061)
(between) Rotary Clubs	1.074***	(1.049 - 1.099)
(within) Rotary Clubs	0.998	(0.990 - 1.005)
(between) Adjacent-county aid organizations (lagged)	1.003*	(1.000 - 1.006)
(within) Adjacent-county aid organizations (lagged)	1.000	(0.999 - 1.000)
(between) Population (thousands)	0.997***	(0.996 - 0.997)
(within) Population (thousands)	1.000**	(1.000 - 1.001)
(between) Population density (hundreds)	1.008***	(1.004 - 1.012)
(within) Population density (hundreds)	1.000	(0.998 - 1.002)
(between) Other nonprofits (hundreds)	0.969**	(0.948 - 0.989)
(within) Other nonprofits (hundreds)	0.996**	(0.993 - 0.998)
Capital city	1.841**	(1.277 - 2.653)
South	0.994	(0.850 - 1.163)
2000	2.938***	(2.590 - 3.332)
2010	8.460***	(7.125 - 10.04)
Random part		
sigma_u	1.363***	(1.214 - 1.530)
Log likelihood	-6443.991	

N= 9,414 observations (3,140 county-equivalent groups)

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1 (two-tailed tests)

Random-intercept multilevel Poisson regression with cluster means

**Table 4.4 Net Effect on 10-year Founding Rate
of 1 Standard Deviation Increase for Hypthesized Predictors**

H1: Income

Between counties: Per capita income (thousands)	57% increase
Within county: Per capita income (thousands)	10% decrease

H2: Education

Between counties: Percent BA or more	74% increase
Within county: Percent BA or more	10% increase

H3: Racial diversity

Between counties: Race HHI	9% increase
Within county: Race HHI	(Not significant)

H4: Religious congregations

Between counties: Religious congregations	434% increase
Within county: Religious congregations	1% increase

H5: Foreign-born residents

Between counties: Percent foreign-born	29% increase
Within county: Percent foreign-born	(Not significant)

H6: Rotary Clubs

Between counties: Rotary Clubs	35% increase
Within county: Rotary Clubs	(Not significant)

Table 4.5 Nested Longitudinal Models with Race/Ethnicity Variables

	Model A	Model B	Model C	Model D
<i>All models include: Between and within variables for Per capita income, Percent BA or higher, Religious congregations, Rotary Clubs, Other nonprofits, Population density, Population, Adjacent- county aid organizations</i>				
(between) Percent foreign-born	1.054*** (1.037 - 1.073)	1.046*** (1.023 - 1.071)	1.041*** (1.024 - 1.059)	1.049*** (1.023 - 1.076)
(within) Percent foreign-born	1.009 (0.991 - 1.027)	1.000 (0.978 - 1.022)	0.999 (0.974 - 1.024)	0.991 (0.965 - 1.017)
(between) Racial diversity	1.653+ (0.979 - 2.792)	1.656+ (0.980 - 2.796)	1.893** (1.206 - 2.973)	1.057 (0.458 - 2.436)
(within) Racial diversity	1.599 (0.648 - 3.943)	1.811 (0.726 - 4.518)	1.941 (0.785 - 4.798)	0.868 (0.328 - 2.299)
(between) Percent Hispanic		1.003 (0.995 - 1.011)	1.003 (0.997 - 1.010)	1.006 (0.996 - 1.015)
(within) Percent Hispanic		1.013 (0.995 - 1.032)	1.015 (0.996 - 1.035)	1.025* (1.005 - 1.046)
(between) Percent non-Hispanic Asian			0.996 (0.980 - 1.013)	1.005 (0.977 - 1.034)
(within) Percent non-Hispanic Asian			0.998 (0.974 - 1.023)	1.001 (0.977 - 1.026)
(between) Percent non-Hispanic Black				1.007 (0.997 - 1.017)
(within) Percent non-Hispanic Black				1.045*** (1.028 - 1.062)
Random part				
sigma_u	1.363*** (1.214 - 1.530)	1.358*** (1.210 - 1.525)	1.195*** (1.084 - 1.317)	1.342*** (1.195 - 1.507)
Log likelihood	-6443.991	-6443.991	-6457.723	-6426.271

N= 9,414 observations (3,140 county-equivalent groups)

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.10 (two-tailed tests)

Random-intercept multilevel Poisson regression with cluster means

95% confidence intervals in parentheses

Chapter 5: The Things Most Needed: Projects, People, and Purposes of American NGOs, From a Sample of their Websites

Roughly speaking, the things aimed at are those which, to an American eye, appear most needed—health and clean water, plentiful crops, houses with tight roofs, the right and indeed the duty to learn, the ambition and the opportunity to get ahead without stepping too hard on the next man. These are the things which to an American are essential and ought to be essential everywhere. The programmes as they emerge are expressions of American experience, American dreams, American shrewdness, and American biases, against the background of a pervasive memory that it is not so very long since Americans worked their own way out of primitive conditions, and of an insistent belief that the techniques which they found useful then may now also be useful elsewhere.

--*The Economist*, "Private versus Public Giving," 1958

The aims of private development aid articulated by *The Economist* four and a half decades ago were expressions of American ideals of pragmatism and progress. But the public aid infrastructure that emerged in the Eisenhower era had to juggle, as it would in decades to come, the objectives of national security and economic interests with humanitarian ideals. The question of *who* should be the object of aid was driven by Cold War realpolitik, while the *what* and *how* was guided by emerging theories of economic modernization, the lobbying of agriculture and industry groups, and partisan wrangling in Congress. Private aid, which in the 1950s was confined mostly to several large foundations and a handful of religious groups, played a relatively small role compared to the complicated and growing foreign aid infrastructure that developed in the latter half of the 20th century.

The aims of public foreign aid, in the form of multilateral agencies and bilateral U.S. aid, were fundamentally shaped by domestic political forces from the 1950s onward (Lancaster 2007, Babb 2009). Meanwhile older private agencies—like their colleagues in government agencies whose aid mandate focused on humanitarian rather than diplomatic aims—became increasingly dominated by professional expertise (Smith 1990). Thus, by the late 1990s, aims as simple as

clean water, plentiful crops, and tight roofs were beneath the purview of public foreign assistance, and even some of the older NGOs like CARE. USAID was increasingly a “wholesaler” rather than a “retailer” of aid, contracting out projects to NGOs and private firms on the basis of broad priorities set by the agency.

But the grassroots NGOs that have proliferated in the last two decades are not subject to the political machinations of official foreign aid, and they largely bypass the normative pressures faced by larger, professionalized NGOs. In the next chapter I will argue that the questions of *who* should be aided and *how* do not follow the “expert narrative” of development that guides professionalized aid agencies. Instead, while operating within constraints of non-governmental standing, budgets, and distance, grassroots NGOs’ ideas of *who* should be aided and *how* rely on existing schemas about charity and progress and are shaped by ad hoc organizational learning. This chapter lays the descriptive groundwork for that argument.

Using NGOs’ Websites as Sources of Data

Here I describe the *who*, *what*, *where*, *why*, and *how* of aid as articulated by American NGOs. This chapter uses a content analysis of a sample of 150 websites drawn from the roster of the 10,624 international relief, development, and human rights organizations registered with the IRS at the end of 2011. As Watkins et al. (2012) have noted, locating any systematic data about NGOs’ locations and activities is a perennial problem for people who study the sector. The information about projects and programs contained in IRS filings is minimal. While large NGOs issue annual reports, this is rare among grassroots groups. Most grassroots NGOs are not yet connected to the umbrella organizations like InterAction that can provide data on the sector—and assuming that my case studies are representative of the population, most NGOs are not even

aware that such umbrella organizations exist. Using websites then allows me to gather basic information on the programs of a cross-section of NGOs in the only practical way short of a large-scale survey.

The main limitation to this approach is selection bias: NGOs without websites may differ somewhat in their programs from NGOs with websites, but in the absence of a survey there is no way to be certain. As I describe in Chapter 2, websites were located for 6,564 of 10,624 registered organizations, or 61%. In comparing NGOs with websites to those without on *known* quantities—i.e., those in the IRS data—I found that groups with websites had higher average income and were older than groups without websites at statistically significant levels.

This sample of 150 was drawn randomly from that roster of 6,554. (The names of the organizations appear in Table 6.2) In other words, the NGOs depicted in this chapter include both some traditional NGOs—professional staff, large budget---and many GINGOs. The descriptive statistics here are meant to depict American-based international relief and development organizations as is possible from their websites. (In this sample 7% of NGOs were founded before 1990, and 23% had annual income of \$200,000 or more. For all NGOs registered in the BMF, the respective figures were 8% and 20%.) Naturally, there are distinctions between the approaches of traditional NGOs and the grassroots—that is the focus of the next chapter. The aim here is to describe the field using these data before asking how grassroots NGOs are different than their traditional counterparts.

The strengths of website data are their ubiquity and orientation towards the interested public. Since the sites are designed to inform prospective supporters, they typically include data on the types and locations of the organizations' projects. Narrative accounts of the work and "About Us" and "Get Involved" pages yield other sorts of information—on the roles that

potential supporters can play, and the organizational partners already connected to the NGO.

Accounts of projects and fundraising events and other pages that name “partners” reveal a host of network connections: other NGOs, businesses, religious congregations, government agencies, and civic groups.

Websites describe the locations, projects, supporter roles, and network partners, all material dimensions of NGO’s work. Webpages are also rich sites of symbolic action; texts about how projects work, who benefits from them, and why NGOs engage in them reveal a good deal about NGOs’ notions of what constitutes “good aid.”

When organizations describe their work on their websites, they often mention groups of targeted recipients like women or youth. Using Mohr’s (1994) terminology, these are *status categories*. But these texts offer other characterizations of recipients, particularly when they use the discursive device of including life narratives of individual recipients. These narratives, alongside accounts of the organization’s work which include interactions with recipients, are sites for discourse about the character or nature of the recipients.

Besides characterizing recipients, website texts also offer rationales for their mode of action. I define *rationales* as discursive acts that explain why something was done. In the context of NGO websites they are most often making an explicit claim of why particular people should be helped or why a particular intervention is appropriate. These are claims about moral desert, but they are also claims about the obligations of givers.

Rationales are powerful as forms of persuasion only insofar as they align with existing logics of obligation. To use the metaphor of the recipient as child and the giver as parent builds on an accepted logic of parental obligation. Abstract principles of justice or rights can provide other logics, as can other relationships or forms of shared identity. Rationales differ from

motivations in that we understand them to be an *account* of why something is done; to understand something as a rationale is to understand it as a speech act rather than as a motivation that is deep-seated within an individual (Wuthnow 1991). The ways in which recipients are framed is particularly important for NGOs because of the vast social distance between the recipients and NGO supporters.

If all of this discourse is enacted with an online audience of potential supporters in mind, does that mean we should consider it as instrumental and detached from what NGO workers really believe? Two findings from the case studies give me some confidence that we should not. First, the sort of discourse used to describe recipients and rationales on websites was very similar to what I heard in the case study interviews. Second, the imagined supporters to which the websites are addressed are not so very different from the NGO volunteers themselves. My case studies revealed that except for Indego, which employed full-time workers and had revenues in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, practically all of the financial supporters to the organization were personally known to the volunteers. Financial and volunteers support came from personal networks: family members, friends, colleagues, or network members at one further remove (colleagues of family members, etc.). Thus, unless NGOs are deliberately creating websites to attract supporters that are radically different than their current roster of donors, I expect that the websites are in fact targeted to people similar to the organizations' founders.

The Programs of U.S.-based Aid NGOs

Where: NGOs' Foreign Locations

As Table 5.1 shows, the most common destination for American aid organizations is Africa. More than half of American NGOs have at least one project in Africa, while just less

than a third have a project in Latin America. (Organizations may work in more than one country and are coded for every country and region in which they work.)

Among countries, India is the number-one destination of aid organizations—15% of organizations have a project there. The next most common destinations, in descending order, are Kenya, Uganda, Haiti, and Peru. Note the three top countries are Anglophone; 58% of all organizations are working in at least one Anglophone country. The destinations of American private organizations in this sample differ markedly from the top recipients of official U.S. foreign aid and from objective criteria of need. Haiti, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Nigeria and Uganda, are top destinations for U.S. NGOs and were among the top 20 recipients of non-military assistance from the U.S. government in 2012 (USAID 2013). Among the 20 countries ranking lowest on United Nations' 2013 Human Development Index, only Sierra Leone and Liberia rank as top destinations for U.S. NGOs (Malik 2013).

Table 5.1 Destination Regions*Percent of organizations with a project in each region*

Africa	56%
Asia/Pacific	37%
Latin America (excluding Caribbean)	30%
Caribbean	15%
Middle East/North Africa	11%
Europe/Eurasia	9%

Table 5.2 Destination Countries*Percent of organizations with a project in each country*

India	15%
Kenya	14%
Uganda	12%
Haiti	11%
Peru	11%
Mexico	9%
South Africa	9%
Honduras	8%
Nicaragua	8%
Ghana	8%
Rwanda	8%
China	8%
Sierra Leone	7%
Vietnam	7%
Tanzania	7%
Guatemala	6%
Liberia	6%
Nigeria	6%
Ecuador	6%
Zimbabwe	5%

Table 5.3 Reference Countries. <i>Overlaps with top 20 NGO destinations in bold.</i>	
<i>Top 20 Recipients of Economic Aid from U.S. Government Agencies</i>	<i>Lowest 20 Countries on UNHDI (Lowest to Highest)</i>
Afghanistan	Niger
Pakistan	Congo (DRC)
Ethiopia	Mozambique
Jordan	Chad
Iraq	Burkina Faso
Kenya	Mali
Colombia	Eritrea
Haiti	Central African Republic
West Bank/Gaza	Guinea
Tanzania	Burundi
South Sudan	Sierra Leone
Congo (Kinshasa)	Guinea-Bissau
Uganda	Afghanistan
Russia	Liberia
Nigeria	Ethiopia
Sudan	Zimbabwe
Somalia	Sudan
Mozambique	Malawi
South Africa	Comoros
Bangladesh	Cote d'Ivoire

Despite the historical trajectories that shape Americans' interactions with the global South, and more broadly that affect patterns of development and underdevelopment, NGOs have surprisingly little to say on their websites about the context of where they work. Only 18% of sites offer any historical, economic, or ecological description of the country where they operate. Of these, only four organizations make any mention of colonial-era history or colonialism itself. This is especially notable given the high percentage of these that operate in Africa, where colonial rule is still in living memory. What NGO websites instead tend to emphasize are relationships that emerge from the founders' previous travel, volunteerism, or work. The following are typical narratives:

During a visit to the majestic Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe in 1998, Janice was rummaging through a nearby gift shop when she came upon a photo album made from unusual, textural paper that was obviously handmade by a local craftsman. . . Janice soon located the small pioneering group of papermakers creating unique African style handmade papers. She set up Eco-Africa Papercraft, a social enterprise that would provide skills training and crafting work to hundreds of local women from the impoverished township of Chitungwiza. (Eco Africa Social Ventures)

Women Work Together began in 2007 when Dr. Tracy Ehlers, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Denver, spent a month in San Pedro, Sacatepéquez, Guatemala. . . Although she'd visited many times from 1977-1996, in 2007 she had not been there for ten years. Her current connection to the town is very strong because, as a graduate student, she lived with the family of the town's current mayor, Dr. Marco Antonio Orozco. . . At his invitation, they began a collaboration aimed at strengthening women's networks through participatory workshops. (Women Work Together)

The first narrative in particular might be read to hint at the serendipitous quality of global ties. But analyzing these narratives in the aggregate points to just the opposite—the underlying structure of existing connections between the United States and other countries. The importance of existing “human links” to new aid organizations suggests that the pattern of NGO formation is path dependent on existing global connections between the United States and the rest of the world. The disproportionate prevalence of English speaking countries and greater prevalence of developing countries where American tourists are likely to travel—China and Kenya, over, perhaps, Burundi—suggests that existing opportunities for Americans to personally forge links to foreign countries are a necessary if not sufficient condition of NGO founding.

A common alternative to this founding narrative of previous travel or voluntarism is the organization founded by an immigrant to the U.S. In this sample, about one-third of organizations were founded by first- or second-generation immigrants. The websites revealed that these immigrants were most likely to come from Asia or Africa, and most were individuals who had earned a college degree and had reached middle age and middle-class status. Among

the founders of organizations in this sample were attorneys, doctors, professors, IT workers, and accountants. While some immigrants partnered with co-ethnics, more commonly the other members of their board were recruited from work or religious congregations and were native-born Americans. It is also worth noting these immigrants are not representative of the general population of immigrants in the United States. In 2010, nearly 30% of immigrants in the U.S. hailed from Mexico, and just over 50% hailed from Latin America generally. Why do Asian and African immigrants seem to disproportionately start GINGOS? It may be because Latin American immigrants interested in providing assistance to their native countries prefer direct remittances or hometown associations. An indirect explanation could also lie in the relationship between education and the organizational form. NGOs are typically started by individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher; 13% of immigrants from Latin America hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 44% of immigrants from other regions (Current Population survey 2010). Immigrants with less education and lower English fluency might find it difficult to complete the legal maneuvers to register a 501(c)3.

What: NGO Projects

The projects of NGOs run the gamut from capacity building to animal husbandry, but nearly all operate at the level of the community or some smaller unit. They are distinct from projects operated by governments or large international agencies like the World Bank in that they steer clear of infrastructure or industrial development. This is true of even the largest and oldest NGOs in the sample like Child Fund—interventions are targeted at towns or villages, schools, cooperatives, families, or individuals.

Education is the dominant interest of the NGOs in this sample. The majority of NGOs support either specific schools—Activate Tanzania among the case studies is an example—or particular students through scholarships. Other Americans promote education by donating books, computers, or other supplies for students. Informal educational programs for adults also fall under this category, but more often, programs directed to adults have to do with small business training, Bible courses, or the type of general “capacity building” projects observed by Swidler and Watkins (2008) in their Africa fieldwork.

Medical projects are also popular among these NGOs. Nearly four out of ten NGOs ship supplies or money to medical clinics in the receiving countries. Fourteen percent of NGOs coordinate visits by doctors, nurses, or other specialists to foreign countries. These visits are typically of several weeks duration, and often they focus on “in-and-out” procedures like cleft palate surgery that do not require patients to receive ongoing treatment. Some organizations, like the case study NGO Rwanda Ultrasound Initiative, concentrate on using American personnel to train local medical providers. But training providers rather than treating patients requires coordination with local medical systems which often means contending with a Ministry of Health. More often American medical personnel team up with one clinic—private ones, such as those run by missionaries, are popular—treat patients for several weeks, and then repeat the process with a new visiting team the next year.

Clean water projects also suggest particular interventions: wells. Thirty-five NGOs in this project work to provide potable water by digging wells or installing pumps, or else providing funding to other organizations that do. These projects are particularly popular in sub-Saharan Africa, Haiti, and India.

Indego Africa provides one example of small business projects: women producing handicrafts that are sold to American consumers at fair-trade-like prices.¹ These sort of projects are popular among the 25% of NGOs who describe small business programs on their websites. Other projects are more ambitious, such as the Bridge 2 Rwanda project that aims to increase the scale of poultry production in Rwanda. Café Feminino is one of several NGOs that works with cooperatives to transform subsistence farmers into agricultural businesspeople. Projects to nurture entrepreneurship are also common. Global Partnerships, Bridge 2 Rwanda, the Women's Entrepreneurship Initiative, and Financiers Without Borders all provide training programs or mentoring partnerships to encourage low- and middle-income people in the global South in business enterprises.

¹ The fair trade designation requires membership in the Fair Trade Federation, which screens retail and wholesale operations in North America, or the World Fair Trade Organization, which sets standards for production and sale of goods in all countries outside North America (Shorette 2014). Achieving accreditation from these groups is a demanding process, so some NGOs in this sample (including Indego Africa) opt out. The NGOs set above-market prices that they argue generate a living wage for producers. See as examples of this practice the NGOs Café Feminino, Five for Water, and Indego Africa.

Table 5.4 Project Sectors	
<i>Percent of organizations with a project in each sector.</i>	
Education	59%
Medical clinic or supplies	38%
Small business	25%
Clean water	23%
Teach English	19%
Provide food	17%
Agriculture	16%
Visiting medical teams	14%
Disaster relief	9%
Research	8%
Capacity building	7%
Preserve cultural heritage	7%
Economic development	7%
Microcredit	7%
Sports	6%
Cultural exchange	5%
Family planning	5%
Animal husbandry	5%
Democracy building	5%
Landscaping/gardening (not for food)	4%
Green technology	3%
Housing	3%
Forestry	3%

How: NGOs' Characterizations of their Aid Projects

In addition to coding the *types* of projects that NGOs' describe on their website, I coded qualitative descriptors of the projects. Several themes emerge from the qualitative ways that NGOs describe their projects. These codes show what NGOs cast as the virtues of their approach to aid. The themes of efficiency, effectiveness, and being volunteer-run were prominent, and would be repeated many times in my case study interviews.

Notions of efficiency, transparency, effectiveness, being volunteer-run, and promoting self-sufficiency all counter the bogeyman image of "bad aid." Bad aid is bureaucratic and expensive, it produces corruption, and it does not yield results. Grassroots NGOs emphasize that

they were established to do better than existing aid agencies. A group called Direct Connect is explicit on this point:

DirectConnect is all about getting things done. We don't have a large staff, fancy headquarters or complicated service model. All we need is your help, plus the hard work and commitment of our local volunteers. . . We purposely avoid the stifling bureaucracy, overhead, and red tape that hinder so many other aid organizations today.

An even more prominent theme was that NGOs rely on local knowledge to do their work. This typically means “partnering” with local government or nonprofit groups or hiring local staff. One Acre Fund exemplifies the latter approach:

[F]ield officers are typically recruited from the communities in which they work. We don't hire university-educated horticulturalists for our field staff. We prefer to employ down-to-earth, hard-working staff who have strong teaching ability and leadership potential within their own communities.

Relying on local knowledge can serve two purposes. First, it can be structured to allow local “participation” in development projects, a principle that has become *de rigueur* among development agencies since the 1990s (White 2010; Mansuri and Rao 2012). Second, it can be a way of acknowledging the practical limits of the involvement GRINGO leaders. Most of the founders of these organizations maintain primary residence in the United States (this was true for all five of the case study NGOs). These groups have to rely on local staff to execute the projects in the absence of the American leaders. These staff are “interstitial elites” described by Swidler and Watkins (2008)—relatively educated by local standards, able to work with foreigners, “in” the aid receiving community but by nature of their education, orientation, and increasing income, not completely “of” it. The complicated nature of the agency of these interstitial elites or local “brokers” in aid projects has been considered at length in the development literature (Kaler & Watkins 2001, Luke & Watkins 2002, Marsland 2006, Molenaers 2006). For this discussion of NGOs' discourse on their websites, suffice it to say that expressing a reliance on the expertise of

local people in development projects is common, that is used by both explicitly religious and secular groups, and that it cuts across project sectors.

Who: Aid Recipients

Websites were coded for both status designations and qualities of the recipient. I should emphasize that even the status designations, which appear to be cut-and-dry relative to qualitative descriptions of recipients, must still be understood as part of organizations' discourse. NGOs decide which information to feature about their programs on their websites, and the codes here depicted the ways in which organizations portrayed their work and the people who were beneficiaries of it. For example, an organization that distributed weekly food rations to African women in all likelihood benefitted men and children indirectly; but here, the discourse highlights women as recipients. I expect that although the status designations are a reasonable accounting of the targeted recipients of a given aid organization, the website text should not be understood as some sort of objective audit, but as a speech act aimed at potential supporters of the organization, and thus likely to emphasize the sort of people that donors feel are deserving recipients of their assistance.

Table 5.5 Status Designations of Aid Recipients	
<i>Percent of organizations targeting each recipient category</i>	
Children/youth	62%
Women	38%
Orphans	33%
Disabled	20%
Men	10%
Families	10%
Elderly	9%

Table 5.6 Qualitative Descriptions of Aid Recipients	
<i>Percent of organizations using each designation</i>	
Living in deprived conditions	45%
Depicted with personal story	31%
Hardworking	25%
Kind, good, or hospitable	25%
Vulnerable	25%
Universalism	20%
Has future ambitions	19%
Has positive attitude	15%
Transformed by project	13%
World citizenship	11%
Referred to by work role	8%
Made bad decisions	7%
Childlike/naïve	6%

According to these websites, children and youth are the group most frequently targeted by American aid organizations with more than six in ten organizations describing a project for their benefit. A bit more than half of the organizations that targeted children or youth worked specifically for the benefit of orphans, most often by running orphanages, offering scholarships, or providing material support for orphans' caregivers. Women were designated as recipients by 38% of organizations, compared with only 10% of organizations naming male recipients.

The high visibility of children and the near invisibility of men persist in the images that NGOs use on their websites. Of images on the organization's home page (i.e., the first page of the site), children appeared in nearly half the images (43%); photographs of women appeared about half as often as children (26%), and men appeared less than half as often as women (12%). American volunteers were more likely to be featured in pictures on the homepage (14%) than were local men (12%).

Nearly half of all organizations describe their beneficiaries as living in deprived conditions, and a common discursive tactic on websites is to include a short biography tracing the how the recipient's life has been changed as through her contact with the NGO—or what her hopes for the future are, pending continuing support from the organization. Even though children, youth, and women are the most common recipients of assistance, personal narratives feature them disproportionately, in 31 out of 33 cases. This supports the suggestion that these groups are imagined as the most broadly legitimate recipients of aid. Although texts describing recipients' suffering were common, the images on homepages far more often depicted recipients smiling (21%) than visibly suffering (6%).

In rare cases website texts cast aid recipients in a negative light, as either child-like or as having made decisions that have contributed to their neediness. In the uncommon passages that describe blameworthy behavior by the recipients of aid, mitigating circumstances are usually mentioned. A text describing missionaries' efforts to aid an alcoholic man put it this way: "Guillermo played the violin beautifully. *Yet with 11 children and heavy farm work*, he often turned to hard liquor" (Last Frontiers; emphasis mine).

The more typical portrayal on NGO websites is of morally worthy recipients in difficult conditions beyond their control. Texts that describe recipients use language of work ethic,

positive attitude, and kindness. Orphans and the disabled are those who are usually described as “vulnerable,” but the descriptor is also applied to minority ethnic groups communities at large in the wake of wars or disaster. This term designates a group as deserving of care by virtue of their special status. In contrast, discourse about “universalism” makes claims for recipients on the grounds that humans everywhere are essentially the same. Universalist texts speak to common human nature and desires. A volunteer for an education organization in Uganda wrote on the group’s website, “The stories were compelling, but what shone out was their humanness. They were eager to forgive, eager to let go of the past and look forwards the future, eager to love” (Friends of UNIFAT). This language of suffering and, more rarely, of abstract claims of desert also appear in the texts NGOs use to rationalize their work.

Why: NGOs’ Rationales

I code as *rationales* texts that make arguments for the worthiness of particular recipients or programs. Some rationales rely on references to outside authorities, like scientific bodies or international agencies, to establish that an issue or type of intervention is important. Other texts make abstract claims based on principles of human rights, gender equality, or justice. The most common rationale relies on the implicit claim that human suffering demands a response, and the texts themselves focus on explaining the source of the suffering, as in the excerpt below:

Africa faces an unprecedented food crisis. The food price index is on the rise.
Families that already spend most of their income on food are facing longer
“hunger seasons”: In the developing world, 10.9 children die each year.
Malnutrition and hunger-related diseases cause 60% of these deaths.

Then, the organization makes the claim for how their project is positioned to alleviate the suffering:

Most of the world's hungry are farmers using outdated technologies, and we believe that they represent a significant opportunity for development. They have the means to literally grow their way out of poverty if their crop yields are improved. One Acre Fund allows farmers to make a simple investment in their farms—our market bundle of services—that dramatically increases yields. (One Acre Fund)

Other rationales are more specific and pragmatic, emphasizing extraordinary events that necessitate aid: war, epidemic, natural disaster, and other sorts of political conflict.

The second most common rationale invokes divine purposes for aid. The rationales coded here as “God’s purposes” take a several specific forms: they describe projects as material demonstrations of god’s love or as obedience to what volunteers understand as God’s will or a “calling” to take particular action. The “calling” variation of this rationale most often comes from evangelical or Pentecostal NGOs, but a Catholic group described being inspired by Mary to combine a religious pilgrimage with a housing-repair volunteer project:

Our Lady put it strongly in Jeff’s heart that this project was about more than just roofs. It was about the priceless gift of hope . . . Thus, at our Lady’s behest, St. David’s hosted forty-two Americans of amazingly diverse backgrounds on this working pilgrimage in order to fan the embers of hope into a flame in the little Bosnian town of Boderiste. (St. David’s Relief)

Rationales of “God’s purpose” can be used to justify projects that do not seem apparently religious, as with this evangelical small business program: “We believe that business is a divine mission that can be used to transform lives and expand God’s kingdom.” (Bridge 2 Rwanda)

Rationalizing projects as inspired by God or consistent

Table 5.7 Rationales <i>Percent of organizations invoking each rationale</i>	
Suffering	35%
God's purposes	27%
Reference to international organization	19%
Human rights	17%
Justice	14%
Gaps in government services	13%

Political strife	13%
Epidemic disease	11%
War	11%
Natural disaster	10%
Edification of volunteers	7%
Gender inequality	8%
Oppression by outside groups	7%
Reference to scientific authority	6%

with religious teachings is part of a greater discursive strategy of religious framing used by NGOs that I analyze in Chapter 7. Table 5.7 lists the most common rationales invoked by NGOs in the website sample.

Notice that claims involving self-interest of Americans are almost entirely absent here. The “edification of volunteers” rationale is occasionally used, and most often appears in the context of exchange programs in which both there is to be mutual benefit between the global North and global South. While government and inter-governmental aid agencies supported (however weakly) with tax dollars must often make the case for their work in terms of enlightened national interest, NGOs seem to rationalize their work in almost completely altruistic terms.

Roles for U.S. Supporters

Half of the organizations in this sample generated less than \$25,000 in annual revenue, so individual supporters play critical roles in donations and volunteer labor. Prospective supporters are the imagined audience of the websites analyzed here, and their roles in NGOs are on display in two ways on websites. The first is through depictions of existing volunteer support—particularly testimonials from donors and accounts of volunteer trips. “News” or blog sections of websites often give accounts of fundraisers or events that offer a window into existing

supporter roles. The more explicit way we learn what supporters can do is through the requests made on websites. Nearly every site has a page labeled “Donate,” “How You Can Help,” or similar, with one or more of the tasks given in Table 5.8.

Requests for cash donations are ubiquitous, and are absent mostly from organizations that operate international exchange programs where “volunteers” pay fees rather than making open-ended donations. Supporters are encouraged to increase the audience for the organization by “liking” a Facebook page or following on Twitter. Child sponsorships are a more narrowly tailored sort of donation wherein a supporter offers a recurring monthly donation to support the school fees or maintenance of an individual child. Under these arrangements—popularized by Save the Children in the 1980s—U.S. supporters typically receive a photograph and capsule biography of their sponsored child. In acknowledgement for the assistance they receive, sponsored children (typically with the assistance of teachers or NGO staff), offer letters once or twice a year to their American sponsors. This fundraising tactic became broadly used by larger NGOs beginning in the 1980s because it increased donations by putting a (young, typically

Table 5.8 Roles for U.S. Supporters	
<i>Percent of organizations offering each role</i>	
Donate money	89%
Follow on social media	45%
Volunteer abroad	35%
Volunteer in US	31%
Donate goods	24%
Sponsor child	16%
Pray	16%

dark-skinned) face on complex and overwhelming development issues.² In the wake of the negative publicity that came from a 1998 Chicago Tribune report on child sponsorship programs, most NGOs that use child sponsorship note specifically on the website whether all of sponsors funds will go directly to a child or whether a share will be used for general operating expenses. Sixteen percent of NGOs in this sample use this funding model.

Three out of ten organizations solicit volunteer work in the United States. Because many grassroots NGOs are so small, it is not unusual for organizations solicit volunteers for basic administrative tasks such as handling mailings or website maintenance. Experts in grant-writing or fundraising are highly in demand. My case studies revealed that even when these tasks are not advertised publicly, new organizations rely heavily on favors within personal networks to get these tasks done. Someone typically has an accountant or attorney friend that handles the registration paperwork to achieve 501(c)3 status, and someone else has a friend who can build a simple website. Assistance from family members is common: of the 150 websites here, 45 listed family members working together on the board of directors or in other volunteer roles. As organizations become wealthier and better established, board members come to be recruited on the basis of their professional expertise or fundraising capacity, and paid staff can be relied upon for administrative support.

The place of volunteers in the delivery of aid itself is one of the qualities that distinguishes GRINGOs from their traditional counterparts. In professionalized NGOs like Oxfam and CARE, as in government aid agencies, only trained staff---typically with relevant

² In a private conversation, the former CEO of an American INGO with annual revenues in the tens-of-millions conceded his personal frustrations with child sponsorship programs. He acknowledged that it reinforced racial stereotypes and conflicted with the organization's need for unrestricted donations. However, he admitted, it was a hugely effective fundraising tool, and he doubted that his former organization would ever abandon it.

university degrees and years of experience in the U.S. office—carry out the projects themselves in the receiving communities. Even “voluntary” organizations like the Peace Corps have a rigorous volunteer screening programs and require months of intensive language and project training. But one-third of the NGOs here publicly recruit volunteers for work abroad. In most cases, these are for short-term visits of a few weeks to a few months. As I discuss in the next chapter, organizations using particular models of aid recruit volunteers with very specific technical skills, but more commonly volunteers are recruited for low-skill projects. Often the projects these volunteers engage in, such as landscaping or construction of community buildings, rely on the unskilled manual labor that is abundant in the receiving community. But the logic underlying these projects is not of fulfilling tasks at the most efficient prices. Instead, organizations offer accounts that value the interaction between volunteers and the host communities.

Network Partners

American NGOs collaborate with a variety of other organizations to raise money and to carry out their work. In the countries in which they work, American NGOs frequently collaborate with other international NGOs or with host-country NGOs—known in some regions as community-based organizations, or CBOs—to carry out their projects. In some cases the American NGO exists essentially to raise funds for programs run entirely by CBOs—this is a particularly common relationship with schools and orphanages. Other sorts of contracting and collaborative relationships are possible, and nearly half of all organizations mention a partnership with another NGO on their website. One third of organizations discuss a relationship with some agency or level of the receiving-country government. These relationships can be as

superficial as photo ops with government ministers, as bureaucratic as receiving official approval to work in the country, or a substantial as developing a curriculum module for local doctors in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. Most commonly, the relationship is with a local government body rather than the national government—these higher level governments typically limit their partnerships to much larger private, bilateral, or multilateral agencies. Artisan or agricultural cooperatives and local religious congregations are other common receiving-country network partners, but those relationships tend to coalesce around particular models of aid.

Table 5.9 Network partners*Percent of organizations listing each type of partner*

INGO	43%
Business donors	33%
Religious congregation in U.S.	31%
NGO based in receiving country/CBO	31%
Religious congregation in aid-receiving community	29%
Government in receiving country (any level)	27%
Artists or arts organizations	24%
U.S. university	20%
Rotary Club	15%
Diaspora organization	15%
Government--American (any level)	15%
Foundation donor	14%
U.S. school	13%
International affiliate/chapter	11%
Business partners	10%
Other U.S. affiliate/chapter	7%
Cooperatives	6%
Retail partner	4%

In the United States, businesses and religious congregations are the most common organizational sources of cash donations and volunteers, with 1/3 of NGOs reporting connections to each. Most grassroots NGOs are not sophisticated enough in their programs or administrative structures to compete for grants from foundations. Of the 21 organizations in the sample that listed foundation donors, 13 of the organizations were at least 10 years old, with three of those significantly older, founded in the 1950s or '60s.

The most common relationships between businesses and NGOs are donor-client relationships, with businesses offering cash or in-kind donations. Nearly a third of NGOs list this kind of relationship, while a bit more than one in ten have some other kind of partnership with a business. A small number of NGOs partner with retailers to provide outlets for the sale of goods to benefit NGOs. Ten Thousand Villages shops are a familiar example. The goods for sale are

often cottage-industry products like jewelry, baskets, or paper crafts; high-end coffee is another popular item. The ability of NGOs to have their own online shops is partially obviating the need for these sort of brick-and-mortar retail partnerships. Indego Africa started by seeking out museum gift shops, but today the majority of its sales are either through its online store or contracts with retailers like Tom's Shoes.

Other network partners provide volunteers, knowledge resources, or public platforms for NGOs. Schools, universities, diaspora organizations, and Rotary Clubs fit this profile. As I will discuss in Chapter 8 these organizations are critical to the impact of NGOs on American communities, because they are outlets where NGOs frame the countries where they work and the nature of poverty. Small shares of NGOs report having chapters or affiliates elsewhere in the U.S. or abroad: for instance, Minnesota Uruguay Partners is a Partners of the Americas organization, a network of U.S.-Latin America civic exchange groups started during the Kennedy administration.

When "Government--American" is coded as a network partner, it refers to contact with any level (municipal, state, or federal) or agency of American government. Only three organizations in this sample report having won grants or contracts from USAID.³ As with foreign governments, sometimes the connections coded here are cameo appearances by an ambassador or congressman thanking the NGO for its efforts. More substantive relationships take one of two forms. One is a partnership or exchange program between municipalities in the United States and a country in the global South. The second are advocacy relationships vis-à-vis the U.S. government, where the NGO lobbies the government for political action on behalf of some constituency in the global South. Arts or artist organizations are among the network partners for one in five NGOs.

³ These were ACDI/VOCA (founded 1966, annual revenue \$13.8 million); Mercy USA (founded 1989, revenue \$7 million); and Weniruda Enterprise (founded 2010, revenue less than \$25,000).

Artists or arts organizations are common partners, but typically the art is being used as a fundraising tool. The sale of CDs, paintings, and photographs is a common fundraising technique. Music or dance groups—especially those with ties to the aid-receiving country—perform at fundraising events. Arts occasionally are the substance of the NGO's project; exchange groups like Partners of the Americas host foreign artists and exhibitions. Fundacion ALMA sees arts as integral to development, describing its mission as to “strengthen communities and promote peace through music and arts education.”

Conclusion

Most of the NGOs that have been established since 1990 do not issue annual reports or provide data on their programs to intermediary organizations. Absent a national survey, NGOs' websites provide the best sort of data on their foreign locations, projects, recipients, networks, and roles for private supporters.

American NGOs deviate from official foreign aid in their locations and seem to be guided less by sheer need than by linguistic, religious, and migrant affinities. Programs to provide education, medical supplies and personnel, small business training, and clean water are most popular. Websites must not be understood as a perfect audit of NGO practices, but these texts point to children and women as the most common aid recipients. Texts depict recipients of aid as individuals in difficult circumstances, but with a work ethic and ambitions for the future.

Some NGOs cite abstract rationales of justice or human rights for their work. The authorities of local government officials or scientific experts are less often invoked than divine authority: God's love or God's calling were used as a rationale for work by over a quarter of NGOs. Most often, though, NGOs rely on claims that humans are suffering and that others have a responsibility to respond.

American supporters are asked to help by donating money, goods, or time (either in the U.S. or in the aid-receiving country). Volunteer service ranges from the typical nonprofit roles of envelope stuffing and grant-writing to performing surgeries and mentoring businesswomen. NGOs also ask supporters to pray for them or to increase their visibility by following them on social media. Besides individual supporters, American NGOs partner with international and local NGOs, government agencies, foundations, religious congregations, Rotary Clubs, diaspora groups, and schools.

In many ways, the projects of contemporary NGOs do not stray far from the aims of private aid more than half a century ago: “health and clean water, plentiful crops, houses with tight roofs, the right and indeed the duty to learn, the ambition and the opportunity to get ahead without stepping too hard on the next man.” Although larger aid organizations have been transformed since the mid-20th century, as I describe in the next chapter, grassroots NGOs are shaped less by evolving expert knowledge than by the personal narratives of development held by Americans. Like the private aid providers of the 1950s, GINGOs are guided by the “memory that it is not so very long since Americans worked their own way out of primitive conditions, and of an insistent belief that the techniques which they found useful then may now also be useful elsewhere.”

Chapter 6

Exporting Bootstraps: GINGOs' Narratives of Development and Models of Aid

In development economist Angus Deaton's book *The Great Escape* there is a telling disjuncture between the opening chapter and those that follow. In the preface Deaton relays the story of his father, Leslie Harold, who was born in 1918 in an English coal mining town. Leslie trained with a British commando unit in World War II, but because of a bout with tuberculosis was spared participation in a disastrous 1942 raid on occupied Norway. After leaving the army he married a Scottish girl and studied at night to become a civil engineer; they scrimped and saved to leave grimy Edinburgh for the countryside, where Leslie nurtured young Angus to a scholarship at a prestigious private school. From there, the younger Deaton went on to Cambridge and eventually, to Princeton, where he now holds an endowed chair and is respected as one of the world's foremost development economists.

Deaton uses the story of his family's generational mobility to illustrate the magnificent gains in health and wealth enjoyed by much of the world's population starting in the late 18th century. He acknowledges that humankind's "great escape" from poverty has left more than a billion people behind, and in the last section of the book he addresses the possibilities of development aid to eliminate poverty in less-developed countries. His argument is that aid fails because it undermines the democratic institutions that foster long-term development. What is needed instead, according to Deaton, are technological advances—a malaria vaccine, for instance—, fairer deals in international trade negotiations, technical advice, and more generous migration policies. He says that well-meaning Americans would do best to advocate these solutions rather than volunteering their own time and money or lobbying wealthy countries to increase their foreign aid.

The beginning and the ending of Deaton's book exemplify opposing narratives about development. The latter is an *expert narrative*. Deaton differs from his colleagues in some particulars, but he represents basic points of consensus among social scientific experts on development. This expert narrative of development embraces the human capabilities approach pioneered by Sen (1999), which situates well-being through health, education, and democratic participation as both the *ends* and *means* of development. It emphasizes technical expertise and the legal, economic, and political institutions that create the infrastructure for growth and keep the state accountable to citizens (North 1990, Portes and Smith 2012, Rodrik 2006). From this perspective aid efforts must complement rather than supplant the development of local capacity.

This is the paradox of Deaton's book: expert narratives reject the apparent template for development laid out by Leslie Harold Deaton. The themes that emerge from the Deaton family's rise from poverty are good luck (a case of tuberculosis at the right moment), hard work (night school to achieve professional qualification), and a "hand up" from a charitable benefactor (Angus Deaton's scholarship to a private school). These themes constitute a *popular narrative* of development that, I argue, drives the efforts of the American grassroots NGOs established since 1990. This narrative explains development not as a case of developing the right institutions but as inciting individual mobility—in other words, of developing countries one Deaton at a time.

World society theory offers a helpful but incomplete account of how ideas drive the growth of NGOs. It explains NGO expansion with a neo-institutional logic of appropriateness that drives organizational elaboration. The "appropriate" principles are empowered actorhood and scientific authority, and as these are globalized, organizations are established to identify and remedy a host of social problems (Boli and Thomas 1997, Meyer and Jepperson 2000, Drori et al. 2003). The Americans who establish GINGOs act with an empowered sense of actorhood, and

their approach—indeed, their basic embrace of the development project—is rooted in a belief in social progress through rational action.

But world society theory pays to little attention to the nature of the global networks through which these ideas apparently pass. Globalization allows people to travel and communicate easily from the U.S. to the global South, albeit in networks that bear the imprint of historical patterns of trade, religion and empire. This easy interchange allows people to create personal networks that span global inequality and but bypass larger institutions that have traditionally mediated relationships between global North and South.

Grassroots aid organizations are distinct from the type of NGOs that have been the object of most scholarship, including work from the world society perspective, because they are based in these lateral personal networks that are relatively new products of globalization. While his focus was on “global imaginaries” broadly and not aid organizations, Appadurai (1996) anticipated the importance of these lateral networks to popular visions of development. He argued that migration and electronic media have displaced nation-states’ “megarhetoric of development” with “micronarratives” that re-write development “more as vernacular globalization and less as a concession to large-scale national and international policies” (23). In the last two decades, aid is being reimagined as a type of personal charity made possible by middle-class Americans’ newfound ability to travel and communicate in real time with poor citizens of the global South. These relationships are established even as grassroots NGO founders remain embedded in their careers and personal networks in the U.S., unlike full-time, trained aid workers whose orientation is to the professional field of development (Mosse 2011). Because they are largely self-financed and separated from the professional development field, and because they emerge from personal relationships, grassroots aid organizations reject expert

prescriptions and more systematized procedures in favor of aid approaches that are more expressive and personal. The lateral or grassroots networks of globalization allow Americans to transmit their folk ideas about how people move out of poverty.

This popular narrative of development is associated with particular ways of giving aid. Most GINGOs either directly deliver goods and services, or else focus on shaping the skills and subjectivities of aid recipients themselves. GINGOs are least likely—and less likely than traditional NGOs—to focus on strengthening social collectivities or building relationships between groups.

The next part of this chapter uses interviews with volunteers of NGOs to elaborate the popular development narrative that animates their work. I contrast it with the expert narrative of development favored by social science-informed policy experts. The latter section of the paper shows how the popular narrative shapes what grassroots NGOS *do*. Using a content analysis of aid groups' websites, I discuss a typology of aid, showing how the popular narrative helps account for aid projects that reject concerns of institution building in favor of providing goods and services or of developing individuals as religious, educated, or capitalist subjects.

Narratives of Development, Expert and Popular

The popular development narrative highlights individual transformation and the global diffusion of subjectivities and skills that enabled people in the global North to make their “great escapes.” Popular narratives of development are consistent with a focus on health and other capabilities emphasized by development experts, but they are largely indifferent to political processes, coordination with broader development efforts, and *institutions* broadly understood—all of them themes emphasized in the prescriptions of social scientists.

At the moment when the Asian financial crisis and the failed fast-track market reforms in the former Soviet states were eroding the Washington Consensus (Stiglitz 1999 and Broad 2004), an “institutional turn” (Portes and Smith 2012) was taking place among social scientists. The result was that experts came to converge on the importance of legal and political institutions to development: “We are all institutionalists now,” wrote economist Gerard Roland in 2004. The institutions that economists emphasized were the sort of market safeguards that had been taken for granted in highly developed Western economies: property rights, contract enforcement, corporate governance, government mechanisms to address unemployment (Acemoglu et al. 2001, North 1990, Rodrik 2006, Stiglitz 1999). Political institutions also came to be seen as critical, particularly because development objectives had expanded to include health and education, traditional responsibilities of the state. These institutions include participatory mechanisms whereby the civil society can engage the state (Baiocchi et al. 2008), offering clear signals of democratic preferences and feedback on the government’s performance (Evans 2004). That NGOs would be a catalyst for civil society mobilization was one of the promises of the initial NGO movement in the 1980s. After a period of embrace by development experts (Fisher 1997), NGOs’ place in the elite development narrative of the early 21st century hinges on their ability to work without undermining state-society relations or weakening local institutions (Brautigam and Knack 2004, Leonard & Straus 2003, Watkins et al. 2012, Wenar 2011).

In contrast to this expert development narrative that sees the routes to progress as historically and contextually specific, and that emphasizes civil society and robust local institutions, a popular development narrative highlights individual transformation and the direct transmission of subjectivities and skills that enabled people in the global North to make their “great escapes.” In the popular development narrative, adequate human knowledge exists; the

riddle of development is transferring that knowledge across borders from those who have it to those that do not. The popular development narrative differs from the expert narrative in several features: 1) it uses stories of American success as blueprints for individual mobility in less-developed countries; 2) it focuses on direct transfer of skills and subjectivities from Americans to aid recipients; 3) it understands sustainable development not as a question of developing institutions but as “investing” in individuals, who create social change through contagion. I illustrate these features of the popular narrative with evidence from interviews with GINGO volunteers.

The popular narrative depicts development as a basically universal process across time and place. As a result, the lessons learned from one’s own stories of social mobility are understood as reasonable blueprints for human development in the global South. The founder of Indego Africa explained that he looked to his grandmother’s biography in creating a women’s microenterprise project in Rwanda.

[T]here was a narrative from my family history that was very, what’s the word I’m looking for—not “entrepreneurial,” it’s not quite right. We would not be an entrepreneurial family, but a bootstrap family, I guess. My grandmother would be an inspiration. . . there are a lot of parallels between her life and the lives of the women that we support. She grew up on a farm. She went through 6th or 7th grade only because that’s what the family could afford to send her to. No running water in her house, no heating, none of those things. And she had to go out and eventually she did start her own business in catering that she used to support herself. . . So I would say our view of the world is shaped by that experience not only because it was women-driven but also because it was about taking advantage of opportunities. . . (Mitro)

Mirroring the story of the Deatons, leaders of other grassroots NGOs spoke of the need for aid recipients to seize opportunities. A board member of Wellsprings of Hope expressed her frustration over a Ugandan boy to whom she had provided a scholarship who had failed his exit examination three consecutive years. “I really had some serious discussions with him when I was

there last year. ‘I understand it's hard, but you have to take advantage of this... you have to raise your grades before I'm gonna spend that extra money to send you to boarding school.’ ”

This narrative holds that education and small business are demanding but achievable routes to success in any setting.

Popular narratives focus on direct transfer of skills and subjectivities (e.g. knowledge of water-borne illness) rather than on cultivating the local institutions (a government capable of maintaining public sanitation) that are needed to sustainably apply them. Later in recounting the story of his grandmother, Mitro specifically mentioned the libraries, schools, and political stability that allowed his grandmother to raise three sons successfully. But in explaining what he thought to be the most effective aid intervention, he emphasized transmitting skills:

AYS: What made you sort of move away from . . . a model that is more focused on institution building rather than sort of developing human capital?

Mitro: A few reasons. One, I think that the actual conduct of economic activity in business is really healthy and we—and I think that was also where our experience came from. Because really this was in many ways a joint project between my father and I in the beginning. **So I would say we were quite keen to pass on some of the skills and knowledge that we had.** We thought like actually helping them conduct business was a valuable form of training . . .

A recurring theme in interviews was the desire of well-educated NGO volunteers to diffuse their professional skills. This is the entire premise behind the Rwanda Ultrasound Initiative: extending training on diagnostic ultrasound from American to Rwandan doctors. One of the founders described her reaction to seeing unused equipment at Rwandan hospitals: “I found these machines, these two beautiful brand new machines off in some side room. I would be using that every second of the day, but if they don’t know how to use it then it’s totally wasted, and it’s this amazing technology.” Doctors (5) accountants (2), pastors (2), teachers (2),

a nurse, and a librarian all described in interviews their efforts to transmit their skills to African counterparts.

This transfer of professional skills—along with the more abstract dispositions like future planning, risk-taking, and problem-solving—is an appropriate intervention in a narrative that explains development as aggregated cases of individual mobility. Expert narratives—even those of economists—make space for spillover effects and emergence—but the popular narrative as articulated by NGO volunteers is relentlessly atomized. Broader social change happens through contagion as well-trained individuals go on spread their knowledge, gradually developing the nation from the bottom up. This pattern emerged in interviews to describe the impact of ultrasound-trained doctors, children educated in personal hygiene, religious primary schools, religious evangelism, village health workers, and youth in politics.

In the popular narrative the organizational nature of the state is minimized. Instead, the state is seen as a perch on which powerful persons sit, and the quality of government hinges on the character of the individual. NGO volunteers' discussions of government centered on corruption, which was framed as fundamentally a problem of character. When asked about the roles that government should play in development, respondents often spoke of government officials in terms of their personal integrity or as role models for citizens. One volunteer cited the presence of a government official at a ceremony for a private school opened by an NGO as providing an inspirational message for the children there: "I thought that was a very positive thing, to see somebody who was a Ugandan in a position, first off, a woman, who is educated, and is in a position of power, talking to them about their rights." In an extreme example of focus on personal character, one NGO volunteer explained the predatory reign of Idi Amin as damaging because of the example it set of sexual immorality:

I think that the reign of Idi Amin damaged that country so badly. He was a very poor role model as a father and as a husband; had many wives, and didn't -- you know he encouraged men to just take as many wives as they wanted and-- he was very corrupt.

NGO volunteers alternatively depict the state as feeble or as a site of corruption and an impediment to the direct transactions between aid givers and receivers. The volunteers described their work as taking the place of government services: “it's really stepping into the gap of what the government can't or won't do.” Yet when local or national governments attempted to fold NGO efforts into broader development schemes or to exert political control over their projects, volunteers expressed frustration at what they saw as unnecessary roadblocks to the primary goal of providing services and transferring knowledge. That transfer, to the recipients identified by the NGO, took precedence over the development of local institutions that could offer capability-enhancing services.

Grassroots NGOs' Models of Aid

Development narratives are prescriptive: they describe not only what development is, but what action by local and foreign actors will foster it. The popular narrative of aid suggests interventions aimed at the well-being of individuals, who in time can assist their families and neighbors. Grassroots aid organizations typically work with strong financial and logistical constraints. They need projects that can be executed on budgets in the tens of thousands of dollars per year, with the expertise that can be volunteered by Americans on a part-time basis, and executed by the local middlemen they can afford to pay.

Using the imperfect data source of aid organizations' websites, three discernible models of aid emerge. The first model has to do with the direct provision of goods and services; the second involves transmitting skills and subjectivities; and the third (and least associated with the

popular development narrative, for reasons I will discuss) engages aid recipients' social relations. As the descriptors suggest, these models are distinguished by the type of aid project, but I will show that these projects are associated with distinctive recipients, rationales, and roles for American supporters. Differences among the models on these dimensions is illustrated by Table 6.1 (see appendix), which gives relative frequencies for codes in these three broad areas. As before, *rationales* are defined as discursive acts that explain why something was done. In the context of aid groups' websites they are most often making an explicit claim of why particular people should be helped or why a particular intervention is appropriate. *Recipient* codes include both status categories (men, women, children/youth, orphans), and qualitative descriptions of aid recipients. Finally, *roles for U.S. supporters* refer to descriptions of action already taken by supporters or appeals for readers of the website to offer particular kinds of support to the organization. In this analysis each organization is assigned to one model according to its primary sector of work as determined by the qualitative coding. It was possible to assign a primary model to all but one group based on their websites for a usable *n* of 149. These models were developed inductively, and validated using the relative frequencies displayed in Table 6.1.

The goods/services and the subjectivities models, in particular, are consistent with assumption of the popular development narrative that the supply of wealth and knowledge in the world is sufficient, and that the task of aid should be to transfer them. The subjectivities model especially relies on the assumption that individual mobility is possible once a person acquires particular knowledge and dispositions.

The advantage of analyzing a probability sample of all registered relief, development, and human rights organizations is that it allows differences between what I have called GINGOs--relatively young, small budget, founded by individuals without professional aid experience--and

more traditional NGOs to emerge organically. Organizations working in the social relations model, which I define below as interventions that aim to empower marginalized social groups or to create partnerships between groups in other countries, are commonly traditional NGOs. Many of them are older and employ full-time staff. The social relations model also is employed by only 11% of NGOs. The strong majority of aid groups rely on models consistent with the popular development narrative—those that focus on directly providing the goods and services or on cultivating aid recipients’ skills and subjectivities.

Model #1: Direct Provision of Goods and Services

The most common model of aid (used by 53% of NGOs in the sample) involves direct provision of the goods and services that poor people lack. This can involve distributing the necessities of life like food and clothing, either in times of disaster or to the chronically needy. It also includes building housing or providing the sorts of infrastructure and capability-enhancing services that are typically the purview of the state: medical clinics and care, water, electricity, orphanages or foster homes. In other words, organizations working in this model stand in for the family or the state.

The sophistication with which these goods and services are distributed varies. Some organizations collect small items like pencils or soccer balls to be distributed as gifts when they arrive in country. Other organizations provide more sophisticated and large-scale redistributive schemes for American surplus items: several library projects move English-language books by the shipping container to Africa, while MedShare operates two warehouses in the U.S. where hospitals can donate surplus supplies and international NGOs can request them. The provision of services can be more durable—the building of wells or clinics, and in some cases, the training of

their staff. World Children's Initiative provided the expertise and funds for a new hospital in rural Sri Lanka and is organizing a scheme to train pediatric surgeons in East Africa.

Disaster relief organizations are part of this category. For traditional NGOs with capabilities like cargo flights or pop-up hospitals, the distinction between relief and development operations is apparent. The difference is less clear for grassroots aid groups. In a typical example, an organization that had made previous contact with a pastor in Haiti sent volunteers with donated stocks of clothing and medical supplies after the 2008 earthquake. As the months went on, volunteers would continue to come and would assist in an orphanage established by the pastor. For these grassroots NGOs both relief and development objectives were accomplished either by providing goods and services directly from American volunteers or through privately funding indigenous efforts with American dollars.

However, there is a distinction between relief and development projects in the discourse about recipients. Websites featuring relief projects tend to make few distinctions among recipients. But development organizations dealing with chronic poverty tend to emphasize marginalized populations—women, children, the sick—in their discourse. For all recipients, the rationales for aid tend to emphasize suffering. Compared with other models of aid, organizations working in this model rarely appeal to abstract principles (e.g. human rights) or elaborate political causes for disadvantage. Aid groups working in the goods and services model most often rely on the implicit claim that human suffering demands a response, and the texts themselves focus on explaining the source of the suffering, as in the text below:

In Senegal, and in much of Africa, there is a season that we do not experience. . . The Hungry Season. In many rural villages, families are reduced to one meal a day, and not even that. The hardship goes largely unnoticed because it is not a widespread famine. . . it is just a slow, gnawing, debilitating hunger that robs people of their energy and strength.

Then, the organization makes the claim for how their project is positioned to alleviate the suffering:

We at Anando hope we can be a small part of the solution. We are working at creating an environment in rural villages where people have enhanced ability to grow their own food, through micro lending, water security and education. There are no quick solutions, but village by village we hope to make a small difference along the way. (Anando)

The response that suffering seems to demand, according to this discourse, offers roles for Americans. These roles include the donation of goods and the logistical management of their transport from the U.S. American volunteers may also offer low-skill work (playing with children in orphanages is a common example) or high-skill interventions (cardiac surgery). These groups justify their presence by the imperative of the human need and the absence of indigenous providers: “Cameroon’s East region is sometimes characterized as ‘forgotten’ by politicians and development projects. . . Its ‘forgotten’ status is one major reason why Opportunity Africa chose to concentrate our work in the East.” (Opportunity Africa)

Model #2: Skills and Subjectivities

If the goods and services model can crudely be characterized as the “give a man a fish,” approach to development, the second model is about teaching a man to fish—more specifically, to have both the skills and the *initiative* to fish. What unifies this model is the attempt to alter aid recipients’ cognition and behavior--their desires, their habits, their strategies—so that they can eventually prosper on their own. Within this model I include three seemingly disparate types of programs: education, small business, and religious ministry. There are differences in the targeted recipients and in the techniques of intervention, but the unifying thread is an effort a)

that is about transforming the dispositions and behavior of recipients b) and therefore, by definition, is aimed squarely at individuals rather than collectivities.

Thirty-five percent of all NGOs in the sample primarily work in this model. They provide education (by directly operating schools, offering scholarships, or summer enrichment programs), give training for small business or offer microcredit, or engage in spiritual or religious ministries (evangelizing, teaching meditation techniques, building of churches).¹ The targeted recipients vary. Education projects target youth, predictably, while small business programs often target women. Religious ministry programs are more broadly aimed, though conservative Christian programs differ from other aid projects by reserving particular religious roles for male recipients. What all programs have in common is the discourse of transformation. Small business and microcredit organizations strive to build people's sense of initiative, risk-taking, and future planning. By making people more forward thinking and entrepreneurial, they can seize market opportunities and reap material and social gains. Small business and microcredit programs are depicted as offering women social empowerment vis-à-vis men; as providing self-esteem and dignity; as generating leadership qualities; and as driving overall change—economic and social—in the communities.

Education programs also aim to cultivate a work ethic and agile mind, though the particular tasks to which an educated youth will apply these traits is left unspecified. The theme is that an educated person is one that can “break the cycle of poverty.” The language of transformation is prevalent here as it is with business projects:

¹ In this sample, 18 organizations employed ministry as their primary method of aid. Eighteen additional organizations carried out “ministry” activities as secondary to other objectives, including one Buddhist group. Twenty-six additional organizations in the sample identified with some religious affiliation or as “faith-based,” but their projects did not include proselytizing, clergy training, or building and maintaining religious facilities.

Education offers children a way out of the cycle of poverty by giving children a broader range of choices for their lives. It provides individuals with the necessary tools to transcend poverty, to participate in their communities, and to provide a higher quality of life for themselves and future generations. (Wings of Peace)

Religious ministries aim to incite a devout subjectivity. Discourse on ministries' websites focuses less on a religious imperative to save souls² than on the earthly benefits for recipients. In addition to spiritual solace, aid recipients' newfound devoutness may lead to a reform in habits—or new network links—that yield income opportunities. American volunteers have a particularly important role to play in the religious variant of this model. The skills and subjectivities to be transferred here are not technical but *religious*; one need not be a surgeon to be useful. As a result, this model variant more than any other solicits Americans to travel as short term volunteers. Supporters who are unable to travel as volunteers are asked to support the ministry through prayer.

In the education and small business variants of this model, Americans have a less direct role. They are not directly providing goods or services; instead, they are promoting the cultivation of skills or ways of thinking among aid recipients. Americans tend to play complementary roles that offer incentives to the new subjectivities of aid recipients; they offer scholarships, or act as buyers for the products (e.g. fair trade coffee or artisan goods) that the nascent businesspeople market. Organizations working in this model were more likely than those in the goods and services model to cite as rationales abstract principles of human rights, justice, or gender equality. These are rationales that emphasize the *sameness* between recipients and donors rather than their differences, even as the projects themselves aim to make recipients

² Contrast the language used by the (American) Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions in 1894: "There is a great Niagara of souls passing into the dark in China. Every day, every week, every month....!" Quoted in Varg (1954).

more like donors. While religious variants tend to emphasize “God’s will” or “God’s love” in their rationales, their discourse too emphasizes sameness:

We do not want to go with the attitude of “doing” but of being with our friends, to learn from each other, to pray with and encourage each other, to partner with what God is already doing there. While we hope to accomplish a lot, we also hope to spend our time building relationship with Malawians, each other, and with God.
(Circle of Hope)

Perhaps it should not be surprising that organizations using this model are more apt than in any other to highlight recipients’ personal stories on their websites. These narratives trace the transformation of recipients’ material circumstances but also their hopes and plans for the future. Discourse about recipients in this model is more likely than in any other model to emphasize recipients’ “hard work” or “positive attitude.”

Model #3: Strengthen social groups or build relations between groups

Organizations in this model work on policy advocacy, capacity building, democratization, cultural exchange, and preserving cultural heritage. While improving the standard of living might be a long term goal, the more immediate intervention is to allow people to build collective skills or relationships that will empower them. This can mean building women’s groups capable of lobbying in local politics; it can be a children’s anti-corruption group; it can be shoring up Tibetan monasteries to preserve their traditional practices against Han Chinese pressure. Cultural exchange groups such as Partners of the Americas also fall into this category.

Organizations who aim to alter recipients’ relationships with institutions or other social groups face a fundamentally different task than those who aim to provide social services or needed goods. Here the needs and aspirations of individuals recede in favor of the fates of some collectivity. This model is primarily used by 11% of NGOs. Organizations that intervene *solely* at the level of social groups comprise only 4% of the sample, and they are immediately distinct

from other aid groups in the sample because their primary mode of activity is advocacy. Human Dignity International (formerly Christian Solidarity International) is part of an international coalition of groups advocating for the rights of Christian minorities outside of the West. The Washington Kurdish Institute advocates for the Kurdish ethnic minority in Iraq, while two organizations in the sample combine general political advocacy for Tibetan people with support for Tibetan Buddhist institutions in exile. The theme here is that these organizations are supporting the rights of political minorities. Of all of the organizations in the sample, these are the most explicitly political; they are led by well-educated members of diasporas and have strong political constituencies in the United States. But rather than engaging directly in politics in their home countries, these organizations operate in the manner of Keck and Sikkink's (1998) transnational advocacy groups, leveraging connections among powerful allies (here, the U.S., though some of these groups also have branches in Europe) for their political ends. They operate at the margins permitted within designation as a 501(c)3 public charity, so their public language must be carefully chosen to remain within the discursive framework of human rights advocacy rather than political lobbying.

Other organizations aim to build more equitable and collaborative relationships between Americans and communities in the global South through exchange and service programs. Minnesota Uruguay Partners (a Partners of the America chapter), Amigos de las Americas, the Wallace Toronto Foundation and Global Routes all operate exchange or volunteer trips for Americans to communities in the global South. While the American visitors often take part in some service project, that project is a means to the broader end of international friendship and solidarity. In the case of the Wallace Toronto Foundation, the social groups whose relationships are to be transformed can be pinpointed: the goal is to improve relations between the LDS church

and the Czech and Slovak republics. Mormon missionaries had fled the country in World War II and returned, according to official accounts, after the fall of the iron curtain. The Toronto foundation, named for the founding LDS missionary in Czechoslovakia, returns with volunteer groups each summer to engage in a service project designated by municipal leaders. Foundation volunteers also assisted in the petition effort for legal recognition of the LDS church under Slovak law.

These organizations are older on average than those working in other models: the mean founding for organizations intervening in social relations is 1998, compared with the overall sample mean of 2003. Among these are longstanding exchange programs Amigos de las Americas and a Partners of the Americas branch based in Minnesota. These partnership groups represent a departure from the popular narrative of development, and embrace something more like a pan-national understanding of development that relies on partnerships for mutual improvement. A handful of groups engage in transnational advocacy, and only one, the Cabeceras Aid Project, takes building political capacity as a primary goal. These groups not only represent a minority of NGO approaches, but they also hold a declining market share among NGO models since 1990. They also represent a disproportionately small share of NGO revenues. Though NGOs working primarily on social relations comprised 11% of the sample in webpages, their income comprised less than 1% of NGO gross receipts.

Discussion

The period since 1990 has seen an ascendance in the *popular narrative of development* as Americans have had increased direct access to the global South and formed personal relationships that straddle global inequality. The popular narrative of development focuses on

individual mobility, and sees development as the aggregated effect of individual progress. Because individuals are the unit of analysis, the popular narrative makes possible the transferring of templates for individual mobility in the global North to the global South. Where elite narratives might have focused on the legal and political institutions that facilitate individual mobility, the popular narrative emphasizes the skills and dispositions that the individual must acquire to be successful. From this perspective, the riddle of development is not the creation of locally-appropriate institutions or technology, but the transfer of existing knowledge across borders to those who purportedly need it. In this narrative the state is largely envisioned as enfeebled or corrupt.

This popular narrative is a variant of what Deaton calls a “hydraulic” approach to aid: an assumption that development is a technical problem. If aid is pumped in, development will pump out. A contribution of this chapter is to show that Americans involved in GINGOs see that technical problem as one about which they have personal knowledge. They believe that the goods that they have should be enjoyed by others, and that the skills and subjectivities that have allowed them to enjoy success can be piped across borders.

This chapter offers evidence that this popular narrative finds material expression in the models of aid used by American NGOs. Less than 11% of organizations orient themselves towards the social relations that affect development, and that figure is even smaller among grassroots aid organizations. The most common type of organizations aim to provide goods and services to the underserved privately, taking on the responsibilities of the family or the state. By using discourse that emphasizes the suffering of aid recipients, they encourage impatience with politics and local solutions. Another common approach is to transmit the skills and subjectivities—religious, educated, and capitalist—that Americans understand to be essential to

their mobility. These organizations highlight the personal qualities of dedication and optimism in their recipients. In justifying their work they appeal to abstract principles of gender equality and human rights, using arguments that emphasize the equivalent aspirations of aid donors and recipients.

As we assess grassroots NGOs' potential contributions to development, we might ask whether the popular and expert narratives of development are ultimately complementary. Large development agencies and the international financial institutions now attempt to engage small civil society organizations in an effort to improve governance.³ After all, the call for robust political, legal, and economic institutions is part of a vision of development in which the state provides this infrastructure, and free associations (democracy) and free markets (capitalism) become sites for citizens to produce their own collective goods (Hwang 2006, p. 84, Evans 2004). Small aid organizations are consistent with decentralized development that rejects state planning and leaves development strategy to individuals and organizations (Hwang 2006).

Evaluating the merits of that approach is a task too large to approach here, but there are reasons to question whether grassroots aid organizations can function in this manner. If grassroots aid organizations are to be part of either democratic associational life or a market of service providers, they need to be able to read signals of preference/demand. While GINGOs are indeed nimble and efficient, it can be difficult for them to create meaningful mechanisms of accountability to their clients. The Americans who run these organizations often visit for only weeks a year, and rely on what Swidler and Watkins (2008) call local "brokers" to implement the

³ See, for example, the World Bank's new Global Partnership for Social Accountability. It funds "civil society organizations"—in practice, often foreign NGOs-- "to create an enabling environment in which citizen feedback is used to solve fundamental problems in service delivery and to strengthen public institutions." (<http://www.thegpsa.org/sa/>)

work and give feedback. The primary axis of accountability is between the organizations' founders and the small individual donors—usually friends and family—who support the projects. The ability of grassroots aid groups to work sustainably is also in question. Among the five case studies, when leaders spoke about sustainability what they talked about was looking for local revenue streams, but none of the five had been able to tackle that problem. On websites other groups reframe the problem of sustainability by claiming that investment in human skills will somehow ensure continued progress. Thus, even within a framework of decentralized development the contributions of grassroots aid groups are constrained because they lack structures that make them sustainable or locally accountable. But the deliberate effort to provide aid on a small scale, to (somewhat-)known others using scripts from one's own success suggests something about how global economic inequality is popularly interpreted.

While economists debate the methodological issues in measuring income inequality and prescribe changes in macroeconomic policy, non-experts are traveling to parts of the world where they encounter poverty in stark and tangible terms. Policies related to trade or monetary policy seem coldly esoteric to the American that encounters makeshift huts and latrines on a volunteer trip to Haiti. In these dyadic comparisons, the persistence of inequality is the salient fact. We know that globalized media can increase senses of relative deprivation by shifting the reference group with which people compare their standard of living from neighbors to glamorous “others” in television and films. Yet inequality made visible through travel and media can also produce feelings of relative affluence. The popular narrative of development wielded by grassroots aid groups is an attempt to make sense of American volunteers' relative affluence, and to account for it in terms that offer the same hopeful possibilities for the aid recipient.

In other words, in a world where the gap in the standards of living between Leslie Harold and Angus Deaton is not a matter of a century but a six-hour flight, the slow and difficult expert prescriptions for development are often unsatisfying. Grassroots aid is an improvised, imperfect, personal, human response to the inequality people can now witness thanks to globalization. Cool-eyed Angus Deaton recognizes that an individual's escape from poverty is a morally compelling story; for better and worse, expert aid strategies will have to contend with the everyday Americans who want to help bring those stories about.

Table 6.1**Frequencies of Codes for Rationales, Recipients, and Roles for US Supporters by Aid Model**

	Goods and Services	Skills and Subject- ivities	Social Relations			
			<u>Business*</u>	<u>Education*</u>	<u>Ministry*</u>	
<i>Rationales</i>						
Suffering	0.42	0.34	0.46	0.33	0.17	0.06
War	0.14	0.08	0.04	0.06	0.17	0.12
Gender inequality	0.04	0.15	0.19	0.17	0.11	0.06
Justice	0.09	0.17	0.23	0.23	0.17	0.25
Gods love	0.25	0.36	0.15	0.30	0.94	0.13
Human rights	0.10	0.13	0.27	0.20	0.06	0.38
Outside Oppression	0.04	0.02	0	0	0.06	0.44
Political strife	0.09	0.15	0.11	0.17	0.17	0.31
<i>Recipients</i>						
Women	0.35	0.43	0.65	0.20	0.33	0.38
Men	0.10	0.21	0.23	0.10	0.22	0.19
Youth	0.64	0.66	0.58	0.83	0.72	0.44
Orphans	0.43	0.26	0.27	0.30	0.39	0.06
Kind/good/hospitable	0.21	0.23	0.35	0.30	0.22	0.19
Deprived	0.43	0.40	0.53	0.50	0.22	0.19
Future ambitions	0.13	0.26	0.35	0.37	0.11	0.13
Hardworking	0.14	0.42	0.58	0.53	0.11	0.06
Positive attitude	0.11	0.23	0.27	0.33	0.17	0.06
Universalism	0.15	0.23	0.35	0.30	0	0
Transformed by project	0.09	0.17	0.23	0.33	0.33	0.19
Referred to by work role	0.05	0.15	0.27	0.07	0.06	0.06
<i>Roles for US supporters</i>						
Donate money	0.89	0.94	1.00	0.97	0.89	0.69
Donate goods	0.31	0.19	0.15	0.23	0.17	0.06
Pray	0.13	0.25	0.04	0.17	0.67	0.06
Volunteer US	0.33	0.34	0.31	0.30	0.28	0.19
Volunteer abroad	0.31	0.42	0.46	0.33	0.56	0.31
<i>Subtotal n</i>			26	30	18	
<i>Total n</i>	80	53				16

*Subcategories of the Skills and Subjectivities model are not mutually exclusive. Website texts described projects in multiple subsectors, but it was not always possible to link discourse about recipients or rationales with particular projects.

Table 6.2 NGOs Included in Website Sample (n=150)

Name	Year of IRS Registration	Gross Receipts*	Primary Aid Model
7 Day Hero	2010	0	Goods/Services
A Bridge For Africa Foundation	2005	369,556	Skills/Subjectivities
A Childs Hope International Inc.	2009	732,834	Goods/Services
A Glimmer Of Hope Foundation	2001	18,402,778	Goods/Services
A Touch Of Love Foundation	2000	137,622	Goods/Services
Abandoned Little Angels-Nhom Tinh Thuong	2004	204,454	Goods/Services
Abraham's Tent	2008	0	Goods/Services
ACDIVOCA	1966	138,000,000	Skills/Subjectivities
Africa Hope	2009	9,800	Goods/Services
Africa In Mind Inc.	2008	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Africa Resurrection And Restoration Ministries	2008	0	Skills/Subjectivities
African Leadership Inc.	2001	4,520,478	Skills/Subjectivities
Ahope For Children	2010	317,002	Goods/Services
Alternative Medicine International	2010	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Amigos De Las Americas	1980	29,190	Social Relations
Andando Foundation	2009	139,246	Goods/Services
Antahkarana Society International	2005	0	Social Relations
Baobei Inc.	2009	0	Goods/Services
Barrels Of Love Inc.	2009	0	Goods/Services
Benevolent Missions International	1992	551,264	Goods/Services
BFA Library Project	1999	15,979	Goods/Services
Bharathi Theertha	2007	0	Goods/Services
Biblical Missions Incorporated Nfp	2010	129,432	Skills/Subjectivities
Blue Marble Dreams Inc.	2011	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Books For Africa	1993	23,800,000	Skills/Subjectivities
Bridge 2 Rwanda	2008	951,653	Skills/Subjectivities
Cabeceras Aid Project	1997	0	Social Relations
Cafe Femenino Foundation	2007	71,877	Skills/Subjectivities
Capacitar Inc.	1995	176,228	Skills/Subjectivities
Central African Republic Renaissance Foundation Inc.	2007	0	Goods/Services
Central Brazil Mission Inc.	1975	1,140,191	Skills/Subjectivities
Childfund International USA	1951	245,064,261	Goods/Services
Children's Dental Care International	2002	316,890	Goods/Services
Childrens Opportunity Foundation	2008	70,069	Skills/Subjectivities
Christian Solidarity International Inc.	1999	739,209	Social Relations
Circle Of Hope International	2010	0	Skills/Subjectivities
CMJ USA	2002	323,458	Skills/Subjectivities
Comfort Aid International	2006	1,641,226	Goods/Services
Congo Global Action	2010	100,132	Social Relations
Connecting Connection	2001	54,204	Goods/Services
Cotton Tree Foundation Inc.	2008	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Crimes Of War Education Project	1999	789	Social Relations
Cuban American Military Council	1998	0	Social Relations
Cunningham Foundation	2003	191,101	Goods/Services
Direct Connect Humanitarian Aid	1989	98,618	Goods/Services
Discover The World	1994	863,778	Goods/Services
Eco Africa Social Ventures Inc.	2007	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Educating Africans For Christ Inc.	2010	201,382	Skills/Subjectivities

Families In Vietnam	2005	50,495	Goods/Services
Farafina	2009	0	
Financiers Without Borders	2010	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Five For Water Foundation Inc.	2010	0	Goods/Services
Flagstaff International Relief Effort F I R E	2002	105,430	Goods/Services
Forum For Information Technology Initiatives Incorporated	2004	2,290	Goods/Services
Foundation For International Medicine	2008	0	Goods/Services
Friends Of Rancho De Ninos	1996	78,825	Goods/Services
Friends Of UNIFAT	2009	75,363	Skills/Subjectivities
Fundacion Alma Inc.	2010	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Gansu Inc.	1991	365,424	Goods/Services
Global Connections Project	2010	0	Goods/Services
Global Environmental Relief Incorporated	2010	0	Goods/Services
Global Partnerships	2003	4,765,574	Skills/Subjectivities
Global Passion Mission	2010	0	Goods/Services
Global Routes	1990	154,493	Social Relations
Gods Grace Ministries Nfp	2004	16,134	Skills/Subjectivities
Golden Bridge Association Inc.	2010	0	Social Relations
Grandmothers Raising Grandchildren Inc.	2008	0	Goods/Services
Grwks Inc.	2010	0	Goods/Services
Guyana Medical Relief	1993	45,389	Goods/Services
Healing 2 The Nations International	2009	51,340	Skills/Subjectivities
Help Makwanpur Foundation	2009	0	Goods/Services
Henri Riquet Perpignand Foundation Inc.	2010	0	Goods/Services
High Cloud Foundation	2008	0	Goods/Services
Hope Charities Inc.	2001	41,233	Goods/Services
Hope International Relief And Development Agency	1997	0	Goods/Services
Hope Seeds Inc.	1999	292,717	Skills/Subjectivities
House On The Hill Inc.	2010	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Human Dignity International	1999	40,789	Social Relations
Imaging The World Corp	2009	561,996	Goods/Services
Institute Of Global Education	1984	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Island Aid	2007	0	Goods/Services
Isuikwuato Progressive Union	2004	0	Goods/Services
Jerusalem Foundation	1966	12,900,000	Goods/Services
Kellermann Foundation	2006	510,954	Goods/Services
Kids Matter International	2008	504,968	Goods/Services
Kopernik Solutions	2011	51,510	Goods/Services
La Luz De Cristo Ministries Inc.	2010	445,725	Goods/Services
Last Frontiers Mission Nfp	2003	140,338	Skills/Subjectivities
Light Of The World Charities	1999	339,777	Goods/Services
Macaya Foundation Inc.	2010	0	Goods/Services
Mats	1998	151,976	Goods/Services
Medicine And Beyond	2010	0	Goods/Services
Medshare	1999	18,200,000	Goods/Services
Mercy Airlift	1992	0	Goods/Services
Mercy-USA	1989	7,014,034	Goods/Services
Mezzi Foundation Inc.	2010	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Minnesota Uruguay Partnership	1991	9,704	Social Relations
Missions Of Grace	1996	26,180	Goods/Services
Mothers Fighting For Others Inc.	2009	0	Goods/Services
Moving Windmills Project Inc.	2008	185,430	Skills/Subjectivities

Myles Of Great Hopes	2009	4,620	Goods/Services
Nechung Foundation	1997	40,870	Social Relations
Nepal House Society - Us Chapter Inc.	2011	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Nicaraguan Relief Society	1979	0	Goods/Services
OB Mexico Inc.	2006	23,311	Skills/Subjectivities
OMID USA Inc.	2010	0	Goods/Services
One Acre Fund	2006	3,638,567	Skills/Subjectivities
Onemaker Inc.	2008	15,992	Skills/Subjectivities
Oneseventeen Inc.	2011	0	Goods/Services
Opportunity Africa	2010	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Overseas Helping Hands	2005	108,693	Skills/Subjectivities
Partners With Haiti	1981	626,385	Skills/Subjectivities
Pathways Africa	2010	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Power Of One Ministry	2009	0	Goods/Services
Proyecto Bienestar	2008	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Rainbow World Mission Inc	2004	15,242	Goods/Services
Read For Kids Donate To Kids Inc	2006	23,100	Goods/Services
Rebuild Southern Africa Association Inc	2008	0	Goods/Services
Sahasra Deepika	1997	71,302	Skills/Subjectivities
Shic Inc Asian Health Services Exchange	2001	91,120	Goods/Services
Shining City Foundation Inc	2004	60,471	Goods/Services
Soup By The Yard	2009	0	Goods/Services
St. David's Relief Foundation	1993	110,307	Goods/Services
Step Of Faith Ministry Inc	2006	0	Goods/Services
Suba Yo Foundation For Women And Children	2008	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Sustainable Collective Solutions Inc	2009	56,381	Goods/Services
The Foundation For A Civil Society Ltd	1984	497,061	Social Relations
The Human Relief Organization	2010	563,600	Goods/Services
Threads Of Hope Africa Inc	2008	82,143	Skills/Subjectivities
TMAGC Inc	2011	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Trans Africa Partners Inc	2008	0	Goods/Services
Udhyami Nepali	2011	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Uganda Hope Africa	2010	0	Goods/Services
Unite Foundation	2009	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Village School Foundation	2003	0	Skills/Subjectivities
Virtis Inc	2011	0	Goods/Services
Wallace Toronto Foundation	2005	0	Social Relations
Washington Kurdish Institute	1997	199,211	Social Relations
We R Love	2010	0	Goods/Services
Wells Of Hope International Inc	2010	0	Goods/Services
Weniruda Enterprise	2010	0	Skills/Subjectivities
What Better Looks Like Inc	2011	5,950	Skills/Subjectivities
White Dove Foundation	1997	64,270	Skills/Subjectivities
Wings Of Peace	2006	0	Goods/Services
Women Work Together	2010	0	Social Relations
Womens Entrepreneurship Initiative	2008	0	Skills/Subjectivities
World Birth Aid	2010	300	Goods/Services
World Childrens Initiative Inc	2006	651,440	Goods/Services
Youth 4 The Kingdom A Non Profit Corporation	2010	224,694	Skills/Subjectivities
Yspaniola Incorporated	2009	0	Skills/Subjectivities

Source: July 2012 IRS Business Master File via the National Center for Charitable Statistics

Chapter 7

What Religion Affords Grassroots NGOs: Frames, Modes of Action, Networks

When I founded For Kenya's Tomorrow¹ I purposely did not found it as a religious organization for a couple of different reasons. . . it comes with a certain connotation I guess you can say. And I didn't want anybody who wanted to come and serve to feel left out. Do you know what I mean? Whether or not you are a Christian or a Muslim, or a Jew or whatever, I wanted it to be an open door for people to come and serve. Not limited to any type of religion. And I also felt, too, like in my conversations with God that God was just saying to me that there are so many Christian organizations that are out there doing things in my name that aren't a true representation of really who I am. So just lead by example. And that's kind of how I felt about it, too.

Natalie, the 30-year-old founder of For Kenya's Tomorrow, illustrates the difficulty in designating an international aid group as religious. Both Natalie and her Kenyan husband and their families are Pentecostals; her husband's mother is the pastor of a small Nairobi church that is the key partner for aid activities, and the bulk for FKT's funding and volunteers come from Natalie's childhood church in Michigan. A recent newsletter punctuates the group's successes with the exclamation "PRAISE JESUS!"

And yet Natalie does not describe For Kenya's Tomorrow as a "faith-based" or "religious" NGO. For her, to claim to be a "religious organization" is to be a group that restricts participation to those who share the same faith or that only offers its services to fellow believers. It also suggests that an organization is claiming a divine mandate for its work—"doing things in my name." She fears that Christian groups abuse this mantle, "doing things. . . that aren't a true representation of who I [God] really am." To be more authentically Christian, then, is to eschew the label of "religious" but to "lead by example." What it means to be a "religious" aid group, and the question of what religion brings to international relief and development, is more complex

¹ Pseudonym substituted for the organization's true name.

than popular discussions of faith-based organizations or the recent policy enthusiasm for “religion and development” suggest.

A question that frequently emerges in conversations about small American NGOs is, “Aren’t a lot of these groups religious?” The short answer is yes. The long answer, which I pursue in this chapter is, “Yes, but there is a great deal of variation in the role religion plays.” This variation is worth pursuing because it underscores the difference between older religious providers of aid, which had clear denominational identities, and grassroots NGOs, which are the projects of entrepreneurs who draw on multiple identities and resources. This analysis of what religion affords NGOs also helps by moving away from the religious essentialism that hovers in aid policy literature, instead depicting religion as something people do, with implications for how aid is delivered.

In this chapter I identify three things that religion affords GINGOs. First, it provides *frames*, or ways of thinking and speaking about relief and development work that imbue it with legitimacy. Next, religion affords *modes of action* that link the NGO, supporters, and local aid recipients. Finally, religion can offer *networks* that provide money and volunteers and that provide entrée into aid-receiving communities.

Before making that argument, I draw a contrast with older forms of religious relief and development aid that were based in the United States. I also situate the emergence of grassroots NGOs in a historical period that roughly aligns with an emerging interest by policy makers in “religion and development” and in faith-based nonprofits generally.

Traditional Forms of Religious Aid and The Policy Questions they Provoke

Grassroots NGOs have grown in numbers in the same period when older development organizations, and subsequently academic studies of development, have given increased attention to the role of religion in development. The World Bank under James Wolfensohn initiated the World Faiths Development Dialogue, which later found an academic home at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University. Subsequently the Swiss, Swedish, and British foreign aid agencies launched various initiatives related to the role of religion in development. (The American foreign aid agency, USAID, was meanwhile included in the Bush administration's broader effort to engage faith-based organizations with federal agencies.) The dearth of articles related to religion in academic development journals—ver Beek (2000) found only one in the three top development journals from 1982 to 1998—has been replaced by a number of articles in *Third World Quarterly*, the *Journal of International Development* and *Progress in Development Studies*; a review on religion and development in *World Development*; and a special themed issue of *Development in Practice*.

Jones and Juul Peterson (2011) observe in a review of this literature a focus on faith-based organizations, which assumes a clear distinction between “faith-based” and “secular” groups. This dichotomy is a vestige from the post-war era when denominational aid organizations were the dominant religious actors on the aid scene (King 2012). The American Friends Service Committee, the Joint Jewish Distribution Committee, Catholic Relief Services, Church World Service, and Lutheran World Relief were all established during or immediately after the World Wars. According to Smith (1990), nearly two-thirds of all private overseas aid was administered by church-associated organizations between 1946 and 1953 (p. 50). These groups had relief as their original mandates, and pivoted toward long-term social and economic

development in Africa, Latin America, and Asia the 1950s. (This is to say nothing of the scores of European and North American missionary organizations, founded from the late 18th to the early 20th century, that had long mixed social welfare with evangelization [Smith 1990].) Organizations from this era were bureaucracies with clearly recognizable religious identities.

But in the decades since, the field of international aid has changed, and with it what it means to be a “religious” organization. The barriers to entry in the aid field have been lowered in the last three decades thanks to cheap container shipping and international flights, email, and broad cell phone coverage. Foreign missions no longer demand months of provisioning and a lifetime commitment; cell phones and email free aid groups from depending on field offices situated within the limits of postal delivery and phone lines. The consequence is that aid organizations can now be launched by a motivated individual with a handful of backers. To make a comparison, would-be aid workers no longer need to join a firm—they can launch a start-up. Rather than being stamped with the imprimatur of a sending organization (government/voluntary, religious/secular), grassroots aid groups like For Kenya’s Tomorrow reflect the multivalent interests and orientations of their founders.

The entrepreneurial rather than bureaucratic nature of grassroots NGOs gives founders broad latitude in shaping their programs, allowing them to draw on “cultured capacities” (Swidler 2001) learned from work, family, or religious life. But the entrepreneurial freedom of grassroots NGOs is also bound up with necessity. Founders must generate support for their projects—typically from individual donors rather than government contracts or large foundation grants. Religion offers useful resources here. The leaders of NGOs can describe their projects in ways that conjure religious legitimacy, draw on actions of giving and volunteering that supporters have learned in religious contexts, and seek resources in networks of religious

organizations and their members. Religion thus functions in important symbolic and material ways for grassroots NGOs. Yet Natalie's words show that dichotomies between "faith-based" and "secular" organizations are difficult, and when made by an analyst, even misleading. Instead of assuming that "religious people" or "religious organizations" will behave in certain ways, I consider here what religion might contribute to their tool kits.

To illustrate this claim that religion affords grassroots NGOs frames, modes of action, and networks, I draw on the hand-coded sample of NGO websites, case study interviews, and topic modeling. The topic modeling generated 24 substantive topics from the corpus. Among these are topics about child sponsorship, ecology, human rights, foreign policy, war, humanitarian relief, and Christian ministry. (A listing of the ten most prevalent terms for each topic are given in Table 7.1.) The proportion of each document (website) constituted by each topic was also determined. I define a topic as being present in a document if 5% of the document's text is assigned to that topic.² In the subsequent analysis I discuss the relative prevalence of the Christian ministry topic and its relationship to other topics in the text.

In this article I refer especially to the codes about network ties; rationales, which signal religious framing; and codes for network partners, in which religious congregations figure prominently. (See Chapter 5 for the overall frequencies of these codes in the sample.) The topic modeling, content analysis, and case studies make different tradeoffs of scope and detail and offer different evidence for this analysis. Content analysis supports the discussion of frames, modes of action, and networks, while topic modeling is used only in the discussion of frames,

² The 5% threshold was chosen as a result of internal validation. For a number of substantive topics I chose documents with topics present at a number of potential thresholds (30%, 25%, 20%, etc.) and read the documents to see whether the topic seemed to substantively describe the document's contents. The seemingly low threshold reflects the high k value, the alpha value of $=.01$ (lower alpha values "assign" content across more topics), and the fact that the texts are "messy" relative to other texts commonly use in topic modeling, as I describe in Chapter 2.

and the case studies are invoked in the modes of action and networks sections. Taken together, these three forms of data offer a triangulated view of the cultural and material resources that religion affords grassroots NGOs.

What Religion Affords Grassroots NGOs: Frames

Most broadly, religion offers the leaders of grassroots NGOs *frames*: ways of organizing, rendering meaningful, and simplifying the problems of global poverty and the group's proposed solutions. The projects that grassroots NGOs carry out could be (and historically have been) framed in several ways. Schooling and agriculture were framed as "civilizing" processes under colonial regimes, and in the post-World War II era as part of "modernization," and most recently as "development" or "poverty alleviation" (Ferguson 2000; Frank and Meyer 2007). Religion affords leaders of grassroots NGOs the capacity to frame these tasks as part of religious traditions of charity, altruism, or mission.

By *frame* I mean "a lens through which we observe and interpret social life. . . [that can] highlight certain aspects of social life and hide or block others" (Small et. al 2010 p. 14). The concept rests on Goffman's (1974) insight that people use schemas—mental structures that organize—to "locate, perceive, identify, and label" events in their lives (p. 21). Social movement theorists Snow and Benford (1988, 1992) emphasize that framing is something that is *done*. It is a meaning-making process of guiding perceptions, of interpreting "what is going on" or "what *should be* going on" (Benford and Snow 2000, p. 614). In interviews and in website texts, NGO leaders can draw on religious discourse to frame aid work in ways that align with audiences' existing schemas. Just as McLean's (1998) Renaissance-era letter-writers drew on a number of culturally-available frames to define their relationships to their prospective patrons,

NGO leaders can use religious frames in their discourse to define their work for their prospective supporters. Audiences can come to understand donations to NGOs as *zakat* or alms. Needs can be framed as prayer requests, while successes and failures can be framed as God's answers to prayers.

Effective frames work with participants' existing schemas, with frames providing a bridge or "footing" that brings together the writer and the reader's understandings of events (Benford and Snow 2000, p. 614). Thus, efforts by NGOs to use religious frames are more likely to succeed if American audiences' schemas about the religiously good or desirable already include international outreach. Wuthnow's (2009) study of the outreach of American religious congregations suggests that this is the case. He reports that four out of five American churchgoers said that "helping people who live in other countries" is something their congregation emphasizes "some" or "a lot." Three-quarters said that their congregation has offered financial support for missionaries, while nearly half said their congregation has sent a short-term mission team abroad in the last year. Importantly, these international outreach efforts are understood to include social welfare: four out of ten respondents said that the church should give "some" emphasis to suffering caused by hunger, AIDS, and other illnesses, and an additional four in ten said the church should give "a lot" of emphasis to these issues. In his history of evangelical humanitarianism, King (2012) points out that religious media and parachurch groups have also shaped Americans' ideas about the relationship between religion and global poverty. The point here is that framing NGO work as "religious" relies on audiences' existing schemas that classify international outreach as a legitimate religious task.

Religious language is a common feature of NGO websites, and it is used to frame projects ranging from training clergy to providing water. In the LDA topic model, one of the 24

substantive topics that emerged was one that I labeled “Christian ministry.” It had as its most common terms, in descending order: *church, ministry, mission, God, Christian, prayer, Jesus, praise, missionary, pastor, Christ, faith*. This topic appeared in 1,670, or 25%, of the websites analyzed. Some of the groups who use this language work explicitly and exclusively on evangelistic tasks: proselytizing, training clergy, and so on. But in many cases the language is used to frame programs that are not inherently religious or secular. Of websites where the Christian ministry topic is present, 53% feature the “community development” topic, 24% the “humanitarian relief” topic, 44% the “child sponsorship” topic, and 21% the “microenterprise” topic.

The hand-coded sample of 150 websites confirmed that religious language was used to frame a variety of projects. Of these 150 sites, the rationales given by 41 of these groups related to enacting God’s will or demonstrating God’s love. Of these, 28 were carrying out the sort of Christian evangelistic tasks described above, typically in concert with social welfare projects. Of the remaining 13, two carried out social welfare and acts of Islamic charity (described at greater length in the next section), and 11 worked on orphanage, water, library, political advocacy, or microenterprise projects with no evangelistic component³.

Consider the organization Living Water International: topic modeling shows its website to be comprised of mainly of topics for water (81%) and Christian ministry (5%). On a page of the site titled “Why Water?,” the organization offers a number of reasons why water and sanitation are pressing issues for development. The page cites statistics on water-born illness from the World Health Organization and the medical journal *The Lancet*: water-related diseases

³ In addition, three groups worked on projects to aid Tibetan Buddhist institutions, but the language of rationale for these groups was about preserving cultural heritage.

cause 2.2 million deaths a year, and roughly 2,000 children succumb to diarrheal diseases each day in Africa. But the most prominent text on the page frames water in terms of the gospel:

For Living Water it's all about Jesus. It's about demonstrating God's love, announcing his kingdom, seeing Jesus in the least of our brothers and sisters, offering a cup of water in Jesus' name and proclaiming his gospel, the living water.

Helping communities create sustainable water, sanitation, hygiene, and Christian witness programs in partnership with local churches is just the best way we've found to do that. Why? Because the water crisis affects poverty, women, health and education—and for us it's a spiritual issue.

The NGO's name and this text refer to two passages in the gospel of John where Jesus speaks of living water: "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" (John 7:37-38, AV). The group uses claims from development experts about the effect of water shortages on women, health, education, and poverty. But using the phrase "living water" invokes the ministry of Jesus and suggests to the reader that digging wells is in continuity with that ministry. The allusion is what allows the group to say "for us it's a spiritual issue," and to enlist supporters on the basis of the project's religious bona fides.

Tying a project to a passage of scripture is one way to frame it as "religious." Other techniques are to describe the project as a vessel of God's love, or to claim that it arose from God's call to an individual to carry it out. Even projects without an explicit Biblical link or in common traditions of religious charity can be framed as expressions of God's love, as seen by the discourse of an NGO doing women's enterprise projects:

OneMaker exists to be a tangible expression of God's love to poor women and girls vulnerable to trafficking and other exploitation by giving opportunities through education and business ventures. We provide educational sponsorships to girls in poverty, believing their God-given potential is a treasure and should be developed.

In this text, “potential”—intellectual and economic—is a gift from God, and programs that support that potential are an extension of God’s love.

It is not uncommon in these texts for NGO leaders—or volunteers for the organization, posting blogs or comments on the website—to offer narratives of God “calling” them to start the organization or to engage in a particular kind of work. In one example, the leader of a group that operates orphan programs in Africa blogs about a late-night prayer session where she is told to prepare a space for infants. The account below from the Friends of UNIFAT website is unusual because it is a narrative of host-country native rather than an American, but like many others in the sample that explain how the speaker was led to a task by God. A Ugandan woman describes her desolation after the civil war in that country, and how a prayer “led” her to start a school that would later receive support from an American NGO:

As I prayed to be shown what to do, I was led to the parable about the sower who went sowing seeds. . . I knew then that the good ground could represent children and the sower could be I; the seeds could be the good information, or teaching imparted to the children. I knew that the time had come. In the spring of 1983 I returned home to start a school among my people.

Describing one’s efforts as led by God can do several kinds of discursive work. It might presage success, or potential for success, especially if it linked with religious narratives with a known outcome. A reader of this text who is familiar with the parable of the seeds knows that the seeds sown on “good ground” bear fruit. If God brought this text to the woman’s mind, along with the vision of a school, a reader may believe that God will bless the school’s efforts with “fruits.”

Second, describing one’s efforts as a calling can justify the choice of a particular place or type of project that might otherwise seem arbitrary. After a civil war, why start a school, rather than rebuilding houses or sheltering orphans? Claiming one is “shown what to do” by God provides purchase for a particular approach to complex problems of poverty.

By using religious frames, people involved in NGOs can recall for themselves and for their audiences the schemas, or ways of thinking about the world, that have been cultivated at other moments in their religious lives. The symbolic work of framing often sets the stage for actors to take up religious modes of *action* on behalf of NGOs.

What Religion Affords Grassroots NGOs: Modes of Action

The turn towards practice in the study of religion has illuminated the many and varied modes of action that religion affords (Bender 2010; Hall 1997; Kurien 2007; Mahmood 2005, Orsi 1996). Having framed their aid efforts as religious, NGO leaders can draw on modes of action in which potential supporters are already fluent. These religious modes of action fall into two broad types: first, repertoires related to giving money and time (including time spent in prayer); second, repertoires of religious practice that provide shared activities for Americans and locals in aid-receiving countries. The latter actions, for example, provide American volunteers who have few practical skills with something to *do* abroad, and according to their accounts, provide them with a stronger sense of shared identity with their co-religionists in other countries. Grassroots NGOs operate in a broader context in which media and migration diffuse religious repertoires across borders (Jenkins 2002; Levitt 2001 and 2007; Miller and Yamamori 2007; Wuthnow and Offutt 2007). These modes of action can link American supporters to aid recipients, sometimes in imagined ways and sometimes in embodied ways as NGOs carry out their projects on the ground.

Natalie, the founder of For Kenya's Tomorrow, told me that her short-term mission trips as a teenager provided a mode of action for raising FKT's early funds. As a teenager she had sent a letter to extended family and friends asking for contributions towards her trip. People

were willing to contribute small amounts, she told me. They did so again when Natalie started FKT. She added that her parents had been on the receiving end of many similar letters from missionaries over the years, and that they typically made small contributions; people understood that this is how mission work was paid for. Her childhood church used its missions repertoire as well, and I saw that Natalie and her husband were pictured—wearing matching FKT t-shirts—in the church’s directory of missionaries.

Another religious practice of giving signaled by NGOs is the Muslim obligation of *zakat*, invoked by two groups in the website sample. In addition to projects related to education and sanitation, both groups had projects to distribute food aid during Ramadan. One of these groups, based in Dayton, Ohio-based and called HOPE, further allows donors to designate their contributions as *zakat al-maal*, alms given as a “tax” of one’s wealth to the poor, or *zakat al-fitr*, alms given on the holiday of *Eid-al-fitr*.

Prayer is another religious mode of action exploited by grassroots NGOs. The websites of 24 of 150 NGOs explicitly asked the reader to pray for the success of the organization. In these texts prayer is often presented as a way for those who are unable to volunteer overseas to support the organization; in some cases, readers are encouraged to pray about how they can best contribute to the organization, making prayer a stepping stone to further commitment. Circle of Hope, which has a variety of projects in a community in Malawi, wrote that that it was starting a “24 hour prayer team. . . for the ministry and vision that Jesus has given us for the healing of Africa.” The post continued with a guide for prayer adapted from a book by evangelist missionary E. Stanley Jones. Yet, consistent with the claim that religious repertoires are part of multiple orientations used by GINGOs, the following blog post on Circle of Hope’s site was

about an animal husbandry project—readers were asked to donate money to buy chickens and goats.

Prayer is also a bridging mode of action that links Americans and locals in the receiving country. Informants from two case study NGOs told me that “prayer walks” were one of the activities that American volunteers shared with the NGOs’ local leadership. A small group of Americans and locals sets out on foot in a neighborhood, calling on each house and asking if they can pray with them. Wellsprings of Hope operates in a Ugandan town that has a slight Muslim majority, and one informant told me that they made calls to both Muslim and Christian households: “We just pray together, Muslim, Christian, it doesn't really matter. . .very few people don't want to be prayed for.” Clara, a 22-year-old American woman who volunteers with For Kenya’s Tomorrow told me that prayer walks and Bible studies were the main tasks on which she was able to collaborate with young Kenyan men. The young men knew the neighborhood and provided local knowledge and safety to the volunteers; the walks helped the volunteers meet neighbors and understand local conditions, which would help them carry out future work.

Among the case study NGOs, worship services were also part of the repertoire shared by Americans and African Christians. The American and Kenyan Pentecostals I met through FKT were familiar with the same songs and preachers through the global broadcasts of the Australian Pentecostal church Hillsong. Volunteers from Wellsprings of Hope and Activate Tanzania also mentioned joining African counterparts in worship. Several of these volunteers recounted the “liveliness” of these worship services that they felt was different than their American style of worship, but they said that in spite of the differences the shared worship had afforded solidarity. Their narratives were consistent with Wuthnow’s claim that common worship “increase[s] the

sense among widely scattered congregations that they share a common destiny and bear responsibility for one another” (2009, p. 91). This sense of shared destiny may be more imagined than factual, but it is likely to be emotionally salient for American supporters and may increase their material commitment to NGOs’ projects. Long-term commitment is what many NGO leaders hope will come from short-term volunteering, as I discuss below.

Of further importance is the fact that these modes of action are situated in networks of people. It is not simply that individuals develop through religion ingrained ways of being that are useful to NGOs. These individuals are also linked in networks of perceived obligation that facilitate recruitment and give NGOs access to resources through the “strength of weak ties” (Granovetter 1973).

What Religion Affords Grassroots NGOs: Networks

Religious *networks* provide crucial resources for NGOs to establish their work overseas and to recruit funds and volunteers from the U.S. That religious networks are so fruitful should not be surprising since religious congregations are the most ubiquitous form of voluntary association in the United States (Putnam and Campbell 2010), and because they in turn are well-connected to educational, service, recreation, and political groups in their communities (Cornwell and Harrison 2004, Patillo-McCoy 1998). The literature shows that religious networks are important sites for recruiting volunteers and soliciting charitable donations generally (Becker and Dhingra 2001, Musick and Wilson 2008, Bekkers and Schuyt 2008, Putnam and Campbell 2010). The website content analysis confirmed the ubiquity of religious congregations as NGO partners, and the case study interviews revealed the role of religious networks even for some NGOs that eschewed religious frames.

Except for other NGOs, religious congregations are the most common network partner cited by grassroots NGOs on their websites. Forty percent of NGOs have some sort of partnership with a religious congregation. Of the 69 NGOs with a congregational partner, 25 have ties to American congregations only, 22 have ties to host-country congregations only, and the remaining 22 have ties to both American and host-country congregations. Religious congregations are more common partners than either foreign or U.S. governments, businesses, foundations, arts groups, schools or universities, or diaspora organizations.

Websites depict religious networks as playing a critical role in furnishing donations and volunteers. Congregations can be important stops on fundraising tours; an NGO to support Tibetan religion and culture raised money through a series of visits by a well-known monk to U.S. meditation centers, yoga studios, and interfaith churches. Congregations also often provide recruitment pools for teams of volunteers that travel together for a week or two at a time. Most often these groups are referred to as “mission teams,” reflecting the religious frames that are shared by the NGOs and congregations. Aid organizations that named U.S. congregations as partners on their website were significantly more likely ($p < .05$) to solicit American volunteers to come abroad (47%) than those who list no such partnership (29%).

The literature on short-term missions (Probasco 2013; ver Beek 2006; Wuthnow 2009) has questioned whether short-term volunteers’ contributions to aid efforts are worth the expense. After all, would it not be more efficient to simply contribute the thousands of dollars of each volunteer’s travel costs towards actual project expenses? In case study interviews American NGO leaders—and to my surprise, African leaders—said that the contributions of short-term volunteers were worth the expense and hassle. They recognize that short-term volunteers would not realistically donate the amount they spend on travel. For these volunteers, the trips abroad

replace vacations or other leisure-time activities. Natalie of FKT and several board members of Wellsprings of Hope explained that short-term trips ratchet up supporters' commitment to the NGO. Trips abroad become the springboard for future financial support or membership on the board. Ver Beek (2006) documented that 162 short-term missionaries to Honduras gave on average only \$2 more per person, per year after their trip than before. But grassroots NGOs, operating on small budgets, do not think in terms of marginal gains among large numbers of givers; instead, they hope for major commitments from a handful, and sometimes they get them. Clara, the supporter of For Kenya's Tomorrow, came to volunteer full-time for the organization in Kenya for four months after a shorter trip. A volunteer for Activate Tanzania was convinced by villagers to raise money for to build a preschool, which he did—roughly \$20,000.

Several African interlocutors working with American organizations emphasized that they enjoyed the exchange with American visitors. Paul, a Ugandan pastor who is one of the local leaders of Wellsprings of Hope, explained the utility of American volunteers in another way. “Our people, they are very, very careful and attentive to a foreigner, the volunteer, to what he is saying. . . they hear and they trust the words of the volunteers.” He believed that American strangers are trusted more than Ugandan strangers also claiming to do good, because Ugandans have seen too many charlatans among their own countrymen. From his perspective, why would it be worth an American's time to come halfway across the world for a swindle?

Religious networks offered financial or volunteer support to four out of the five case study NGOs. Congregational networks formed the backbone of For Kenya's Tomorrow and Wellsprings of Hope, but also were valuable to Activate Tanzania and the Rwanda Ultrasound Initiative, groups that did *not* invoke religious frames in their websites or in interviews and that did not carry out any evangelistic tasks. Most of the doctors involved with RUI spoke

witheringly of involving religion with medical aid, yet one of the physicians on the board had given a talk at her parents' friends' church. The global network of Lutheran churches that links Tanzania and Minnesota helped give rise to Activate Tanzania. When Erasto, a Tanzanian immigrant, looked in his adopted hometown of St. Paul for support for his nascent NGO, he was referred to a Lutheran minister who had traveled several times to Tanzania through a sister-church program; they soon discovered that the pastor had not only visited Erasto's village, but had met his mother. Both Erasto and Pastor Dan's churches became dedicated donors to Activate Tanzania, and until the NGO was legally incorporated the funds were wired through the Saint Paul Area Synod.

It was also religious networks that offered beachheads to two of the NGOs. Wellsprings of Hope had its seed in a visit from a Texas delegation of Baptist preachers, and the initial goal was to provide financial support for the ministry of five Ugandan pastors. When the founder of For Kenya's Tomorrow first traveled to that country with only a vague idea of the work she might do, a church friend sent her with an introduction to the leader of a fellow Open Bible church in Nairobi. Through social ties to that church Natalie eventually found Ruth, pastor of a small Pentecostal church, and whose son David Natalie would eventually marry. Ruth and David's family and close friends became the trusted network upon which Natalie built the organization's work in Nairobi, even as her own family and close friends provided financial and administrative support in the U.S.

In sum, the global reach of religious networks and their utility as recruiting bases for volunteer and financial support make them useful tools for grassroots NGOs—even groups like Activate Tanzania and the Rwanda Ultrasounds Initiative that do not otherwise characterize their work as religious.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that religion affords particular resources to groups that operate outside of the budgets and professional paradigms of large-scale aid. First, it provides *frames*, or ways of thinking and speaking about relief and development work that imbue it with legitimacy. Topic models of 6,575 websites showed that 25% of them used the frame of Christian ministry to discuss their work, even when the substance ranged from computer training to clean water. Roughly the same share of organizations in the n=150 content analysis used discourse of “God’s will” or “showing God’s love” to rationalize their work, including two groups that used this language in the context of Islam. Second, religion affords *modes of action* that link the NGO, supporters, and local aid recipients. GINGOs rely on habits of giving of money and time (including time in prayer) that supporters have learned in religious practice; the groups also use religious modes of action common to the United States and aid-receiving countries to forge affective bonds and to provide tasks for American volunteers. Finally, religion can offer *networks* that provide money and volunteers and that offer entrée into aid-receiving communities.

The theoretical move to depict religion as affording resources does more than just troubling the divide between faith-based and religious organizations. It also provides an opening to see where NGO leaders set religion to the side in favor of other tools, and it gestures towards NGO leaders’ worries about the place of religion in aid. Natalie’s words at the beginning of the paper allude to such a worry: “Whether or not you are a Christian or a Muslim, or a Jew or whatever, I wanted it to be an open door for people to come and serve.” Given that essentially every member of FKT’s support network was a Christian, I suggest that Natalie saw providing “an open door for people to come and serve” as one of FKT’s important roles. In other words, it

is not just the sanitation projects for Kenyans that matter, but the opportunity for Americans to support those projects with their blood and sweat. Natalie believed that one's religious identity should not be a barrier to the latter goal.

Another worry expressed by NGOs was that the expression of religion to aid recipients could be seen as coercive; as the founder of the Rwanda Ultrasound Initiative put it, “like a bartering system”—medical care in exchange for being proselytized. Two of the RUI physicians described themselves as religious, but the organization framed its work in terms of patients' human rights to medical care. They rejected the language of mission. Said one: “of course, there's very good things that missionaries have done. But we're not in that day and age anymore, so I think you have to be a little bit careful.” Future scholarship could say a good deal more about the ways religion is *not* used by even organizations that use religion in other capacities.

I began this chapter with the premise that the dichotomy between “faith-based” and “secular” development organizations is a relic of a mid-20th century understanding of the international relief and development field, and that the question “what resources does religion afford?” makes more theoretical and empirical sense than the question “how are faith-based organizations different?”. This reframing is necessary to make sense of the 2015 field of nonprofit international relief and development organizations, in which the majority of groups rely on volunteer labor and small budgets fueled by individual contributors.

Jones and Juul Peterson (2011) claimed that the distinction between “faith-based” and “secular” organizations might be less consequential than distinctions between scales of development work and between professional and volunteer-based organizations. It is my argument that in fact the small-scale and voluntary nature of many aid organization provides the flexibility that makes the faith-based/secular dichotomy moot. The entrepreneurial nature of

grassroots NGOs makes them different than bureaucratic and professional aid groups. At least in their early phase, grassroots NGOs are governed by the multivalent orientations of their founders; someone like Erasto, the founder of Activate Tanzania, can draw on strategies of action learned as a Lutheran, an expatriate Tanzanian, a suburban father, or a corporate employee. It is these orientations that provide grassroots NGOs with symbolic resources—answers to questions about what, why, and how they do what they do—as well as the material resources of money and manpower to carry out their projects. The influence of these multiple fields will shape thousands of grassroots NGOs acting as “big fish in small ponds” in the global South.

Table 7.1 Top 10 Terms for LDA Topics
(Topic labels, generated by researcher, in bold)

Research institutes	Child sponsorship	Schools	Bible study	Christian missions	World citizenship
research	children	school	Bible	church	nature
university	child	educate	God	ministry	life
student	sponsor	student	unit	mission	world
art	care	program	study	God	book
science	orphan	learn	archive	Christian	peace
school	hope	teacher	day	prayer	make
program	sponsorship	community	holy	Jesus	people
faculty	home	train	today	pray	human
institute	donate	youth	church	missionary	person
study	family	work	lesson	pastor	time
Humanitar. relief	Community development projects	Micro-enterprise	Economic development	Medical trips	Medical clinics
Haiti	project	work	develop	trip	health
relief	donate	community	global	medical	medical
food	village	partner	economy	mission	care
world	fund	busy	research	volunteer	clinic
gift	water	social	resource	Kenya	travel
hunger	school	Africa	policy	start	hospital
work	community	global	public	Africa	patient
donate	support	develop	social	send	disease
intern	charity	women	work	date	prevent
disaster	children	opportunity	invest	friend	treatment

Fundraising	Fair trade shopping	Volunteer narratives	Exchange programs	Water	Ecology
fundraise	shop	day	volunteer	water	climate
fund	trade	time	program	project	forest
idea	fair	people	amigo	donate	conserve
raise	product	work	week	blog	plant
site	gift	family	Guatemala	live	nature
group	cart	live	community	title	tree
connect	coffee	year	project	post	carbon
school	home	back	Honduras	Ethiopia	environment
free	bag	hope	youth	clean	water
profit	add	home	support	read	earth
Advocacy for women	Security	Labor policy	Human rights	Foreign policy	Org. workings
women	human	state	human	govern	donate
work	war	nation	justice	intern	event
intern	peace	worker	traffic	politics	contact
aid	Burma	govern	advocacy	Asia	volunteer
health	intern	report	join	global	board
people	military	labor	intern	human	mission
donate	Israel	intern	project	democracy	home
report	report	unit	Sri	Africa	newsletter
Sudan	Palestinian	year	resource	north	support
girl	force	U.S.	work	society	program

Chapter 8

Personal Relationships in the Establishment, Maintenance, and Influence Of GINGOs

“[W]e were having fun partnering with them directly. . . and maybe it was reinventing the wheel, but, man, it was our wheel.”

--Bill Smith, founder of Wellsprings of Hope, on the relationship with his Ugandan partners.

Inzosi Nziza might be the only GINGO to come from a relationship forged at the Sundance Institute, but personal relationships that span the U.S. and the global South are the seed of most grassroots NGOs. Globalization allows immigrants and adopted children to keep ties to their homelands, and allows American tourists and business people to nurture friendships cultivated in their travels. These first-order relationships provide the motivation for Americans to found GINGOs. But second-order relationships between GINGO leaders and their American friends and family are equally important—the leaders provide influential depictions of Southern needs, and loved ones respond with the money and labor to support the projects. Through these relationships grassroots NGOs become for the lenses on the global South for their supporters. This chapter shows how these personal relationships affect the establishment, maintenance, and influence of grassroots NGOs.

First-Order Personal Relationships and the Establishment of Grassroots NGOs

Grassroots NGOs are often organizational elaborations of a personal relationship between an American and one or more people in the global South. I show that Wellsprings of Hope, Activate Tanzania, and For Kenya's Tomorrow were organized to respond to needs identified by Americans' loved ones in Africa, or to capitalize on the resources those loved ones offered. In these instances African friends or family members became the full-time local staff of the NGO. These staff positions were a boon to the loved ones—they provided the status and income of

NGO employment. And there were advantages to Americans of using African loved ones as partners, who could serve as trusted proxies able to identify recipients and projects and navigate local customs.

Most people in the U.S. and Europe who want to provide financial support to loved ones in the global South do so through simple remittances.¹ The Hudson Institute (Adelman et al. 2011) estimates that \$90 billion in private remittances passed between the U.S. and developing countries in 2009, compared with \$12 billion passing through private voluntary organizations. But the personal relationships I discuss here are of the minority that eschew direct charity in favor of taking a broader organizational form. The obligation felt by the organization's founder is to "do something bigger" in the community, typically involving the loved one in the administration of the project. This "something bigger"—the school, the clinic, the small business network is intended as a public benefit for a group or a community at large. But these projects also offer private benefits for the loved ones abroad, offering them employment, status, and income. Involving friends and relatives in NGO work can also be a practical decision, driven by the need for a trusted agent abroad. Here I show how personal relationships spanning the U.S. and Africa shaped the founding and subsequent work of three case study organizations.

For Erasto, the founder of Activate Tanzania, the relationship is with his family and friends of his hometown. Muyinga is a village of about 2,000 people; his mother remains there, along with some of his younger siblings. After he immigrated to the U.S. Erasto periodically sent cash to relatives and friends. While this satisfied his relatives, Erasto became more unsatisfied—he felt that remittances would never make his family self-reliant. In his telling, Erasto's idea of a

¹ Some of the alternative forms of remittance, like hometown associations, are discussed by Portes et al. (2007).

broader gift always centered on the village. The plan-making for the school soon involved a cousin of Erasto's, who lived part-time in the village, and a childhood friend born in the village but then living in a city. In the decade since the two men have remained stalwarts of the school. One is the school's administrator, Erasto's right-hand "man on the ground," while the latter is the school's longest-serving teacher.

Erasto's labors over the last decade have been extraordinary. He estimates that he spends 10 to 20 hours a week dealing with school business, and his organization has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars. The benefits for the village are what Erasto envisioned—an excellent secondary school, whose nearest match in quality is more than 30 kilometers away in the regional capital. In concrete terms, the village has also benefitted from the 10 full-tuition scholarships for village students that the Activate board promised in exchange for title to the school's land. Muyinga also profits from the economic presence of roughly a hundred students and teachers, who buy sundries in village shops, who provide business for the mini-bus drivers who travel to the regional capital and back, and who require local labor of cooks, groundskeepers, and laundresses.

To manage this huge enterprise, and to balance the desires and demands of Tanzanian family, friends, and former neighbors on one hand, and American in-laws, friends, fellow-congregants as donors on the other, requires tremendous interpersonal and emotional work from Erasto. Activate Tanzania volunteer Leann acknowledged the strain Erasto faces between fellow Tanzanians, who have expectations of what the village is owed or what a private Tanzanian school should look like, and the American board, who have their own notions about pedagogy and budget allocation. Leann explained,

I think it's very hard for him. He's so passionate about doing this stuff there, and he gets the information and then provides it for the Board here and a lot of times

it's not received well because it's not the American way. And so he's caught in that middle all the time. . . And it's very heart wrenching, I know, for him.

For Activate Tanzania, Erasto's relations to loved ones in Tanzania offered inspiration and critical resources for the organization, even as they seeded conflict between professional management and personal obligations.

The work of For Kenya's Tomorrow has been defined by the relationship of its founder, Natalie, to her Kenyan husband, David, and by extension to David's mother Ruth and to his childhood friend, Martin. Ruth, a pastor of a small Pentecostal church, was one of Natalie's early contacts in the slum neighborhood of Kawangare. Natalie describes meeting Ruth as a case of divine intervention. Natalie had encountered Ruth twice at church, and felt led by God to approach her:

I went up to her afterwards and I said, "I don't know if this is gonna make sense to you or if this is something you're even gonna want to do, but I really--I've been praying that God would provide somebody that I can be mentored by, and I really feel like it's you." And she looked at me and she said, "Absolutely, I've been waiting for you for the last year." And she had had a vision the year prior of this white girl coming to her saying that . . . And so she was ready for it, like her heart was already in line with it.

As I described in the previous chapter, Natalie's partnership with Ruth's church gained her trust in the neighborhood and local cooperation. Natalie soon began dating David, Ruth's son, and after their marriage David became a full partner in FKT's work. The area around Ruth's church became the base of the NGO's projects—street cleanups, a Saturday morning program for children, and latrines. Martin also became a critical partner. He owned a van and had started his own business to transport tourists around Kenya's national parks; soon, he became the designated driver for FKT's work and several times a year took FKT volunteers to Masai Mara for a backcountry experience. His parents owned a tract of land in Kawangare that they sold to

FKT as a site for the organization's women's craft workshop. When David and Natalie were in the U.S., Martin supervised the craft workshop served as FKT's general man-on-the-ground.

A friendship was also at the genesis of Wellsprings of Hope. As I described in Chapter 3, Wellsprings began after Pastor Bill Smith visited Uganda with a delegation of Baptist preachers, and the initial goal was to provide financial support for the "ministry" of five Ugandan pastors that he met there. Bill spoke in emotional terms about a week of itinerant preaching with the Ugandan pastors, camping in the bush, and their initial discussions about the organization they would launch together. With tears, he told me:

That week -- because those are my best friends in the whole world, those men. All of them are still living. . . I've wondered what it's gonna be like when one of them goes to be with the Lord. But, anyway, it's a big deal to me because as they shared their vision, God allowed me to get in on it.

He went on to explain how that relationship trumped existing patterns of religious assistance—namely, why he decided to launch his own NGO and fund these pastors rather than supporting existing NGOs or Southern Baptist missionaries.

Well, brought up as a Southern Baptist, that was my paradigm. . . "Let's send money to organizations that really know how to do this, and we'll send money to missionaries who are there;" or "We'll send money to mission organizations that do this kind of work." But when we went, we ate with these people. And the answer is, it became a relationship, and it was no longer a middleman, we were having fun partnering with them directly. And so, you know, maybe somebody else could -- and maybe it was reinventing the wheel, but, man, it was our wheel.

Those five pastors became the administrators of the multi-project NGO: in addition to their congregations, two schools, two clinics, men's and women's Bible classes, a farm, and a child sponsorship program. The pastors are paid a monthly salary which has brought them to middle-class standing; all own houses, and one has a car. Noting the pastors' increasing weight, Bill told them, only half in jest, "You know, you guys are starting to look more and more like Americans, that's not a good thing."

These three NGOs were built around personal relationships, but they were designed as organizations that would have broader public benefits than direct charity. Erasto's relationships in Muyinga bore fruit for the students and residents there more broadly; all of the residents who worked in the craft shop, attended the children's program, or used the public toilets in Kawangare profited from Natalie's personal commitments to people who lived in that neighborhood. What could have been a program by Wellsprings to subsidize the salaries of pastors in Uganda instead was designed as a regional network of churches, clinics, and schools.

In each of these cases, private benefits also accrued to the African partners in the relationship. They often gained steady employment, increased business, status, and a reliable middle-class salary. Ruth's church saw an inflow of resources, while Martin's tour business gained built-in customers; the pastors effectively became, in addition to religious leaders, nonprofit executives.

But these private benefits for friends and family weren't intended as rents. Americans saw these roles for African friends as necessary for the smooth operation of the NGO. All of the groups required local brokers to execute their projects, and these friends and family members served as trusted agents. Erasto told me of his cousin, "to be honest, if it wasn't for him, I don't think the school would be [there]." GINGOs are particularly dependent on these agents, because the organization's leaders spend little time in the receiving country. And unlike larger NGOs, there are few codified procedures for administering projects or handling money. Rather than relying on the professional management techniques that permeate traditional relief and development NGOs (Baccarini 1999), grassroots NGOs depend on trusted local partners to execute the projects. The trust of family and friendship ties becomes the organization's currency.

This system has its failures. Activate Tanzania's school was threatened when a former neighbor of Erasto's, an aspiring politician, tried to appropriate the school. Erasto was forced to dispatch a lawyer to the regional capital to demonstrate the claim of the Activate board to the school property. The episode left a bitter aftertaste in the village, with some residents feeling that the school had become "in" the village, but not "of" it; tuition and entrance standards had risen such that some children of secondary-school age in the village couldn't attend, and instead went to the inferior public school nearby. Similarly, one of the five Ugandan pastors—who Bill described as his "best friends"—embezzled thousands of dollars from the organization. With the American congregation that supported the NGO on the verge of terminating its funds, Bill flew to Uganda where the disgraced Ugandan pastor offered his confession, resignation, and a public apology. The organization was able to right itself, with new standards for transparency in accounting in place.

Watkins et al. (2012) write that nongovernmental organizations are defined by the uncertainties they face in "altruism from afar." NGOs "are principals who depend on intermediaries to implement programs, and they rely on these same agents for information about the success of the programs" (288). I argue that *grassroots* NGOs are defined by the personal relationships between Americans and citizens in the global South, and that the principal-agent relationship is often layered over ties of friendly or intimate relationships. This approach reduces some sources of uncertainty. It allows the Americans, in the absence of a more comprehensive political or social scientific analysis, to identify recipients and projects. It provides them with trusted on-the-ground knowledge, including knowledge of local languages and customs. But role strain also emerges, as a person like Erasto is torn between being a good "hometown boy" and an effective chair of an American Board of Directors. And relying on the trust of personal

relationships in lieu of formal accountability between principal and agent is risky. Wellsprings of Life found that personal trust needed to be backed up with formal rules for accountability and transparency. Building an NGO around a friendship with someone in the global South joins features of formal organization and direct charity, importing some of the advantages and problems of each.

Relationships Between Grassroots NGO Leaders and their American Associates

Personal relationships between GINGO leaders and their American friends, family, and colleagues are no less consequential. These relationships, radiating outward from NGO leaders to their intimates, to those intimates' personal networks, can be analyzed both in terms of what they bring in to the organization and what they bring out to American audiences. What these networks bring *in* are resources. I described in Chapter 5 how GINGOs rely on individual supporters for cash, volunteers, and supplies. But in asking for those things, NGOs bring *out* images of the people they are helping. Requests for support are moments for NGOs to transmit ideas about poverty, development, and the global South. Every conversation about a trip to Africa and every fundraising pitch is an occasion for grassroots NGOs to frame development problems and the place of Americans in solving them. Framing also happens on websites, as I describe in Chapter 5. What I want to emphasize in this section are the ways that this happens in the personal networks of NGO leaders and to argue that these moments of framing are especially powerful because of the relational influence between speaker and listener, and because many listeners have scant knowledge of the global South.

An early fundraising event for Activate Tanzania illustrates how NGO leaders' relationships with other Americans are important for generating resources for the organization,

and for portraying the global South and its “problems.” Activate Tanzania called the event “Come to Africa” and hosted it at a local Lutheran Church. An Afro-centric music group comprised of African immigrants and black and white Americans sang. Guests could bid on Tanzanian handicrafts that Erasto and Kate had imported from the regional capital and from Dar es Salaam. The image of Africa being presented to Activate’s supporters was generic; it was not Muyinga itself being introduced but Tanzania, and more broadly—as the name of the event showed—Africa. And while the need and plans for the school were discussed, the event was centered on aural and material culture rather than on politics. Instead, Erasto and Kate could have hosted a more political event, framing the lack of education or development activities in Muyinga as unjust or a violation of human rights. Suffering or images of an “emergency” could have been used. But they—rightly, I think—sensed that that approach would be less successful than drawing from the established fundraising playbook for private schools, libraries, and other cultural institutions. At the event they held, Muyinga —Tanzania—Africa was portrayed as someplace vaguely exotic, warm, and inviting. It was a place where an American now had an opportunity: to build something, to invest. The image given was one of long-term growth and reliability, where donors could make a contribution that was sure to do good, even as they basked in the glow of cultural exchange. In the sections that follow I draw out more evidence from the case studies for the material and ideational ways the relationships of NGO leaders to other Americans matter.

Collecting Resources

The U.S. personal networks of grassroots NGO leaders matter fundamentally because they provide they provide the bulk of the cash support. The founders of all five case study

organizations turned first to family, friends, and fellow church members for their initial contributions. For Kenya's Tomorrow continues to rely almost exclusively on donations from Natalie's family and friends and from two religious congregations in Michigan with which she is associated. The two founders of the Rwanda Ultrasound Initiative got their early donations from friends and family; some in-kind donations from their workplaces followed, and through personal connections they were able to attract a grant of a few thousand dollars from a private foundation. The first donors to Activate Tanzania included the uncle of Erasto's wife, and Erasto's American host family from his early days as a student in the United States. Local Lutheran churches also contributed early and remain a steady source of income. I asked FKT, RUI, and Activate Tanzania in 2012 if they had received any donations from strangers with no apparent connection to the group's leaders; the answer was no.

Indego Africa was launched with help from Matt Mitro's father and other friends of the family. Its revenue model was to finance the program with the sale of fair-trade-like crafts, and those sales have now been supplemented with grants and with contributions from national fundraising events. Wellsprings of Hope began with contributions from Bill Smith's Baptist church. Over the course of several years, members of the Methodist church in the town became involved, and friends, family, and neighbors of those church members began to give for mission trips or sponsor children.

Associates of NGO leaders also have the satisfaction of helping their loved ones pursue projects that are their passion. For the founders of Indego Africa, For Kenya's Tomorrow, and Activate Tanzania, launching the NGO was a passion project, and the associates I interviewed spoke of offering support for the project because of love and admiration for the founder. One of

the board members of For Kenya's Tomorrow, a childhood friend of Natalie, said, "it was important to Natalie² so it was important to me."

Because they are approaching family and friends, the sites for leaders making the "ask" are old-fashioned. The leaders of For Kenya's Tomorrow, Activate Tanzania, and Indego Africa all started with letters or emails sent out en masse to loved ones. (The tone and format of the letter was also shaped by the social context. We saw in Chapter 7 that Natalie's fundraising letter followed the format of letters of solicitation from missionaries. Matt Mitro's first email resembled a business proposal. Headings in the email included "What is the exact form that this project would take?", "What kind of challenges would we face?", "Will I be reimbursed or compensated?" and "What skills is our organization looking for?") NGO leaders spoke about their projects at church meetings and book clubs; they went to Rotary meetings and chatted up their neighbors on the street. They asked fellow workers to contribute to their travel or to buy African crafts or come to a fundraiser in a church hall.

But just as overlaying personal and functional relationships between American NGO leaders and African friends creates complications, so too does relying on U.S. friends and family for material support. One volunteer from Wellsprings of Hope, for instance, spoke of her family member's resistance to sponsor a child, and her frustration with herself, believing that she hadn't done enough to gain support for the cause.

Volunteer: So none of my -- my family doesn't sponsor. They pray for me. They know I'm active. I--

AYS: Yeah. They probably have their own passions too, right?

Volunteer: I don't know. I don't know. I feel like since I've been so frustrated that I haven't been a good enough witness or something.

² Pseudonym substituted for Natalie's true name.

But in spite of these frustrations, NGO leaders also rely on their personal networks to recruit volunteers for both domestic tasks and international work. Natalie found short-term “missions teams” to come to Kawangare through her childhood church. Erasto found new board members through his initial contact at a St. Paul Lutheran Church—the pastor there brought his daughter and son-in-law on board, and the daughter in turn recruited Leann, an elementary school teacher. Since Rwanda Ultrasound Initiative depends on the specialized medical skills of volunteers, professional networks were more important to them; their medical teams were recruited through hospitals and email lists of professional societies dedicated to emergency medicine.

But whether these requests come in person or in writing, when NGO leaders make them, they give personal accounts of problems they see in Africa and how their group offers a solution.

Forging Lenses on the Global South

As the question of development is filtered through the NGO and down to people telling stories and asking for money, the definition of the problem is simplified and made amenable to action by donors. Telling compelling stories, of course, is a basic tenet of fundraising. But the stories of grassroots NGOs have particular power to frame distant people and problems for listeners and to distort reality. This is because the story tellers often have relationships with the aid-receiving communities that are of short duration or are episodic, and because they are operating across cultural and linguistic divides.

Perhaps more importantly, social distance between the everyday Americans who learn from NGOs and the NGOs beneficiaries is wider still. Many Americans have no notion whatsoever of the communities that NGOs serve, so the power of the organization to define that

place and its problems is nearly absolute. Whatever particularism—in place, in aid model—of the organization’s founder has shaped the NGO, then echoes outward as the NGO tells its story to potential donors. All aid organizations that raise private funds have this power of framing, but grassroots NGOs are different from large-scale aid agencies that have a broad assessment of the country’s social conditions but strategically target donors, for example, with images of children who need medical help. By contrast grassroots NGOs usually have little understanding of the socio-economic situation or the broader development infrastructure in the countries where they work. They know their piece of the picture, and that is what they portray to their supporters. In sum, grassroots NGOs’ depictions are apt to be biased but influential.

Africa Through the Lens of Activate Tanzania: Poor in Money, Rich in Community

Leann, the volunteer for Activate Tanzania, has offered a lens on Africa through her personal and professional relationships. She is an elementary school teacher in the suburbs of St Paul, Minnesota. When I spoke with her in 2012 she had made two trips of several weeks to Tanzania to volunteer at Activate’s secondary school. Her work there entailed assisting with the English language classes and running professional development workshops for the Tanzanian faculty. But, just as one of the three objectives of Peace Corps volunteers is to bring knowledge of foreign countries to Americans, so Leann felt that teaching Americans about Tanzania was a critical part of her service with the NGO.

She invited me to visit her classroom in September 2012, in the first weeks of the school year. On the walls and shelves of the room were African, Asian and Latin American textiles, curios, dolls, and several illustrations of the word *ujamaa*, a Tanzanian term that translates roughly as community, brotherhood, or fellowship. After I had observed the class for some time,

Leann told the group I would be traveling to Tanzania soon and asked them to share what they had learned about the place in those first weeks of school. One student raised a hand and said that people there are very poor but the children are good at creating their own toys out of materials on hand. (Makeshift soccer balls made of plastic bags and twine were among the souvenirs in the classroom.) Yes, Leann asked, but what are they rich in? *Ujamaa*, the class answered. In Tanzania people are poor in money but they are rich in community.

In our interview later that day, Leann explained to me that she taught about Tanzania to develop empathy among her students:

I do intentionally show them toys or show them tools because I want them to understand they're just like you. They're like you even though they're in a different part of the world, they have different tools, but they're like you and we're all—To make this place a better place, we need to have tolerance for each other.

Her lessons emphasized shared humanity and respect: “just because you don’t have something, doesn’t mean you’re not rich.” At the same time, the lessons in “giving back” had to do with sharing material wealth. For holiday celebrations students would bring in donations for Heifer International, Feed My Starving Children (an emergency food aid charity), or for a program for care packages for deployed U.S. soldiers. Leann began integrating lessons about Tanzania into her teaching in 2008, so by the date of our interview, 200 students—between 24 and 28 a year—had learned about Tanzania through the lens of Leann’s work with the NGO.

Leann’s work with Activate Tanzania aligned with critical parts of her self-identity: her vocation as a teacher and as a worldly, unprejudiced person. During our interview her eyes teared as she discussed the Minnesota community where she grew up. “[It] was not very diverse at all and I saw a lot of prejudice. . . I see now it was uneducated prejudice.” She saw sharing her work with Activate Tanzania and raising money as an opportunity to reach out to family and former neighbors: “So I’m gonna write uneducated family members, uneducated community

members, educators who we learned some of the negative things [from] as well as the positive things.” She believes that her work has “had an impact” on her family. “They see the world as a much smaller place where perhaps they can help out.”

Perhaps the most consequential contact of Leann was Evan, her former student teacher, who came to volunteer at the secondary school in Muyinga for six months. During his visit, several leaders invited Evan for lunch and made a bold request: that he help them raise money for a preschool. Evan agreed. When he returned to the U.S. he registered his own NGO and set to raising money as he worked on and off at his family’s Minneapolis liquor store. The store was a regular contributor to community events, but now their donations and the cash from annual golf outing went to build the preschool in Muyinga. Evan raised enough money to build three classrooms. When I met him in 2012 he had not been back to Tanzania—he asked me to take some pictures of the classrooms his family’s money had built when I visited.

Leann understood the lessons to her students as being about empathy and “giving back.” The other lesson that was carried by Leann and Evan was about the place of education in Tanzania’s development. The name of Evan’s NGO (which I omit here to preserve his anonymity) conjured an image of Tanzanian children gathering around kerosene lamps at night to study. This was what Evan had seen in Muyinga and the message he wanted to send his friends was about the desire of Tanzanians to learn and the difficulties they faced in doing so. This message was carried through beer-fueled golf outings, church youth group meetings, letters to elderly aunts in rural Minnesota, and classrooms full of American elementary school children. In describing what she’d seen in Tanzania that she wanted to convey to her American students, Leann said:

Education’s my passion and I believe that the people in Tanzania value that. And not value it because I want them to value it . . . Because I’ve been there and I’ve

seen that, I think I can show them [my students] kids who are hungry for an education.

I want to emphasize two things about the how this education lens is forged by someone like Leann. First, she said “Education’s my passion.” In our interview Leann revealed that she had a long history of volunteering for various causes, but her trip to Tanzania with Activate was her first travel abroad. She chose an organization that aligned with her professional skills and what she called her “passion.” What she came to see as a critical problem in Tanzania was limited by the issues that were important to her. Second, she said “I’ve been there and I’ve seen that.” Her faith in Tanzanians’ need and desire for education comes from the fact that she traveled there, and as she said, saw it for herself. Her assessment of the needs and desires of Tanzanians came not from social scientific theories of development or of broad travel and assessment of Tanzania’s social services. It was based on what she saw with her own eyes on a trip for a project she chose. Her interests or “passion” became the basis for an image of distant people and their problems that was shared with many other Americans through personal networks. Her ideas were transmitted to students over whom she had authority, colleagues over whom she had influence, and elder kin and neighbors who she hoped to affect.

Africa Through Wellsprings of Hope: “I’ve Got a Big God.”

Every volunteer for Wellsprings of Hope knows the story of Lindsey, a nine-year-old girl who raised \$25,000 to build a classroom. Lindsey and her mother learned about Wellsprings of Hope in 2010 through a chance conversation with a fellow volunteer en route to a project feeding homeless people in San Antonio. Soon after, Lindsey read a children’s book about a teenage boy who had raised money for people in Africa with AIDS by engaging his classmates in basketball shoot-a-thon. The idea caught Lindsey’s imagination. Having just learned about Wellsprings of

Hope, and with her mother's encouragement, Lindsey decided to launch her own fundraiser aimed at building a classroom for one of Wellsprings' elementary schools in Uganda. She was able to extract a promise from her parents that if she raised enough money, they would get to travel to Uganda to see the new building. (Her mother told me that she believed that raising the money would be possible, but over the course of several years.)

The fundraiser caught on among the students at Lindsey's Christian school. A read-a-thon and other fundraisers from the schoolchildren raised half of the sum. More donations came from Lindsey's family and friends, and from members of church and community groups that Lindsey gave talks to about her project. Within five months she had raised \$25,000. The board members regarded this donation with surprise and admiration, and soon with the notion that God was working through the young girl. Lindsey's parents made good on their promise and the family of four (including Lindsey's younger sister) traveled to Uganda in spring 2011 for the dedication of the new classroom building. A plaque with Lindsey's name hangs on the building's wall. In the following year, Lindsey was asked to speak to service clubs at Texas A & M and Texas State, and on a nationally-syndicated Christian radio show.

Wellsprings of Hope volunteers tell this story to emphasize God's greatness and a girl's boldness and generosity. But other interpretations emerge if we rephrase the story thus: adults gave \$25,000 to a nine-year-old fundraiser. The story then is about the poignancy and effectiveness of an American child raising money for Ugandan children.

Lindsey's account of an encounter with a Ugandan girl that her family sponsored illustrates the pathos in the comparison of Ugandan and American children: the former, destitute, and the latter, surrounded by resources so abundant that they can be diverted to strangers.

And we met in Uganda -- there was a girl, she's in third grade and her Dad died when she was young and her Mom is gone days at a time working, so she has to

take care of herself. She doesn't really have like food and proper shelter and medical care and all that. And so we decided to sponsor her and we asked, "Is there anything that we can pray with you for?" And she says, "Just pray that I stay alive." And I'm like, "You're in third grade, you should not be worrying about that." When I was in third grade, I did not worry about staying alive.

When Lindsey speaks to hundreds in a church audience, they hear about Uganda as a destitute place where one can encounter a child on the street who fears for her life. Lindsey offers this lens on Africa for hundreds of listeners, but *her* view in turn was shaped by her mother, who manages what Lindsey learns about development problems. Her mother believes that Lindsey should look at the problems of Uganda in an age-appropriate way (this means excluding discussions of HIV and how it transmitted, for instance) and try to engage her peers in solving them.

In Lindsey's account the social and economic conditions of Uganda are reduced to problems of poverty; the problems of poverty are defined as problems of facilities and material provision for children; these problems are defined as a problem of fundraising; the problem of fundraising is defined as a problem of will. Lindsey's account is simplified, as one would expect a child's to be, yet her account—and her example—are powerful for American audiences. What is implied by Lindsey's story is that the social and economic conditions of Uganda could be transformed if well-meaning Americans could generate enough will. A child is the ideal exemplar for this theory, because her innocence seems to contrast with the self-serving excuses of adults who could mobilize huge amounts of resources, but don't. Lindsey's mother described herself as "realistic" in contrast to her daughter's childish enthusiasm. Recalling Lindsey's notion of raising enough for a school, her mother had thought, " 'You're not going to raise \$25,000. That's just not reality.' And so I wanted – I didn't want her to be disappointed." But, in this family's theology, the will to do something involves trusting that God will help bring it to bear. This was Lindsey's response to her mother's doubts: "I've got a big God. He can do

anything.” Lindsey’s donation became a powerful narrative to Wellsprings that illustrated the power of will infused by religious faith.

Discussion

As part of the broader argument in the dissertation that grassroots NGOs are defined by personalization rather than the professionalization of the NGO, I have made the claim in this chapter that personal relationships are critical to the establishment, maintenance, and influence of GINGOs. Relationships between American leaders of grassroots NGOs and loved ones in the global South provide motivation for launching the groups, and the human resources to get them running. American NGO leaders rely on friends, family and colleagues in the U.S. for the NGO’s material support, and as they make the case for that support, they—intentionally and unintentionally—provide influential depictions of the global South.

When NGOs incorporate relationships between Americans and loved ones abroad, the characteristics of direct charity and formal organization compete. NGO leaders try to balance the claims of loved ones with the broader public good of the NGO; they weigh the on-the-ground knowledge of intimates against the American expertise of board members. Personal trust must be measured against donors’ demands for transparency. Wellsprings of Hope, Activate Tanzania, and For Kenya’s Tomorrow have been propelled by the strength of personal relationships to Africa and have gained much from the presence of loved ones as trusted agents in the field. But as I have described, these relationships can generate strain, and betrayals of trust can be catastrophic.

A sense of obligation also inheres between grassroots NGO leaders and their American loved ones. All five organizations launched with, and three remain dependent on, the financial

support of the friends and family of the NGO's leaders. But these leaders worry about taxing the generosity of friends and family who have given a lot, and at times feel aggravation towards family members who haven't given at all.

Using personal networks to generate resources for grassroots NGOs means that volunteers have a tremendous opportunity to influence fellow Americans' thinking about poverty and development. Although grassroots NGO leaders' own understandings of the social conditions in southern countries is limited by their interests, language, and time in country, they have the advantage over their intimates of having "seen it with their own eyes." We have seen how one volunteer depicts Tanzania as a place with a hunger for education, while a young volunteer frames Uganda as a place of destitute children whose lives can be transformed through Americans' religious faith and force of will. At times this discourse is incidental to the work of fundraising. Volunteers tell stories when they ask neighbors for money or recruit new labor. But some volunteers, like Leann, see raising Americans' consciousness as part of their voluntary mission. Lindsey and Leann might be exceptional in their network influence, but the bulk of my interviews suggest that the typical grassroots NGO board member or international volunteer could easily discuss work with 50-100 family members, friends, and colleagues during their affiliation with the organization. Averaging five board members per organization, each grassroots NGO could conservatively reach 250 people through personal discussions; multiplied over the population of active NGOs, 2.6 million Americans would have a personal connection to one of these groups. The accounts offered by NGO volunteers differ in their particulars, but all are narratives that center on poverty and the ability of Americans to help.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

One of the unanticipated benefits of my fieldwork in Africa was the opportunity to walk in the shoes of organizations' donors and volunteers. Like them, I got the pre-trip vaccinations and malaria drugs, took the long and uncomfortable flight, and arrived in a country where my skin color made me a conspicuous visitor. As an American visitor to these NGOs, I was courted as a prospective donor. I received the grand tour of projects, was introduced around, dined, and briefed on the needs of the organization. And by the end of my visit, I got the pitch: that when I returned home I would "remember" them and "advocate" for them. That I would pray for their success as they would pray for mine. In one instance, I gave an envelope with \$100. I saw that my financial resources and networks had far greater purchasing power in East Africa than they do in the United States.

Most recently, those networks came into play when I learned about a full scholarship opportunity for African students. A family member was in a position to "advocate" for good candidates, and I was asked if I knew of any. I did: the first teacher hired at the school run by Activate Tanzania. He was born in the village and returned to teach at the new secondary school, having been one of only a handful of young people in a generation to achieve post-primary education. He started tutoring village students for the school before he was ever paid a penny, and had stayed on at the school despite high staff turnover. He had told me he deeply hoped to continue a university education. His story was perfect! He could win one of these scholarships! I would change his life!

Those were the key words: I would change his life. I would be like a fairy godmother. My connections to an American university, commonplace here, would be like magic in an African context. This is what I had heard, in other words, in so many interviews. Because American resources go so much further in the developing world, they can be transformative. There is an allure for Americans that they can come in, and with a phone call here, a few thousand or even a hundred dollars there, and change someone's life. In fact, the idea of "changing lives" is more of what I heard than "changing the world." Changing the world is a political act. Changing a life is a personal one.

This episode showed me the allure of personal aid that defines and animates GINGOs. It has never been so easy for so many rich to encounter so many poor of whom they know so little. Americans can now meet—and stay in touch with—poor people on the other side of the world, and our modern beliefs in progress and the power of the individual have been harnessed to the development project.

GINGOs are part of the apparatus of globalization that Appadurai (1996) saw replacing the "megarhetoric of development" with "micronarratives." Personal relationships, as we have seen, provide the motivation and Southern partners for Americans to launch new organizations. Kinship and friendship are the vectors for cash and volunteer labor to GINGOs and are also the mode by which GINGOs influence American ideas of the global South. The personal histories of mobility and skills of GINGO founders define the organizations' aid projects. Grassroots NGOs largely reject expert narratives of development in favor of popular narratives that depict development not as a case of developing the right institutions but as inciting individual mobility.

The study of these organizations opens doors to the deeper subtlety of cultural exports beneath the "world culture" that organizations from the global center carry with them to the

periphery. Leaders of GINGOs are not on the conference circuit together and don't rub shoulders on K Street. Instead, GINGOs are based in communities in every state of the union, and separated from the normative pressures of professional aid. Not restrained by the professional norms of larger, established NGOs, these organizations' cultural exports may be influenced by religious beliefs or American civic practices.

The efficiency and rigor that is prized by rational, professionalized organizations takes a secondary place for GINGOs. These groups prize *probity*—they know the money is not being siphoned for imported Audis—but there is far less pressure for quantifiable results. Pastor Bill Smith could live with the inefficiency of “reinventing the wheel” because “it was OUR wheel.” The ability to express values of tolerance, solidarity, and generosity are at the heart of people's attraction to GINGOs, as shown in interviews with Natalie (“I wanted it to be an open door for people to come and serve”) and Leann (who wanted to reach her intolerant, “uneducated family members”).

The strong presence of religion in GINGOs and the way the rational and modern mix with the theistic challenges world society theory's depiction of NGOs. Recall that even as Natalie met with engineering experts on biogas toilets, she referred to “my conversations with God” as the major influence on strategic decisions for the organization. Texans and Ugandans both told me that God had worked through nine-year-old Lindsey to provide funds for the group, and that shared belief in how God works is at the heart of their partnership.

In other words, GINGOs are voluntary organizations shaped not just by the high organization of modernity but also by an emphasis on the expressive role of nonprofit action. This research should revise sociological understandings of NGOs and revive an appreciation among nonprofit scholars of the place of expressive qualities vis-à-vis professionalization.

I have shown that globalization provides spaces to resist the pressures of organizational formalization—but tenuously. The trend among nonprofit organizations (Hwang and Powell 2009) and aid agencies (Lancaster 2009, Honig 2014) towards greater professionalization, routinization, and outcome-measurement is well-documented. In the past these institutional pressures combined with logistical pressures in the case of aid organizations. Aid agencies funded from abroad had to rely on the limited networks of paved roads and phone lines, which usually meant expensive brick office compounds in capital cities and regional towns. The relatively cheap back-and-forth travel and more importantly, the ability to communicate from Des Moines to Dakar by email and text message have drastically shrunk the functional demands for organizational elaboration. These changes in travel and communication have indirectly shifted institutional pressures as well. The leaders of grassroots aid organizations can be part-time volunteers whose primary commitments remain to their own work and personal networks. They are not socialized in the graduate degree programs or career circuits of full-time aid workers. In short, grassroots aid organizations are not oriented to the professional field of development aid.

But this different orientation hinges on aid organizations' small budgets and ability to self-finance. Leaders of Indego Africa and Wellsprings of Hope, the case study NGOs with the largest budgets, expressed concern that increased logistical demands of expanded programs worked against the personal ethos that was at the heart of the organizations. As long as GINGOs rely on personal networks of individual donors to finance their work, there are few pressures to quantify their outputs. Yet all five case study NGOs said that expanding their work would require winning grants, and foundation gifts almost inevitably come with demands for greater formalization (Hwang and Powell 2009). This pressure hints at two possible paths for grassroots

aid organizations: groups who maintain low-budget, self-financed projects and who remains structured something like minimalist organizations (Halliday et al. 1987, DiMaggio 2006), and others who look to expand with government and foundation financing and who structure themselves to align with those funders' requirements, eventually functioning as traditional aid NGOs.

Implications

GINGOs are a significant new site for Americans' voluntarism and charitable giving. Gifts of time and money to international organizations are unlikely to overtake those to religious organizations and educational institutions—at present the most common recipients—any time soon. But it seems likely that gifts to GINGOs will substitute for gifts to other charitable organizations. We need further research to detect this on a large scale—data projects like the Philanthropy Panel Study will be useful. Yet this dissertation provides clues. The founders of GINGOs have made extraordinary contributions that are a net gain for charity—in other words, people like Erasto wouldn't have given so much time and money to any other cause. But the friends and family that support GINGOs are more likely to be substituting. Consider Evan, the volunteer for Activate Tanzania who used his family's annual golf outing to raise money for a preschool in Muyinga. Muyinga's gain likely came at a cost to a Minnesota charity. Volunteers for Wellsprings of Hope told me that there was some occasional grumbling from church members that so much congregational time and money goes to supporting that organization rather than denominational projects. Whether we consider dollars sent to development projects in the global South rather than domestic charities to be a good thing (Peter Singer, for example, probably would) is a separate normative question. But we can say with certainty that dividing up

the charitable pie into more pieces—even if the pie is a bit larger—will be the source of anxiety among existing American nonprofits that struggle to stay solvent.

These organizations are also likely to loom large in the minds of their American donors and volunteers, shaping how they view the countries in question, the nature of global poverty, and the role of private actors and governments to respond. Aid is a peculiar lens for seeing faraway people and places. One gazes on failure and dysfunction, assuming outsiders have the tools to help. Grassroots aid is still more peculiar still—it is perhaps a fisheye lens, suggesting intimacy while distorting anything that lays beyond the focal point. As I showed in the last chapter, the images of the global South that GINGOs offer their supporters are highly dependent on the interests and relationships of the groups' founders. GINGOs' portrayals of the global South risk underestimating both the agency of aid recipients and the complexity of the problems. Grassroots NGOs often emphasize the potential of transnational partnership and minimize the importance of the state and political processes. Volunteers' depiction of Southern governments ranges from “annoyance” to “predator.” We saw in Chapter 8 that GINGOs' depictions of the global South are likely to be biased but influential—qualitatively, for the individuals they reach, and quantitatively, with influence on personal networks potentially numbering two and a half million Americans. GINGOs thus follow the tradition of religious missionaries and Peace Corps volunteers as everyday Americans' personal link to the global South.

These are the effects of grassroots NGOs in the United States. GINGOs' consequences for development emerge from their particular potential and vulnerabilities compared with other development organizations. All aid programs risk mis-diagnosing or oversimplifying development problems. James Ferguson (1997) famously described a Canadian aid agency's failed attempt to improve agricultural production in Lesotho, which overlooked that the region's

residents were not actually farmers but migrant laborers in South African mines. But GINGOs' vulnerabilities to these errors are different from professionalized NGOs. First, the leaders of GINGOs typically have less knowledge of the local context than traditional aid agencies. Leaders—even emigrants like Erasto—spend only weeks or months of the year in the field and instead rely on the reports of their local brokers. Many NGO leaders have few local language skills and must rely on translators or ask locals to speak English. Important information can be lost in translation or is unheard as Americans are deaf to the small conversations taking place around them. American leaders lack not only codified knowledge of the professional development field, they also lack the contextual knowledge of the past development efforts—failed or successful—in their particular sites. As Bill Smith conceded, GINGOs can spend a lot of time “reinventing the wheel.”

The desire to make it “OUR wheel”—the high expressive quality—is another vulnerability of grassroots NGOs. These organizations are launched as passion projects of the founders. These founders' understanding of development draws on their ideas of what has made them—or their ancestors--successful: education, occupational skills, or religious practices. And this personal transmission of goods, services, or knowledge is appropriate for aid that is about development “one Deaton at a time,” in the context of personal relationships. The expressive quality of GINGOs and the emotional valence of the work is critical to understanding these groups. Americans involved with GINGOs derive deep emotional satisfaction (and sometimes frustration) from their efforts. Allowing expressive impulses to flourish in an NGO requires certain accommodations. It means choosing interventions that are of interest to Americans; it means allowing in foreign volunteers, even if it isn't particularly efficient; it means constant negotiating and emotional work between outsiders' ideas and insiders' practical knowledge.

Like all aid organizations, GINGOs must find ways to be accountable to the people they benefit and not just the people that fund them. Grassroots NGOs have the advantages of small size and closer relationships with beneficiaries, compared with organizations that are the final link of an “aid chain” and are beholden to priorities set by officials several levels up. Yet even among GINGOs, the reliance on brokers, the imperative of founders’ expressive ideals, and those leaders’ part-time presence are barriers. The case study groups tried to overcome these problems by employing local staff or boards of directors and by cultivating personal relationships with local stakeholders. Whether and how these strategies can be effective are areas for future research.

The independence of grassroots NGOs from the pressures facing larger aid organizations is an advantage in another respect. Larger organizations are constantly pushed to demonstrate their results and to create projects that can be replicated. Grassroots NGOs, since they are supported by personal networks of family and friends, are immune to these pressures. Their accountability to their donors is based on personal relationships rather than formal metrics. These organizations have the opportunity to work “deeply” in a community rather than widely. I predict that where these organizations are successful, it will be in places where they have made longstanding commitments to a particular community.

One of the texts that recurred many times on websites to rationalize the work of grassroots NGOs was a story of a girl walking on a beach where thousands of starfish had washed up, and would presumably die out of the water. The girl was picking up starfish and throwing them back in the water when a man came up to her and told her to let it go, that she

couldn't possibly make a difference when there were so many. The girl tossed another starfish into the water and said, "I made a difference to that one."

On one hand, this allegory makes a convincing case for particularistic but limited charity. I, too, have been the girl tossing starfish, trying to change one life at a time. It is churlish not to recognize that many of the goods provided by GINGOs—more schools, more medical care, more clean water—are of themselves good things. But it is the task of social scientists—we “experts,” however flawed—to interject into the story that the poor are not starfish, and global inequality is not the sea. Human beings have access, however complicated and politically difficult, to the forces that raise the fortunes of some nations while drowning the fortunes of others. However useful that they can be to individual starfish, the Americans that support grassroots NGOs should not forget about the tides.

Appendix 1. Codes used in Content Analysis

AID CONTEXT: civilized/developed/progressing
 AID CONTEXT: corrupt
 AID CONTEXT: destination country
 AID CONTEXT: ecological/economic conditions
 AID CONTEXT: past strife/disaster
 AID CONTEXT: poverty statistics

DONOR: child sponsorship
 DONOR: goods solicited
 DONOR: local volunteer work solicited
 DONOR: money solicited
 DONOR: prayer solicited
 DONOR: social media
 DONOR: volunteer work/visits abroad solicited

(Mode of Action sectors:)

MODE OF ACTION: agriculture
 MODE OF ACTION: aid to US communities
 MODE OF ACTION: animal husbandry
 MODE OF ACTION: capacity building
 MODE OF ACTION: Christian ministry
 MODE OF ACTION: clean water source
 MODE OF ACTION: cultural exchange
 MODE OF ACTION: democracy building/politics
 MODE OF ACTION: disaster relief
 MODE OF ACTION: economic development
 MODE OF ACTION: education
 MODE OF ACTION: empowerment/self-esteem
 MODE OF ACTION: forestry/ecology
 MODE OF ACTION: goods for export
 MODE OF ACTION: green technology
 MODE OF ACTION: housing
 MODE OF ACTION: landscaping/clean up
 MODE OF ACTION: loans/microcredit
 MODE OF ACTION: medical supplies/local clinics
 MODE OF ACTION: medical teams
 MODE OF ACTION: orphanage
 MODE OF ACTION: research
 MODE OF ACTION: small business/microenterprise
 MODE OF ACTION: sports
 MODE OF ACTION: support Buddhist institutions
 MODE OF ACTION: support cultural heritage
 MODE OF ACTION: teach English
 MODE OF ACTION: family planning/women's health
 MODE OF ACTION: feeding/food distribution

(Mode of Action qualities:)

MODE OF ACTION: change lives
 MODE OF ACTION: education=mobility
 MODE OF ACTION: effective
 MODE OF ACTION: efficient

MODE OF ACTION: empower through enterprise
 MODE OF ACTION: evidence-based/data-driven
 MODE OF ACTION: exempt from efficiency
 MODE OF ACTION: following plan of local authorities
 MODE OF ACTION: money to other orgs
 MODE OF ACTION: rational governance
 MODE OF ACTION: relies on local knowledge
 MODE OF ACTION: scientific/tech/biz expertise from US
 MODE OF ACTION: self-sufficiency
 MODE OF ACTION: sustainable
 MODE OF ACTION: transparent
 MODE OF ACTION: volunteer-run
 MODE OF ACTION: women uplift family
 MODE OF ACTION: X\$ will buy...

NETWORK: artists or arts orgs
 NETWORK: business donors
 NETWORK: business partners (non-retail, non donor)
 NETWORK: cooperatives
 NETWORK: foreign government
 NETWORK: foundation donors
 NETWORK: immigrant/diaspora org outside
 NETWORK: INGO
 NETWORK: local congregation
 NETWORK: local NGO
 NETWORK: org has affiliates outside US
 NETWORK: other U.S. chapter
 NETWORK: retail partners
 NETWORK: Rotary Club
 NETWORK: US congregation
 NETWORK: US govt (any level or agency)
 NETWORK: US school
 NETWORK: US university

RATIONALE: anyone can make a difference
 RATIONALE: edification of volunteers
 RATIONALE: epidemic disease
 RATIONALE: gaps in government services
 RATIONALE: gender inequality
 RATIONALE: general underprivilege
 RATIONALE: God's purposes
 RATIONALE: human rights
 RATIONALE: justice
 RATIONALE: natural disaster
 RATIONALE: oppression by outsiders
 RATIONALE: political strife
 RATIONALE: problem is solvable (w/ right intervention)
 RATIONALE: refer to int'l org (WHO, UNDP, etc.)
 RATIONALE: refer to scientific authority
 RATIONALE: small world/interdependence
 RATIONALE: suffering
 RATIONALE: war

RECIPIENT: childlike or naive
RECIPIENT: children/youth
RECIPIENT: disabled
RECIPIENT: elderly
RECIPIENT: families
RECIPIENT: future ambitions
RECIPIENT: hardworking
RECIPIENT: has positive attitude
RECIPIENT: kind/good/hospitable
RECIPIENT: living in deprived conditions
RECIPIENT: men
RECIPIENT: orphans
RECIPIENT: personal story
RECIPIENT: referred to by work role
RECIPIENT: rural communities
RECIPIENT: universalism
RECIPIENT: urban communities
RECIPIENT: vulnerable
RECIPIENT: women
RECIPIENT: world citizenship
RECIPIENT: made bad decisions
RECIPIENT: transformed by project

RELIGION: Bible verse
RELIGION: Critique of/conversion from non-Christian religion

VOLUNTEER: BA or higher
VOLUNTEER: career change
VOLUNTEER: Christian
VOLUNTEER: elite university
VOLUNTEER: immigrant
VOLUNTEER: in memory of loved one
VOLUNTEER: link through adoption
VOLUNTEER: non-immigrant in imm-founded org
VOLUNTEER: previous global voluntarism or travel
VOLUNTEER: serendipitous meeting w/ local(ity)
VOLUNTEER: uses familial language towards recipients
VOLUNTEER: working w/ spouse/partner child

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