STREET ENVIRONMENTALISM
Civic Associations and Environmental Practices in the Urban Governance of Third World Megacities

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I
THIRD WORLD URBAN ENVIRONMENT
AS A RESEARCH INTEREST

1. AN ORIENTATION

The contemporary movement of humankind from rural to urban habitats represents a major demographic transition of the 21st century. In particular, Third World human agglomerations have endured economic, political, social and cultural transformations, which are deeply entangled in the rise of multifaceted environmental questions and spatial transformations in these regions. The limits of governments in responding to these changes, i.e., the question of urban governability, is a particularly urgent issue in the largest human settlements, so called megacities, on which the present study focuses. As a response to such urban governance problems, there is emerging a socio-ecological phenomenon that makes large cities an intriguing object of study for social scientific research. In these regions, urban-based environmental knowledge – as to how humans could inhabit very large settlements and yet try to sustain their ecological systems – developed by various citizen groups is sprouting, thus representing a novel issue to be explored.

Along with urban growth, it can be expected that the issue of the urban environment will attract more attention; however, at the moment the literature focusing on this issue is scarce. City authorities intend to alleviate environment-related pathologies of rapid urbanization through predominantly fragmented and technological, if not mechanistic, responses. Environmentalists, on the other hand, instead of recognizing and examining working solutions for the Third World urban crisis, have got stuck in the degrading aspects of urban life and somewhat implicitly ignored Third World cities as ecologically ‘lost spaces’, concerning both global and local environmental agendas. Since it is not realistic to discuss the reversal of the ongoing urban growth process, it is more appropriate to change perceptions and search for positive responses to various environmental questions in
cities. The point of departure in this study is that this change requires effective encouragement of local human resources in finding innovative solutions and turning them into common practices in the urban neighborhoods of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The relationships among various urban actors in environmental issues have to be reorganized concurrently, in a multidisciplinary search for novel modes of urban governance. Since cities always have diffused innovations, new environment-oriented practices can also be transferred both within a city and from one region to another. The prerequisite for this reform is the presence of organized, collective urban civic action, which I call *street environmentalism*.

The point of departure in this study is that urban growth-driven environmental questions have posed a surmountable challenge for Third World city authorities, and consequently, new social space has opened up to non-governmental organizations, such as *civic associations*, which have entered the urban scene. The main task has been to find out what their possible contribution to urban governance in environment-related issues could be. The study is inspired by the following intertwined subquestions:

- what kind of urban agglomerations are Third World megacities?
- why are environmental problems there exacerbated and difficult to solve by the city authorities alone?
- in which conditions does collective action usually arise?
- what innate characteristics do non-governmental organizations hold in general, and what kind of relations they are expected to have with other actors in urban governance?
- how do civic associations intend to curb various environmental problems in the urban neighborhoods and what challenges do they face?

Hence my aim is to pursue an analysis of urban growth-driven environmental questions in the Third World and the possibilities of citizens to resolve them collectively in large cities by creating certain *practices* in urban neighborhoods. Based on my case studies from Egypt and Cairo, my overall conclusion is that certain civic associations can contribute to the creation of new urban governance structures in Third World large cities.

2. **Conceptual and Methodological Positions**

*The approach*

This work represents a contemporary, new paradigm in Third World urban studies by addressing the role of non-governmental actors in emerging modes of urban governance. I have not only investigated the subject according to my own disciplinary backgrounds – regional studies and
environmental policy – but have also sought to integrate my analysis with those of other disciplines (cf. McCarney, 1995). The theme of the work belongs to the field of interdisciplinary development studies, with the special emphasis on development geography and urban studies. Also several other disciplines are represented, such as sociology and administrative sciences. A problem-oriented study requires an approach that provides an adequate framework for the phenomenon analyzed. In other words, we need to look at the broad context of the subject – Third World urban growth and the notion of megacities; the state and nature of their environment; the limitations of authorities to solve urban problems; the constraints on and possibilities for community activism; the rise of new social movements; the internal characteristics of non-governmental organizations; and the emergence of new urban governance. Otherwise it would be very difficult to understand the entire setting in which urban environmental associations evolve, perform and interact, and which determines the challenges they encounter. To capture the diversity and complexity of a Third World city, while at the same time trying to comprehend the city as a whole, poses here a challenge:

The disparate nature of research on the urban environment is partly due to the diversity of disciplines engaged in this field. Researchers with an ecological background, for example, stress the need for conservation … In contrast, sociologists, political scientists … view the city not as an ecosystem but rather as an organizational entity which encompasses a social structure, political boundaries, and economic and political systems that govern the city and affect the urban environment. Researchers in the health field do not usually consider the city as either an ecosystem or an organizational entity. Instead, they begin with disease vectors and human health risks resulting from urban quality of life parameters. (McCarney, 1995.)

The fragmentation and sub-division within social science mirrors and reinforces fragmentation and division within a city. What is needed instead is a holistic view which will bring these various perspectives and knowledges together, as well as focus not only on identifying problems but on providing solutions. (MacGregor, 1995.)

When selecting the approach of this work, I considered it meaningful to find out the dynamics of the megacity development by combining theoretical and conceptual analysis with pragmatic examples. Hence my material draws on empirical research, primary sources and extensive analysis of secondary sources. It can be said that this is a theoretical work which, however, is rooted in empirical evidence. In addition, despite my focus is on collective action, my methodology is not based on action research at the grassroots level, but rather, I have favored focusing on the organizational level questions as to how socio-environmental practices, a new ‘equipage for governance’, are formed there, i.e., what new solutions ENGOs can bring into urban governance.
Geographically, the study deals with Third World megacities worldwide; however, it has a special relevance for the African and Asian contexts. I have chosen three NGO case studies from the capital of Egypt, Cairo, and two from the capital of India, Delhi. Due to the research setting and the qualitative research material here, it is not appropriate to make broad generalizations on the phenomenon, but rather, to find a few analytical generalizations which might be useful in interpreting and explaining some other cases beyond this study (see Yin, 1989, in Uusitalo, 1991: 78). In other words, these five cases are extrapolated to the wider context of urban environmental civic activity, and thus they are meant to illuminate the diversity of the phenomenon (see Alasuutari, 1993: 197, 208-210).

**The concepts**

Another feature that makes the research setting initially challenging is that all central terms are very recent and, consequently, more or less ambiguous and thus highly debatable: ‘megacity’; ‘environmental problem’; ‘environmentalism’; ‘non-governmental organization’ or ‘civic association’; and ‘governance’. I have had to make conceptual choices when using these terms, and to select the most relevant ones in regard to the context. In addition, I will also define their ‘subterms’ in relevant chapters and, in some instances, try to further develop their definitions. Due to the novelty of the subject matter, it is appropriate to define each of the central terms used here in the beginning of the study. Before that, however, I define the ‘supra-context’ of this work, the Third World.

The term appeared for the first time in 1952, in an article by a French economist and demographer, Alfred Sauvy. Nevertheless, the concept, which the term expresses, is not only his invention but rather, the reflection of the reality of the continents which have been excluded from power in the world. The term has come to manifest the idea that this exclusion has generated a set of certain common, historically determined socio-economic characteristics shared by the societies and peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. The term does not carry value-laden connotations that are associated with ‘underdeveloped countries’. The term ‘developing countries’ is regarded as insulting to the peoples of the Third World since it assumes a linear path to development with the ‘developed’ countries as the end model to aspire towards. It has been mentioned to a lesser extent that Sauvy considered the Third World (Tiers Monde) as a modern parallel to the Third Estate (Tiers État) of the French Revolution, the class of commoners. Thus Sauvy’s term carries not only the idea of exclusion from power, but more interestingly, the idea of the revolutionary potential in these regions. (Hadjor, 1993: 3; see also Miller, 1995: 19-26.)

Although it can also be considered that the Third World has lost its relevance along with the disappearance of the ‘Second World’, it carries these specific characteristics and therefore it is still found to be a useful concept. In addition, the terms ‘Third World’ and the ‘South’ are used
interchangeably to refer to all countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia (except Japan). The term ‘North’ is used to refer to countries in Europe, North America and the former Soviet Union and to Japan. None of these terms are fully satisfactory: in spite of the fact that ‘North’ and ‘South’ do not have normative entailments, they are not quite accurate geographically (for instance, Australia and New Zealand may be included in the ‘North’ politically and economically but are part of the ‘South’ in geographical terms). Also the use of the terms ‘industrialized’ and ‘non-industrialized’ nations has also lost its meaning, given the high level of industrialization evident in many Latin American and Asian nations, and some African nations. (Kothari, 1999; see also Hardoy et al, 1997: 221-222, n4.) It must be pointed out that there is a growing South in the North and a North in the South, particularly within cities. According to the Smitu Kothari (1999), the “two North’s are increasingly looking similar and have similar aspirations while the South’s are experiencing both the victimization as well as the resistance and mobilization to dominant development paths”. In addition, I will use occasionally the term ‘Western(ization)’ to refer to development processes marked by the modernization project. Figure 1 (see page 14) shows the division between North and South, and the geographical location of the largest cities in the Third World.

In order to help in framing the research question, I have selected megacities out of various types of urban areas. The term megacity, which is currently an established term in urban studies, started to appear in the 1970s and 1980s in international urban studies discourses along with the contribution of Janice Perlman, who is the founder of the transnational non-profit network The Mega-Cities Project, which is engaged in transferring innovative solutions to various urban problems between the world’s largest cities. She argues (1990) that all the world’s megacities, regardless of demographic factors, level of economic development, political structure, or socio-cultural background, share certain fundamental problems, such as: increasing demands on limited city budgets; extreme polarization between rich and poor; severe environmental strain; fragmented program initiatives; isolation among sectors and disciplines; and powerful resistance to change in the status quo. The urban problems we deal with are not necessarily exclusive to megacities, but simply emerge on more multiple scales in those cities. Also, if any innovation works in a megacity, it is most likely to work in smaller cities. Hence these common denominators Perlman points out favor the usage of ‘megacity’ both in the Third World and First World countries.1

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1 Perlman (1990) has suggested four global transformations taking place in this century, from: rural to urban; north to south; formal to informal; and, cities to megacities.
Figure 1: The North-South divide and the geographical location of the Third World’s megacities (modified from Potter & Lloyd-Evans, 1998: 17)
The image of ‘gigantism’ attached to a megacity development cannot be avoided, but in fact, this ostentatious term perhaps better characterizes the high-tech and modern big cities like New York or Tokyo. Since rapid urbanization rates, large-scale poverty and the rise of informal settlements, among others, are features common to all Third World cities, can there then be found a more appropriate term in the Third World context? Considering especially the urban structures, functions, and spatial morphology of large Third World cities, a more appropriate term could be ‘megatown’, which more accurately refers to the rural or town-like appearance and way of life in these regions. Perhaps ‘megavillage’ would be even better, especially referring to young, evolving African cities with low level urban structures, appearing as collections of hundreds of villages in close proximity. But, on the other hand, very old urban areas such as Cairo and Delhi are without a doubt, very much megacities.

It is quite striking that at the turn of this century, almost all the world’s 20 largest megacities are located in the Third World – although it also must be pointed out that still just 5 percent of the total world population live in megacities (United Nations, 2000: 2-3). The definition of a megacity has varied between 8 and 10 million as a minimum population, however, the most recent sources quote 10 million (e.g., ibid.) A megacity is often a conurbation of a city proper and its suburbs or towns (e.g. ‘Greater Cairo’ or ‘Metro Manila’). A definition based merely on population size does not suffice because the city should also have a primary economic and political position in the city hierarchy at national and also international levels. Educational facilities, service functions, cultural amenities etc. are other criteria. (Work In Progress, 1991: 1; Goldstein, 1994.) In addition, despite the fact that many large Third World cities are currently undergoing a counterforce, deurbanization, megacities will be the inevitable future for many of the contemporary urban areas that are experiencing rapid urbanization rates. This is the reason why in the study I will occasionally refer to cities of more than 5 million people (metropolises) as potential future megacities.2

In all, there is a range of physical and managerial problems typical of enormous urban agglomerations, cited together as ‘governance failures’. Thus the issues of urban governance and environmental sustainability are at

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2 I will also use the terms urban space and place throughout the study. The place is denominated through its sense of localness, particularity and the sense of boundness. It is often contrasted with space: its infinity and “its sense of the universal, the generalizable and the abstract”. (Schultze & Boland, 2000; Giddens, 1990: 18.) In the present study, I use space at least in two ways when analyzing megacities. Firstly, I use it when discussing megacities in global processes, especially in the notion of global cities (e.g., Sassen, 1996). Secondly, as Findlay (1994: xiv) remarks, urban space is contested by many different development forces. I will illustrate these forces by analyzing socio-spatial divisions in Cairo and Delhi. The issue of place comes up especially in the case of civic associations, their target sites and social relations at the local level, in which I seek to clearly demonstrate the particularity and local boundness of their environmental practices.
the core of megacity development debates (see also Pugh, 1996c). It is argued that the organic foundation of human existence is in crisis (Parajuli, 1991). Basically, a crisis refers to the existence of a persistent difficulty in a system, from which the system cannot come out untransformed (Kaviraj, 1995). It implies an idea of change and indicates a moment in which to introduce new tools, leading to the creation of new innovations; a crisis is often a necessary condition for the formation of a new theory (Kuhn, 1970). There is a common agreement that due to governance problems large Third World cities are now in the midst of a massive crisis, which calls for a change in the way issues are perceived; contemporary institutions and the techniques of governing are no longer sufficient (e.g. Duhl, 1993; Kharoufi, 1994). It can also be evinced that the scale and pace of this urban crisis places humanity in a new historical situation. Perlman (1990), being perhaps the most optimistic advocate for a megacity future, has an encouraging approach to these regions and their potential development, regarding them as places of abundant human and natural resources:

3

The above citation implies that we are actually lacking environmental knowledge systems that enable humans to live in large urban settlements along with the sustenance of their ecological functions.

Environmentalism is a very heterogeneous domain of environmental concerns, philosophies, ideologies and action. Kay Milton (1995) asserts that environmentalism is a “quest for a viable future, pursued through the implementation of culturally defined responsibilities”, i.e., social commitments, which arise from the idea that human activities influencing the environment ought to be controlled in some ways. But these general descriptions initially fail to grasp the complexity and contradictory nature of the phenomenon; its various visions and answers to the question for whom, or what, the future should be viable. Environmentalism is included in the practices of both industrial and non-industrial cultures. Sociologists and political scientists have tended to set their analysis of environmentalism within the broader study of social movements (see e.g. Eyerman and Jamison, 1991: 66-78).

Environmentalism in the Third World context has concentrated on indigenous knowledge systems, and thus it has not yet fully recognized the

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3 Hereafter, the emphasis on certain words in citations is made by me, if not otherwise mentioned.
growth of Third World cities and the urgency of everyday life problems that people struggle with (cf. Ghai & Vivian, 1995). A large part of environmentalism actually has anti-urban connotations when emphasizing issues such as: conservation of natural resources; protecting the rights of indigenous people; climate change and ozone depletion. Martin W. Lewis (1995: 87-89, 97) points out that those who reject urbanism are principally the green extremists or eco-radicals, who consider that especially large cities are intrinsically destructive of both nature and humanity, and thus they deserve to decline and vanish. On the other side, some environmentalists argue that urban growth can offer the only hope for habitat preservation: if rural populations continue to expand, the natural resources of the globe will inevitably diminish. (Terborgh, 1989, in Lewis, 1995: 202).4 In addition, some analysts believe that, through urbanization, humanity can better control its population growth (ibid.).

A number of scholars believe that the future of environmentalism will increasingly depend on small, innovative grassroots organizations, and the ability of these small entities to come together to achieve significant political and social change relies upon their ability to come together over common goals. (Epstein, 2000.) Of various environmental approaches, the theme of this study is perhaps closest to so-called people-centered environmentalism by bringing a ‘human face’ into environmental debates, and thereby expanding the concept of environmentalism beyond preservation of the wilderness to include the impact of environmental hazards and the degradation of the environment more broadly, the impact on the daily lives and health of ordinary people. Its central idea is that the struggle for environmental justice is a “struggle for health”, both among urban and rural groups, and the health of the natural environment. This approach is rooted in the Écojustice Movement (mainly originating in the US and its minority groups), which addresses intrinsic problems in contemporary social structures and economic systems. Thus, its “constituency is diverse and weighted towards those with less power and resources”. (see further Di Chiro, 1997; Epstein, 2000.) I will elaborate the traditional and new social movement (NSM) theories and study their relevance to some Third World mainstream green movements and urban NGOs. The emergence of NSMs coincidences with the declining hegemony of the development discourse both in the First World and in the Third World (Parajuli, 1991).

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4 In addition, Lewis asks whether the wretchedly degraded, large city environments stem from urbanism per se or from the poverty that accompanies low levels of economic development – however, he also admits that certain environmental challenges may not be solved by economic development alone. Furthermore, the role of “political failures” or over-bureaucratization and other forms of centralization in urban, “ungenuine” development are recognized as causing single massive cities in the Third World. As a solution it is suggested to recognize the necessity of urbanization and the importance of industrial development, and enhance “genuine urban-social development” in which “social mainstreaming of marginalized urban settlers” is essential (Lewis, 1995: 202-205).
It cannot be overemphasized that the concept of the environment in the Third World urban context has a quite different meaning compared to that of First World countries. Here it provides a framework in which ecological concerns are indistinguishable from political, economic and social, as well as spatial characteristics of cities. It is utmost important to keep in mind that environmental questions specially affect low-income or poor settlements that shelter a significant part, if not the majority, of the urban dwellers. Conditions under which people live include overcrowded and unsafe settlements; polluted and insufficient water resources; inadequate or lacking sanitation, garbage collection and drainage systems – all of which cause severe health effects and risks (Hardoy et al., 1997: 17-20). Instead of focusing on one environmental question, my attempt is to draw a comprehensive picture, a profile, of diverse environmental problems in Third World megacities, the urbanization forces affecting them and the possible solutions offered by various citizen groups. Thus my aim is to trace the ‘weakest links’ between environment and society (see McGranahan, 1994), and particularly the tensions that arise from this encounter. This angle, portraying a wide array of complex, intertwined socio-environmental questions, is central when discussing the real state of affairs challenging the current governance structures, as well as discussing their future conditions.

Urban growth has generated a plethora of government policy responses, but their record has not been encouraging (Dewar, 1994). Among the leading scholars in urban environmental research, Jorge Hardoy, Diane Mitlin and David Satterthwaite (1997: 21-24) have observed that in most Third World nations, both national and local governments have failed in three essential environmental actions: to enforce appropriate legislation (including that related to environmental health, occupational health and pollution control); to ensure adequate provision for systems dealing with the water supply as well as solid and liquid waste collection and treatment; and to ensure adequate health care provision to treat not only environment-related illnesses but also to implement preventive measures to limit their incidence and severity.

Thus the question of equality is essential when discussing environmental questions here. In addition, it can be argued that too much attention has been given to describing individual environmental problems and to particular technical solutions with little support for enhancing city governments’ capacity to act more effectively and democratically, particularly considering the low-income groups and their organizations promoting community initiatives to improve environmental conditions. Furthermore, in most cities, people’s capacity to build, to work collectively in addressing common problems and to negotiate effectively with local, city and national governments will continue to have the greatest influence on the quality of their living environment. Hardoy et al. (ibid.) have also argued that the quality of low-income housing and living environments will have a major influence on the quality of the whole city’s environment; however, those
institutions responding to this fact and making available appropriate kinds of technical and financial support are very rare. The majority of the most immediate and critical environmental problems in cities fall in the domain of the so-called brown agenda, which usually refers to the above issues, such as: the lack of safe water; inadequate waste management and pollution control; accidents linked to congestion and crowding; occupation and degradation of sensitive lands; and the interrelationships among these problems. In addressing the brown agenda, policy-makers and planners will need to incorporate a blend of preventive and curative measures when responding to the complex issues of rapid urbanization, productivity, poverty and the environment. This will entail making difficult political and economic trade-offs. (Leitmann, et al., 1992.)

It is thus evident that pressure towards new urban governance structures is coming especially through brown agenda issues. Traditionally, urban governance has focused on the provision of services, facilities, and other social benefits. Governance has been about the relationship between the state (government) and society (‘the governed’). The fields of public administration and policy have stressed the importance of urban management for solving environmental problems in the city. They have included a focus on the institutional capacity of municipalities to pay for and deliver environmental services, and to use the right mix of regulatory and incentive policies. More recently, governance theorists have asserted that many urban environmental problems are the result of the lack of public-private partnerships. (Leitmann, 1999: 48-49.) The limitations of governments have not been the only factor opening up space to citizen groups, but also the pressure of international donors to strengthen civil societies and democracy in the Third World in general. There is now a greater appreciation of the role of individuals, households, neighborhoods and people’s organizations in building and managing their cities, especially when finding out solutions to brown problems. Hence a new environmental agenda is needed in Third World cities, one which centers on enhancing the capacity of city authorities, professional groups, NGOs, community organizations and local people, among others, to identify and address their environmental problems (see Hardoy et al, 1997: 21.) This extensive, integrated approach as a whole is referred to as ‘good urban governance’ and it represents a new, developing paradigm also within urban studies.

Perhaps in regard to making a theoretical synthesis, the ‘wildest’ state of affairs prevails within one actor group, which is also treated as the most prominent executor of the brown agenda issues, and thereby reshaping urban governance structures: the local non-governmental organizations. The term ‘NGO’ appeared for the first time in international discussions in a United Nations document in 1953. NGOs are often defined as private, voluntary and non-profit organizations independent of any government and funded through individual and corporate donations, levies imposed on members, or grants from international agencies and governments (e.g. CEE,
THIRD WORLD URBAN ENVIRONMENT AS A RESEARCH INTEREST

The ‘NGO sector’ is undergoing a very dynamic development phase and is more complex than ever before (e.g. Gupta et al, 1998). Due to the vagueness of the description of this term, I have had to make one more conceptual choice: in order to discuss a special group among NGOs and address its origin in people’s collective action as citizens groups, I will use **civic associations** as a unifying term. ‘Civic’ refers to ‘the community of the inhabitants of a city’; civil, urban, community, metropolitan, and public-spirited, while ‘association’ refers to organization, society, and grouping. Despite the fact that the ‘civic association’ also often implies community-based groups (CBOs), in the context of this work the term refers principally to those **urban-oriented environmental organizations** which have initially been established by local ‘professionals’, but which have gradually involved the local neighborhoods in collective action and in to the management of the association; for these organizations I simply use the acronym of **ENGOs**.

I’m interested in influential, or ‘successful’ responses (cf. Jänicke & Weidner, 1995) as new tools to be injected into urban governance; socio-technological innovations that ENGOs have demonstrated when tackling various environment-related questions with the local people ‘in the streets’. I also seek to formulate a working definition of an urban environmental practice in the Third World city context.

**Remarks on urban fieldwork**

Next I will give some reflections on my fieldwork in Egypt and India. I will first give a brief introduction to the histories of Cairo and Delhi, and then consider the meaning of their cultural backgrounds for my research process. I will also point out the methodological problematique employed and the nature of the field when doing research in city environments.

*An historical overview of Cairo and Delhi.* The central role of both Cairo and Delhi in regional and international commerce and cultural life have given to these megacities a specific importance through the ages. In addition, both have been under foreign rule numerous times, which has modified their spatial structures. Whilst their urban history contains unique features, they also share many common traits as colonial cities and certain changes towards modern cities.

Cairo was founded by the Fatimid dynasty in 969 and has been ever since the capital of Egypt. A Kurdish ruler, Salah ad-Din founded his own dynasty, the Ayyubids in 1171, and declared Egypt under his rule. As a major intellectual and economic center under the Mamluks (Turkish-speaking soldier slaves, who were brought by the Baghdad-based Abbassid dynasty in order to protect their interests throughout the empire) during three centuries (1250-1517), Cairo was eclipsed when Egypt was subordinated to a province of the Turkish rule, the Ottoman Empire (1517-1914), but it began

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to revive under Muhammad Ali and was expanded and transformed under Isma’il. Napoleon’s 1798 short invasion was Egypt’s first experience of conflict with a Christian power since the Crusades. Napoleon’s rule is often cited as starting Egypt’s Westernization process, although more credit is due to Alfi Bey, a wealthy Mamluk, and to the later rule of Muhammad Ali. British occupation took place from 1882 to 1946, when the Egyptian economy came under colonial rule, which decreased the position of local market areas. Cairo became the major center of Egyptian resistance to Western colonialism. It also became the leading center of Arab culture. (Goldsmith, 1994: 66, 118; Weiss & Green, 1990: 156, 222; Raymond, 1994.) The city planners aimed at making a European-style city, which was manifested in the appearance of rectilinear, wide streets and squares in the center of the city. However, it was not until 1956 that the last British troops left the country, which also affected the demographic structure of the central area of the city. (Ilbert, 1989: 279; Hourani, 1991: 355; Mansfield, 1992: 208-211; Khalifa & Mohieddin, 1988.) During the post-colonial era under the socialist system of President Nasser, the growth of industry was regarded as a key to modernization and economic independence (Richards & Waterbury, 1991: 195-196). New residential areas were built according to this new industrialization policy which, in turn, together with Nasser’s welfare policies, enforced Cairo’s position as a capital and attracted new people to the city. However, while the population of the city grew, the maintenance and development of the infrastructure were much neglected. The infrastructure decayed in congested central areas, which were also pressured by new economic forces taking more space: this was the beginning of numerous land use conflicts in the city (Ehlers, 1988). The infrastructure in the city also became heavily overburdened, which caused malfunctions in water systems, transportation and the power supply (Lippman, 1989: 177-179). The wars during the 1960s and 1970s constrained the development of the whole country. President Sadat’s Open Door Economic Policy brought in massive consumption of products from the West, but it was also considered to have widened the gap between social classes and initiated land speculation. (Richards & Waterbury, 1991: 196-197.) The latter had a fundamental impact on land use in Cairo when numerous high-rise residential and office buildings rose in the central city. In addition, urban encroachment was sparked off when land values increased also on the fringes of the agricultural areas; while some farmers sold their land and moved to the city, others no longer cultivated their lands but waited for higher land prices. A construction boom occurred particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, while, at the same time, a large part of the population did not have proper shelter and this resulted in the emergence of informal areas on the edges of the city. (Ehlers, 1988.)

Delhi, the ‘city of nine empires’, has not only been an important political center since ancient times but also an international nerve center of politics and commerce, due to its location on the trunk route connecting prominent
trade centers through the Khyber Pass to cities in the north. The antiquity of
the city goes back to the Pandava dynasty (1450 BC) of the epic of
Mahabharata. Muslim rule over India lasted almost two and a half centuries,
1527-1757. The Mughal Emperor Shahjahan established Shahjahanabad as
his capital in 1638 AD. Today’s Old Delhi is the 17th century walled city and
three of the city’s original 14 gates have survived. The city and area
surrounding it are believed to have been the site of many ancient and
medieval cities. Following Mughal rule, the country was effectively under
British control by the early 19th century, until 1947. Delhi was the capital of
British India from 1912 to 1931, when a new city called New Delhi was
established at a distance of three miles. The British presence in Delhi
remodelled both the social and spatial structure of the city; for instance,
railways were introduced, along with a town hall, a new market and a
shopping arcade for European retailing practices. In 1912, the capital was
shifted from Calcutta to New Delhi, designed as the new administrative
capital city, adjacent to the old walled city. The city has seen an unparalleled
growth industrially, commercially, and administratively since India gained
independence from Great Britain, when its total population was less than a
million. In addition to a natural increase, almost one million refugees from
Pakistan are believed to have settled there. (Nagpaul, 1988; King, 1991: 39-
40.) An extraordinary example of colonial influence in urban planning was
the detailed residential stratification of New Delhi into rigid spatial
categories based on the complex combination of British, Indian, military,
civil and colonial ranking systems: the designated zones within which
occurred further stratification according to house size, garden and facing
direction in relation to the “social Mecca” of Government House. The old
city received some improvements in drainage and water supply but urban
planning was primarily reserved for expatriate zones. In-migration has led to
overcrowding and deterioration, and overspill into rapidly growing squatter
areas to the west and east of the old city. (Drakakis-Smith, 2000: 48-49). In
spite of massive urbanization enlarging the Old Delhi-New Delhi area in the
1960s, the colonial capital was still very much in place; for instance, at the
northern edge of the city, acting as a pivot between Old and New Delhi, was
the spacious retailing center of Connaught Circus. Hence much of the
colonial-built environment has remained intact, such as grand tree-lined
avenues and individual official bungalows located in spacious compounds.
The capital continued in its colonial and imperial function as a center of
government and administrative control. A large part of the land was
government-owned and controlled. In the 1980s the center was transformed,
taking on many of the elements of a modern capitalist city. India’s mixed
economy with democratic control has given more space to the private sector
and new external forces, such as multinationals, have encroached on both the
economic and physical territory of the state in the form of massive high-rise
office blocks. (King, 1991: 47-48.)
2. CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL POSITIONS

On the meaning of cultural context for fieldwork. In the case of Egypt, the fact that I had already visited the country several times before the first fieldwork period began, and stayed with my local family, facilitated the fieldwork to some extent. This was not the case with Delhi, which I had to begin to explore from the basics. I carried out my fieldwork in Cairo for eleven months during December 1993-September 1994, and for two months in Spring 1997, while in Delhi I stayed for two months in Fall 1998. The purpose of the first period in Egypt was to gather material for my licentiate thesis, which I finalized in 1996 as a collection of articles (part of which are also included in the reference list in the present study). In order to study Third World cities more extensively, it was necessary to include at least another megacity for empirical study, Delhi, while still considering Cairo as my ‘primary’ fieldwork area. Finally, my decision to conduct fieldwork was influenced by very personal factors: in the case of Cairo, my previous ‘familiarity’ and interest in the city and its districts weighed quite a lot in the selection, whilst in the case of Delhi, a meeting with an Indian scholar, the director of the Society for Development Studies in Delhi (in a UNU/WIDER conference on Human Settlements in 1995) guided my plans to go to India. Finally, when the funding was arranged for both cities, I made up my mind. Thus the purpose of the fieldwork was to obtain both primary and secondary material on urban development in these cities and to get to know the environmental practices the local ENGOs have created.

A problem most researchers usually face when preparing for fieldwork is to not know precisely what to prepare for. Fieldwork is a much more complex personal and professional experience than most manuals on research methodology can suggest. (Devereux & Hoddinott, 1992.) In the beginning of my actual fieldwork, in 1993, I did not have the slightest idea, what profound life experiences (ibid.) all field trips would be; what kind of cultural and social encounters and ethical considerations I would face alongside my research. Even my previous travels to Egypt, for instance, did not help in this matter since it had not been necessary to see the things I later encountered in my work. Furthermore, even the methodological literature relevant to fieldwork in city environments was scarce, although I was assured that no academic book or course can prepare oneself for those rendezvous that take place in the street life of large cities, or how to cope with their congestion and its various implications. Another ambiguous question was what kind of research material I could possibly obtain.

During my first fieldwork trip in Cairo I became acquainted with Egyptian society and Arabo-Islamic culture quite deeply through both scientific and personal experiences. It was inevitable that having a Western cultural background, I was soon captured by perplexing questions on development issues more generally, as well as the differences and interaction between non-Western and Western sciences, concerning especially the various local concepts and attitudes on issues of nature or the environment. I was also quite struck by the distinguished epistemology of urban
development in the Islamic tradition (Myllylä, 1996)\(^6\), and observed the tradition’s physical remnants in both cities. Islam and Hinduism, the two main cosmologies in the case study areas of Cairo and Delhi, have clear ecological insights, though much subdued in modern times. Interestingly, in Hindu tradition there can be found a metaphysical doctrine concerning nature along with the emergence of numerous, mostly natural sciences, some of which influenced Western science through Islam (see Nasr, 1990: 88). Now I consider that also these ‘side trips’ have enhanced my understanding of urban phenomena in today’s cities, too.

Maps 1-4 show the fieldwork study areas in Egypt and India. Egypt has only one megacity, Cairo, whilst India has four megacities, along with rapidly growing metropolises, such as Bangalore.

**Map 1. Fieldwork study country: Egypt (right top)**
Egypt has a population of 66 million people, of which 45 percent live in urban areas. The country is positioned in the conjunction of North Africa and the Middle East. More than 96 percent of Egypt’s land is desert and only 4 percent is inhabited. The capital Cairo, with a population of 17 million, is located upstream from the Nile delta, about 250 kilometers from the Mediterranean Sea. It is surrounded by desert in the east and west.

**Map 2. Fieldwork study country: India (right below)**
India has a population of 1 billion people, of which 28 percent live in urban areas. The country is bordered by the Himalayas in the north. India has most diverse ecological areas, in which also climatic conditions vary greatly. The capital Delhi is one of 25 states in the country, and is located in the north. The country is overwhelmingly rural, with four megacities.

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\(^6\) Hussein Mehmet Ateshin (1989: 168) underlines that the Muslim world has sought success and placed misguided confidence in adopting uncritically the North’s own concepts, which is also visible in cities. In the same vein, Ayyub Malik (1989: 213) argues that the values, attitudes and techniques, the entire conceptual and theoretical framework and professional structure that form the basis of approaches in solving occidental urban problems, are not available and appropriate to Muslim countries. However, there have been few attempts to materialize and ‘modernize’ these ideals in practice. Besides, as contemporary cities comprise highly diverse populations, the subject is rather sensitive and hence the approach has limited applicability. In addition, the epistemology concerning the ‘environment’ has some ambiguities in today’s world, since, for instance, the Koran term *bi’a* is often used to refer to the social context of life. It is suggested that the term ‘pollution’, *tallawuth*, perhaps better refers to the meaning of environmental problems (Hopkins et al., 1995).
2. CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL POSITIONS
Map 3. Fieldwork study area Cairo

The city is divided into eastern and western banks by the Nile River. Cairo receives its freshwater entirely from the river and its alluvial aquifer. The official size of entire Greater Cairo region is 2,900 square kilometers (Bayat & Denis, 2000). In Cairo’s spread-out the city absorbs more than 500 hectares of prime agricultural land (an average 0.5 per cent) each year (El-Batran & Arandel, 1998). (Map source Bayat & Denis, 2000)
Delhi has 14 million people and is situated on the western bank of the River Yamuna. The size of the city is an average 1485 square kilometers.
(Map source Drakakis-Smith, 2000:48)

Having a background in regional studies, I started to gradually construct a spatial arrangement of the both cites as composed of differentiated areas, by analyzing the multiple physical, both vertical and horizontal layers one could find in urban fabrics and functions – which was at times a somewhat messy intellectual process, sounding more organized than it actually was. Like a sweating biologist when anxiously detecting the right species for the alien plant form he has found in the rainforest, I probably felt the same in these...
two cities, which did not fit into any urban form or structure I had studied or experienced before. Like the biologist, I felt content that I was studying a new phenomenon, but I also knew that one has to accept cognitive limitations in the face of so huge a human-ecological entity as a megacity.

I wrote a few articles on Cairo’s urban development, including an historical overview on its growth (e.g. Myllylä, 1994). Later in Delhi it was good to make some comparisons between the two cities. They share many common features in their urbanization and governance processes; nevertheless, they also have some great differences, which I will introduce in greater detail in Chapter 2. The fact that both cities have extremely long historical legacies provided me most interesting field research sites. In addition, both cities have witnessed a phenomenal population growth since 1950s, which in turn, have manifested in the rapid densification and expansion of the megapolitan area, and the outburst of entirely new urban phenomena, which challenge traditional ideas of urbanism.

Next I will make some brief remarks as to how I personally experienced the fieldwork, especially from the viewpoint of studying environmental questions. I would like to describe the field here with a more abstract concept, the city arena. It could be viewed as a scene or stage of conditions, functions, actors, and relations, in which the researcher is ‘positioned’ in all different but often in simultaneous ways. It is about being exposed and adjusted to new societal and urban environmental conditions (Outlander’s position); making observations (Spectator’s position); and interacting with people (Player’s position). I am focusing here on situations that are connected to more general aspects of working in the city, rather than those specific issues that come up when one carries out, e.g., participatory approaches in local neighborhoods.

City arena experienced as an Outlander. The first challenge when entering the city is to begin to mentally construct its size and form; to know its districts, functions and people – so as to know how to conduct research in congested and very spread out urban areas. It could be said that arriving in these cities was like literally “stepping into” the research object itself, which was then studied from within. The same obstacles mentioned in urban fieldwork, whether being exposed to undrinkable water or daily cuts in power supply, were actually an integral part of the issues I was studying in the city: the pragmatic displays of urban governance failures. One major asset in conducting fieldwork at the site, and not only at my desk in Finland, was that I could get, at least, a slight sense of various day-to-day problems in the city’s functions; however, while in Cairo I chose to live in a lower

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7 I’m using the term arena in a different meaning than, e.g., in political science. Arena also refers to terms like realm, orbit, site, locale, milieu, terrain, etc. (Chapman, Robert, ed., 1995, Roget A to Z Thesaurus, New York: HarperPerennial) In addition, the term refers to various relations and competing forces in the city: “a scene of conflict”, or “any sphere of public or energetic action” (e.g. Oxford English Dictionary Online).
income area in the city center, naturally my personal experiences remained far beyond the conditions in a slum.

I would say that environmental problems were sensed perhaps more intensively compared to a situation in which the research topics are different. In other words, I first experienced and observed the city through somewhat distorted lenses, tracking merely the environmental pathologies and societal behaviors related to them (which I also consider part of the ‘culture shock’ effect). Later on, as more social networks opened up and I got to know my neighbors, local associations broadened my view towards more positive aspects of the life of the city. Therefore this kind of approach with an environmental concern can offer a biased angle or image of the city, much disregarding its uplifting, positive features, like the beat of a huge megapolis, its vivid street culture and social activity, etc. In fact, it is those numerous contrasts, the diversity, that makes large cities attractive places to stay.

Nevertheless, it must be addressed that a Third World megacity is a harsh place to carry out research. The extreme hot and rainy/dry weather, monsoon/sand storms, crowds, traffic jams, heavy bureaucracy, or cuts in communications technology, among other problems, were hindering factors for the execution of several parts of my research, for instance in terms of restricting or delaying commuting and contacting people. Basic issues such as clean drinking water or food could neither be taken for granted even in a city, for instance, in 1998 in Delhi, the population suffered from ‘dropsy’ cases, in which using bad quality cooking oil polluted food in households and restaurants, causing sudden illnesses and deaths around the city. But both in Cairo and Delhi my strongest negative environmental experience was connected to severe air quality. A subject one never thinks about in Finland, such as simple breathing, now determined at what time of the day and where in the city one wanted to go. Combined environmental conditions, such as air pollution with heat, or burning household waste in the streets and backyards, all causing toxic smoke, were among the most annoying circumstances. Again, it would have been difficult to fully understand the extreme local environmental conditions – such as those of the garbage-recycling site in the combusting, mid-summer heat of Cairo – only from my desk in home country. Moreover, I did not have to go far to the research ‘sites’, since I could quite often observe severe conditions next door.

Giza, a growing district in western Cairo, ends on an urban fringe, which is constantly spreading on the green fields of the Nile Delta. The place where I’m living was recently built and consists of both lower and upper middle class people inhabiting four to ten floor brick houses. Between buildings there are very few empty, green plots of land, which are gradually filling up. The outlook of the whole place is a mixture of urban and rural lifestyles. Since some green areas still exist next to the house where I’m staying, a noisy concert of frogs and the vicious attacks of mosquitoes remind every night that we are located on the edges of the city – In Cairo’s new urban areas, which are unfinished, it is typical that solid waste
collection is arranged a bit later than houses are built, so household waste is dumped into the closest vacant plot of land. On the other hand, some neighbors say that others do not want to pay for the service, which could be the actual reason for accumulating garbage dumps. Children of rural origin fellahaen families herd their geese and goats to feed on these dumps. Some days breathing, both indoors and outdoors, appears to be painful due to strange, hazardous odors and smoke in the air that also fill the rooms. The reason for this annoyance is the business-as-usual management of garbage: setting whole dumps on fire. (Fieldwork notes, 1994.)

Only after a long while one learns to avoid certain critical problems and find ways to adapt to city life, too. There were usually several options of doing or avoiding certain things – for example, to determine to what extent one wants or is capable of ‘participating’ in the activities or conditions in the city – for instance, whether to use the local, congested bus system or a more convenient taxi ride, or whether to live in a modest house with minimum facilities or a hotel room. If the research site or other local scene became too burdensome physically or mentally, there was often an option to visit more pleasant places in the city center, such as gardens, hotels and restaurants. However, what was also somewhat embarrassing to notice at the same time, was that nearly all more modern city spaces were not admissible to the large part of the city residents, the low-income people, mainly due to their rural-origin, traditional baladi looks. Even an ‘outlander’, a foreigner, such as the researcher, was privileged, and despite trying to minimize visits to these places, one involuntarily became a part of the ‘segregation game’ in the city. But I also had some restrictions on my movement in certain parts of the city, which I felt especially in Delhi. Its center became somewhat empty of people in the evening, and also its other, residential districts did not always appear that safe due to a lack of street lighting. In contrast, there were always people about in the street in Cairo, which was also devoid of a large number of beggars, pavement dwellers and violent crime (see also Wikan, 1996: 2, 6). Thus when evening fell, people crowded Cairo’s teahouses and cafeterias, central market areas, Nile bridges and shores up to midnight. But probably it would not have been wise to enter a strange slum or squatter area in either city, day or night. Maaria Seppänen (1995: 4-5) has analyzed more closely the researcher’s physicality, as she says, the “corporeal fix”, which also influences the definition of the actual field and determines the limits of knowing (e.g., the sense of fear). The physical existence, the body, interacts with the social, the economic and the political; it is about coping with human congestion, movement, time and distance, or the possibilities to fulfill one’s basic needs while staying in the field. In addition, there must also be minimum guarantees of physical inviolability when doing research. (ibid.)
Cairo’s crusader-era fortress, the Citadel (upper left corner), from which the city was controlled by Saladin (Salah ad-Din) and other rulers. The 17th century Ibn Ridwan mosque (which previously had a shop downstairs, i.e., to combine both spiritual and material needs) is located on the left and on the right is the covered market place that Ridwan also established. It is part of the Qasaba (a ‘funnel’), a long market area from the Northern gates to the South, and it comprised specialized sections, such as the Tentmakers or the Brassmakers, many of which can be seen today. The area had an average of 12,000 shops.
(Raymond, 1994: 237; Rodenbeck, 1998: 104.)
An example of massive Mughal architecture; the Lahore gate of the Red Fort in Old Delhi.
Today’s shopkeeper sells items quite similar to those brought by caravans and boats on medieval times to Cairo: “Boutiques selling inscribed ivory combs ... next door was the market for costly Siberian sable, lynx, ermine and squirrel furs ... markets towards the northern gates furnished such things as saddlery and cloth, songbirds and slaves...”.  
City arena observed as a Spectator. Doing research in these cities was much about making observations from a bystander’s position, where one perceives or mentally constructs the city through contrasting scenes, especially the varieties of human development.

Only the motorcyclers can pass the cars, trucks and autorickshaws standing still in the traffic jam on the narrow bridge of Delhi. Staying in a car and being stuck amongst the trembling vehicles, carbon monoxide vapors, black dust and heat, the Researcher has a good moment to think about the chosen research subject. It appears totally absurd to study policy responses to environmental problems in this place, for reality is so overwhelming: the stream of migrants arriving in the city is endless; more poor, handicapped beggars appear in the streets; shantytowns stretch out by the riversides; the elite becomes more isolated in their luxury areas; traffic creates a suffocating layer above the city. It is about people’s movement and free choice. Inevitably, and in spite of any restrictive measures, this city keeps on filling up and expanding at its own pace, like a living organism. (Fieldwork notes in Delhi, 1998, when returning from an interview session at the Central Pollution Control Board.)

I am not quite sure whether this brief moment of thinking I captured in Delhi reveals my Western prejudices and culture shock, or the understanding of the true physical existence of the city – or perhaps it was about all of them. However, I realized that it would be more than easy to perceive the city merely from its visible surface and then end up in shallow, moral and critical judgements on the state of affairs, particularly when it comes to population growth and poverty. On the other extreme side there lurks a trap of romanticizing the local conditions of poverty.

City arena from a Player’s position. Since urban conditions differ quite a lot from that of rural areas, experience drawn from the latter can be adapted to urban areas only to a limited extent. The characteristics and problematique of urban fieldwork in Third World countries have been studied far less compared to that of rural areas, and as a result, its methodology is not at the same stage. For instance, there has been little explicit development in participatory methodologies in urban contexts: despite the increasing number of case studies in urban community development, in general, very little emphasis has been placed on methodology. More recently, there can be found some contributions to fill this methodological gap (see, e.g. Mitlin and Thompson, 1995). Gwyn Rowley (1993) urges the development of a relatively new field in the discipline, urban anthropological studies, for example, has emphasized issues such as poverty and its different aspects; squatters and in-migrants (e.g. Van Kemper, 1988; Abu-Lughod, 1988); and the heterogeneity of urban social life, etc. Concerning more general questions, the issues of ‘Otherness’ and the position of a woman researcher are often problematized, for instance, in studies on Cairo’s poor urban quarters (see, e.g., Hoodfar, 1997; Early, 1993; Wikan, 1996; see also Razavi, 1992). In addition, George Foster and Robert van Kemper (1988) note that, with few exceptions, a majority of anthropological urban studies tell us little or nothing about the urban fieldwork experience, and furthermore, they ask, “is the urban anthropologist simply the mirror image of the rural
fieldwork within human geography, and argues that geography has been viewed as an observational, not an experimental science. He pinpoints several relevant advantages and problems of fieldwork in human geography. There are particular problems concerning entry into field situations. These problems can be divided into five groups: time; establishment; embarrassment; fear; and output. Fieldwork requires considerable time and organization, in its conceptualization, planning, setting-up, undertaking and completion. Establishment implies the nature and reality of grant-funding agencies. Rowley argues that the third feature is that “fieldwork is often considered as demeaning and mutually embarrassing, where one has to seek personal face-to-face contacts and enter into new environments, perhaps with individuals with whom one would not normally associate”. Fieldwork can also be dangerous and intimidating, even fearful, particularly where competitions and conflictive behaviors are under study. The benefits of personal fieldwork initiatives have to be set against the mounting impetus to increase research output. The time and energy spent on fieldwork may thus be considered counterproductive, or at least tangential to professional advancement and the attractions afforded by the higher outputs of desk-based research. Table 1 outlines these various aspects in personal fieldwork initiatives. It must be noted that these attributes are subjective, so some positive attributes can also be regarded as negative and vice versa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positives</th>
<th>Negatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Dangerous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>Demeaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Detail – bottomless pit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploratory</td>
<td>Discomforts (including weather)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting people in places</td>
<td>Embarrassing (both researcher and subject)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realities (people-places)</td>
<td>Intimidating, frightening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary sources</td>
<td>Intricate, complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serendipity [chance discovery]</td>
<td>Suspicions aroused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulation</td>
<td>Time-consuming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the mid-1990s, environmental policy issues were just starting to gain attention in Egypt, a reason why there were numerous, parallel actors in each environmental sector, with scarce coordination and cooperation. I also learned that religious, political, economic and ethnic ‘attachments’ affected the answers I got in the interviews; furthermore, they appeared to be among the causes behind the lack of mutual cooperation and tense opinions. In some cases it was almost impossible to grasp anything actual, as if giving sociologist? George Gmelch (1988) urges recognition of the need to develop new strategies for working in urban settings – which “is not much unlike the peasant migrant adapting to city life”.

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information on the subject matter would somehow be disadvantageous for the person or the organization, whilst in others I did not have any problems. The previous observation may be due to the fact that Third World governments are frequently suspicious of Northern researchers (e.g. Razavi, 1992). In some instances it can also be an asset to be an outsider and obtain material from certain international development agencies or local governmental authorities (e.g. Perähuhta, 1998: 15). As Heyer (1992) aptly remarks, fieldworkers always find themselves having to spend more time than they would prefer visiting and revisiting offices, sitting around, waiting to complete essential business with officials. Besides, I noticed that finding the right person for an interview and agreeing on the meeting took a considerable amount of time and effort. Conversely, I valued the time the people offered to my visits in the midst of their busy work, especially the staff and leaders of ENGOs.

John Hoddinott (1992) asserts that there is no ‘right’ length of time to undertake fieldwork. The number of weeks, months or even years spent in the field depends on many factors, such as the aims of the research, the degree of intimacy required with respondents, and logistical factors. When staying in Cairo the first time, it took about nine months to build a quite comprehensive picture of urban growth and its connections to environmental problems, as well as the various actors in Egyptian environmental policy, including ENGOs. The rest of the time I used to orientate myself to the city and to learn the local language, culture and history in order to be able to interact with local people at least on an informal basis. The next time I visited the city I focused entirely on those ENGOs I had gotten to know previously. In Delhi, on the contrary, I did not have much time to familiarize myself with the city, but straightforwardly proceeded to look for relevant sources of theoretical and empirical material. Thus, my knowledge of Cairo can be considered broader compared to Delhi.

Due to the chosen approach and research setting, I thus decided to adhere to organizational level empirical material gathering in the five case studies. The selection of ENGOs was affected by their ‘good reputation’ among the local development practitioners, international agencies and local researchers; in any case I was looking for sound ENGO practices. All the organizations were middle or large in scale; however, in general, it is also important to recognize the smaller but promising groups. Particularly the international development organizations seemed to favor larger and better-established associations (e.g. Thompson, 1998, pers.comm.). On the other hand, it is sensible when we think of urban governance at large: these kinds of organizations often have the feasibility to scale up their activities, i.e., to foster a more extensive, positive impact also in other areas in the city and even further, in other cities and countries.

I established relations with ENGOs in two ways; by contacting their leaders or visiting them the first time with a group of local practitioners who had some cooperation with the organization. Considering the local customs,
too, it was important that my visits were accepted by the management level of the organization (e.g. Hoddinott, 1992). I carried out the formal and informal interviews among the staff, volunteers and leaders, and in most cases, observed their work with the local people and participated in their meetings. Thus I excluded surveys or in-depth interviews among the residents, although some staff members also originated from the area or settlement. This choice was due to the perception that as an outsider, I felt I would have needed quite a long time to establish myself in all the five study areas, particularly in the case of ‘marginal’ groups (e.g. Assaad, 1994, pers.comm.; also Vincentian Missionaries, 1998; Francis, 1992). It would also have been difficult in terms of the planned schedule and financing of the whole study.

Hence, I am aware that focusing on this intermediary level causes some limitations when analyzing empirical material, since it greatly represents the knowledge, opinions and beliefs of a certain group, the organizations and their representatives. In addition, it is difficult to ascertain as to what extent the organization staff ‘guided’ what I saw and observed at the site. It could be expected that if I had stayed longer in each place, for instance, more controversial issues would have come up. However, I was not that much interested in the internal affairs of the settlement or the site, but rather, I was looking for those elements which composed the environmental practices per se and the organizations’ relations to the outside, towards other actors in urban governance.

Informal discussions with local people and visits to their homes brought up several important aspects on their lifestyles and the improvements the organization’s work had brought about. Personally, due to my local family and relatives in Cairo, it was not difficult for me to approach local residents there, which many times opened new doors when I met new people. However, my fluency in Arabic was restricted to ‘everyday-life communication’, so my skills were not enough for more formal or scientific discussions; neither did I know much Hindi when visiting Delhi. However, I did not have any problems with the staff members in either city since all of them spoke English, most of them very fluently. My research was carried out alone and independently, without a research assistant or interpreter.

Both in Cairo and Delhi my fieldwork included open and semi-structured interviews, library sessions, field trips and personal observations. For this study, I have chosen 40 persons whom I interviewed during my fieldwork, out of 47, which is the total number of people with whom I personally met (or otherwise contacted) during the various stages in the whole study. These people represent a wide array of stakeholders in urban governance: ENGOs, city authorities, researchers, local development practitioners, journalists, international development agencies, etc. In addition, photos, being part of the material from the fieldwork, are meant to supplement the text. Besides primary sources, this work is based on the extensive analysis of secondary sources, including literature from both the South and North. The majority of
the literature is written in English and the minor part is in French; the lack of Arabic or Hindi literature can be seen as a deficiency, although within the time frame for the research it would have naturally been impossible to achieve skills even in reading scientific Arabic literature.

3. EMERGING GLOBAL CONTEXT FOR URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

Third World urban issues were brought into international public debates in the first conference on Human Settlements (Habitat I) in Vancouver in 1976, where governments agreed on some commitments to give greater priority to improving housing conditions and basic urban services. Since then, international agencies’ general tendency to equate environmental issues with natural resource management have led to the neglect of environment-related health problems in urban areas. This recognition was absent through the 1980s, as most Third World governments and international agencies concerned themselves with the economic depression and debt crisis. Hence, until the late 1980s, there was relatively little international interest in urban environmental issues in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Following the report *Our Common Future* in 1987, which devoted an entire chapter to urban issues and helped to stimulate interest in environment-development linkages, environmental issues began to grow in importance again in the late 1980s. At that time the World Health Organization (WHO) became active in highlighting the environmental health problems of cities and worked with many different groups through the *Healthy Cities movement* in order to promote city-specific responses to their problems. In addition, a variety of organizations, including the Stockholm Environment Institute, (SEI) sponsored important new research initiatives on environmental health problems. (Schlyter, 1996; Leitmann, 1999: 40-46.)

The Earth Summit 1992 in Rio and the follow-up to its recommendations (Local Agenda 21) focused some attention on the urban environment, though it was still a minor issue in the conference. Cedric Pugh (1996a) notes that environmental research became more elaborate and sophisticated after the Rio Summit because independent researchers began reporting their findings from both empirical and theoretical work. In the Cairo conference on population and development (ICPD) in 1994, the linkage between urbanization and population growth was only noted briefly (see Johnson, 1995: 28). Eventually, urban issues received full recognition in the second Habitat conference, Habitat II (or the City Summit) in Istanbul in 1996, where urban problems were firmly put on the agenda for action (the *Habitat Agenda*). The Habitat documents recommend more power and resources for local governments, NGOs, residential groups and other citizen
groups. It was recognized that urban problems could not be addressed without drawing from local knowledge, innovation and the capacity to organize. It was also stressed that good governance includes transparent, accountable and democratic public authorities. In addition, in all international conferences, the role of NGOs was essential in advocating urban socio-environmental concerns. Nevertheless, the conference has received criticism since it did not succeed in translating the Earth Summit’s commitment to sustainable development into practical approaches for urban planning and management. (Satterthwaite, 1996; Schlyter, 1996; Leitmann, 1999.)

However, the 1990s can be considered a real urban environmental decade. Patricia McCarney (1995) argues that there is an evolving global context for urban environmental research. Up to now, there has prevailed “a green agenda versus brown agenda”, which not only comes up in the ‘green’ themes (such as global warming or marine pollution) of the UN conferences, but also in issues and environmental priorities expressed by citizens around the world. She argues that to emphasize certain environmental problems as ‘global’ can be considered just a means for Northern countries to prioritize their own issues over Third World poverty and famine. Very large cities represent a recent phenomenon in human evolution – thus it is understandable that the research tradition concerning these cities is also brief. Yet this is not the only reason for the relatively small body of scientific research on Third World cities and their environmental questions. These cities also receive very little attention in most English language journals, magazines and newsletters produced by the Northern environmental groups. Most of the international attention over the past two decades has been focused on issues of ‘the commons’, such as climatic change and ozone depletion. When coverage is given to Third World environmental problems, this usually deals with deforestation, desertification or the impacts of large dams. Third World cities’ environmental problems also receive little or no mention in most general books dealing with the ‘environment’ (E&U, 1989).

McCarney (1995) noticed in her study on five Third World cities that the highest priority identified by their residents was waste and sanitation, followed by water and drainage issues. The next most frequently cited environmental issues were transportation, air pollution, environmental

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9 Concerning the state and development of urban research in Africa, Asia and Latin America, see Stren, 1992; 1994a, 1994b; 1994c; 1995a; 1995b. On Local Agenda 21 and the Habitat Agenda, see Leitmann, 1999: 42-47.

10 In contrast to the brown agenda, the green agenda is often defined by the environmental concerns that have preoccupied the rich, Northern countries since the second half of the 20th century. They went through their own brown agenda in the second half of the 19th century, when distressed living conditions of the poor resulted in high infant mortality, shortened life expectancy, etc. (Hall, 1988 in White, 1997.) The 1950s can be seen as a transition period between the brown and the green agendas due to the passing of air quality legislation, etc. in the North (White, 1997).
education and participation, followed by housing and land use issues, and the more institutional aspects of environmental planning, including regulations and environmental management. The project demonstrated that a distinct urban environmental agenda exists that requires specific actions, and that the current global agenda is out of step with the concerns of citizens. Mitlin and Satterthwaite (1996) also point out that most of the literature on ‘sustainable development’ does not mention cities either. They think this reluctance is due to a disdainful attitude towards cities, even if the authors themselves live in cities. This perception has helped result in the poorly developed literature on the subject.

While elaborating the concept of ecological footprints, William Rees (1992) has named cities ecological black holes. But Mitlin and Satterthwaite (ibid.) consider it important to clarify that it is not cities that are responsible for most resource use, waste, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, but particular industries and commercial and industrial enterprises or corporations and middle and upper income groups with high consumption lifestyles. Furthermore, Hardoy et al. (1997: 21-22) evince that the growing interest in urban environmental problems is based too much on Northern perceptions and criteria: it appears biased towards addressing the environmental questions which Third World cities have in common with cities in Europe and North America. Consequently, greater attention is directed to chemical agents in the air, rather than biological agents in water, food, air and soil – including those responsible for diarrheic diseases, dysentery and intestinal parasites, typical of Third World city environments. This bias also means that many critical environmental problems such as the control of disease vectors, which spread malaria, dengue fever and yellow fever in cities, are forgotten. Among the most immediate environmental problems in the world are ill health, disability and premature death caused by biological agents in the human environment: in water, food, air and soil.

The last few years have brought some signs that a new, urban environmental agenda may be emerging. There is evidence of this in a growing literature on the subject and in new policies and projects adopted by certain governments and development assistance agencies. However, this agenda is still weak and is not underpinned by significant initiatives to relieve economic stagnation and debt burdens, thus hardly promoting stable, competent and democratic governance. (Hardoy et al, 1997: 21.) Research on governance, particularly, requires an integrated approach through interdisciplinary analytical tools, which treat urban systems as integrated social structures (McCarney, et al, 1995). In conclusion, there is a quite solid research basis concerning the social and physical conditions in megacities, and literature elaborating popular or collective responses (through more in-depth urban NGO case studies) using first hand data is emanating, as are the theoretical constructions for new urban governance. Nevertheless, studies, which aim at combining all these three interlinked elements, are very scarce: this is the field which the present study aims to shed light on. If we do not
approach these large urban areas – their physical conditions, functions and actors – with interdisciplinary and multi-level perspectives, how is it possible at all to discuss and look for better urban management?

4. Structure of Work

In the present chapter I have framed the research problem and given some methodological and conceptual viewpoints on the approach used in the study. Chapter II examines megacities in a global framework. It starts with an overview of Third World urbanization, its basic concepts and statistics, with a special emphasis on the notion of the largest human conurbations and the causes behind their growth. In the ‘new geography of centrality’, the conditions of urban governance determine to a great extent whether a city can be classified as a ‘global city’.

Descending from the global sphere, above the city, the socio-spatial morphologies in Third World cities are surveyed from a new angle: the notion of their hybrid characteristics. The study continues to penetrate downwards, to urban neighborhoods as living environments, by tracing the societal linkages of various environmental questions, to what kind of problems people have to cope with in their daily lives, thus portraying the severity of the whole urban crisis. The chapter ends with a brief introduction to the institutional reasons why city authorities have not fully been able to manage urban growth processes and their implications.

Chapter III analyzes the premises for collective action and rise of non-governmental organizations, such as civic associations, to respond to and alleviate the problems that constitute the urban crisis. It begins with an interpretation of the underlying causes as to why collective action, in the face of massive urban crisis, is still too scarce a human resource among the residents in most parts of megacities; why there have been relatively few coordinated efforts to change the state of affairs at street level. In order to search for elements for the rise of collective action, old and new social movement theories are next considered. Three case studies on the green movements in the South will be elaborated against the social movement theories.

One essential element in new social movements are the NGOs, which are analyzed from within, their internal characteristics. NGOs are also regarded as the central actors in the new urban governance structures. The chapter analyzes more closely how this relatively new approach of urban governance differs from traditional ways of governing cities: on what constituents it is based. However, NGOs’ external relations, to other stakeholders in the city, imply certain potential and problematic ‘nexus’ which both help and hinder efforts towards new partnerships and eventually, towards more sound urban governance. Beside theoretical issues, the chapter gives pragmatic examples
of attempts to form new governance structures in various cities, and what roles are suggested within it for NGOs.

As Chapter II attempted to draw a profile of megacities as living environments where the urban crisis takes place, Chapter IV analyzes five ENGO case studies from Cairo and Delhi from an action viewpoint: what kind of collective action or ‘environmental episodes’ happens in the streets in order to improve people’s living conditions. These case studies are meant to demonstrate how very much alive the urban environmentalism in large cities actually is. Their work represents the core issues in the brown agenda: slum upgrading; sanitation; water conservation; air pollution mitigation; and solid waste disposal. The focus is on those organizations which have been established by professionals, but which have involved the public in the action to rectify problems. They also demonstrate the diversity of associational activity in large Third World cities. At the end of Chapter IV, I make a synthesis of these civic associations and their characteristics, the key attributes in collective action, in the light of theoretical material in the study. Furthermore, I propose a conceptual model for classifying urban environmental NGOs.

Each of the case study associations has developed a certain socio-environmental practice deriving from specific urban environmental conditions, however, with some modifications they could be replicated elsewhere. Thus, considering again the city level issues, now from the urban sustainability viewpoint, I am giving some examples of how this urban-based knowledge, various innovations or practices can be scaled up and transferred between cities. In the concluding Chapter V, I will form wider synthesis of the main results of the study, with the outline of future research priorities and policy recommendations.
II
ARE MEGACITIES AN ECOLOGICAL PROBLEM FOR HUMANKIND?

At midday on May 11, 2000, the United Nations’ population counter in Delhi stopped. India had become the second country whose population exceeded the inconceivable limit of 1 billion people, and even comprising 16 percent of the world’s population. While India’s impoverished countryside cannot sustain the newcomers, the stream of migrants seeking a better quality of life puts pressure on cities, which already must grapple with their own population growth. It can be expected that local conflicts over decreasing ecological resources in urban areas will also multiply. And of future urban dwellers worldwide, nearly 90 percent will be living in the Third World. In ecological terms, how elastic actually are these large cities?

Population growth and urban growth coincide in the Third World. The present chapter seeks to bring the global perspective to urbanization, population growth and environmental questions, by focusing on the causes behind urban crisis. Large cities in particular have grown rapidly out of size with their ecological settings. Hence it is perplexing to conceive of large Third World agglomerations as the largest habitats of human populations which are ‘stretching’ the global ecological niche of humanity. I will also outline the basic concepts, causes and statistics of rapid urbanization and end up with the notion of ‘global’ and ‘non-global’ cities within the globalization process.

In the second section of the chapter I will look at the Third World urban crisis from the micro-level to the macro-level, by addressing brown agenda problems: I will elaborate the nature and societal origins of environmental questions typical of large cities. Since socio-spatial configurations in the city also affect its environmental questions, I will analyze the dynamics of city morphologies. Finally, I will give some insights into the limitations of city authorities, their administration and planning systems.
5. Population Growth and Cities

The twin phenomena of rapid urbanization and population growth have occurred simultaneously, particularly in the poorest countries of the world. In 1810 there was just one city of a million people, London, whilst today there are over 20 cities of 10 million or more people, and 41 cities of over 5 million people, located predominantly in the Third World. Herbert Girardet (1995) remarks that urban growth is changing the face of the earth and the condition of humanity. Metropolises and megacities – not rural villages and towns – are becoming our habitat if the current trends continue in the long term. Cities, on less than two per cent of the Earth’s surface, also use 75 per cent of its resources. It can be argued that there can be no ‘global sustainable development’ without sustainable human settlements; therefore, the issue of urban sustainability is critical to humanity.

5.1. Urbanization and the Largest Human Agglomerations

The global niche of cities

In the last 40 years of short human history, the world’s population has doubled to six billion inhabitants. The population of our species will increase to about twice its present size within the next 75-100 years (Berger et al., 1998), a process in which Third World urbanization plays a key role. The success of our species, human population growth, has obviously made our global integration possible. Niles Eldredge (1998: 148-149) concludes that notably in the past 10,000 years, we have redefined our niche in the global system as our own mega-ecosystem; at each stage in human history it has been possible through improvements of technology or cultural reorganization, as well as changes in the relationship to plants and animals, to raise the carrying capacity to accommodate population increases. (see also Sinclair, 1998.) The products of success we have gathered and accumulated in our settlements, cities. However, this prosperity also embodies biased socio-physical structures within our own conglomerations, which also occupy heavily burdened ecological systems.

Paul Erlich (1968) showed that the whole world’s population growth is congruent with the Third World population increase. The most noticeable critic of his ‘population bomb theory’, Julian Simon (1981, in Krishna, 1996: 170) regards people rather as a resource and considers population growth as an impetus to better lives by arguing that “what seems to be rational

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11 Each species population in a local ecosystem is considered to have its own niche, meaning its role and function within that system (see Eldredge, 1998: 58-61).
12 Population growth is the annual net increment of a population when fertility, mortality, and migration are all taken into account, while natural population growth (also referred to as natural growth) is the excess of birth over deaths (Tannerfeldt, 1995: 64-65).
discourse actually hides emotional prejudices, which surface through the language”. As an example of this is Erlich’s description of his somewhat “hellish” taxi ride through the back streets of Delhi:

I have understood the population explosion intellectually for a long time. I came to understand it emotionally one stinking hot night in Delhi a couple of years ago … As we crawled through the city, we entered a crowded slum area … The streets seemed alive with people. People eating, people washing, people sleeping. People visiting, arguing, and Screaming. People thrusting their hands through the taxi window, begging. People defecating and urinating. People clinging to buses. People herding animals. People, people, people, people. (Erlich, 1968:15.)

Erlich points out that since this experience, he has known the feel of overpopulation – a subjective experience that is difficult to contest. Nevertheless, Sumi Krishna (1996: 170-171) remarks that “lurking behind Erlich’s understanding of the population issue Simon discerns a disquieting belief that very poor people’s lives are not worth living”, and, furthermore, Erlich does not write about these people “laughing, loving, being tender to their children, all of which one also sees among these poor Indians”. (see also Lewis, 1992: 76-77; also Keyfitz, 1998.)

Despite human societies having succeeded in overcoming significant environmentally induced changes in resource availability, we do not know how far the environmental resource base can be stretched. Jared Diamond (1991) argues that examples of “ecological suicide” all involve animal populations that suddenly become free of the usual factors regulating their numbers (see also Dilworth, 1998). Richard Leakey and Roger Lewin (1998:38-58), as well as Eldredge (1998: 148-151; 171-176), argue that five times in the history of life mass extinctions have dramatically reduced standing biological diversity; the ‘sixth extinction’ is a “man-made disaster”; what is far less well understood is the other side of the coin, that is, the impact of the global system on us. Humans are having an increasingly devastating impact on the biological and environmental systems of the entire globe, and yet we rely strongly on the integrity of the global system for our continued existence.

Madhav Gagdil and Ramachandra Guha (1995b: 2-4) have studied the ecological history of India from the social scientific viewpoint on population growth and its connections to power structures. Within the context of the country’s history, they have distinguished three broad categories of Indian people. Ecosystem people depend on the natural environments of their own locality to meet most of their material needs. Biosphere people enjoy the produce of the entire biosphere or, as the authors also term this group, omnivores. The complex process favoring a narrow elite of omnivores at the cost of masses of ecosystem people has created large numbers of refugees in the hinterlands. They have flocked to the cities, to which the state has channeled resources, from all over the country. Ecological refugees, however, cannot become full partners in sharing this largesse. But the
authors argue that this group may still be better off in city slums than in many declining villages, with marginal access to water and to opportunities of employment, in the unorganized sector as domestic servants, hawkers and recyclers of garbage. Or, as in the outskirts of Calcutta, they may learn to cultivate vegetables very efficiently by using solid organic wastes and city sewage. In consequence, Gagdil and Guha argue that city populations have grown rapidly, not through the growth of economically productive activities, but as “parasites” subsidized at the cost of the hinterlands. Hence their approach to city development is rather gloomy (see ibid.:30-31):

Naturally enough, the country’s omnivores are concentrated in such centers. Even the rich landowners whose primary base is the countryside often have another base in the pampered urban areas. In this scenario, it pays industry to manipulate and bribe politicians and bureaucrats, rather than to worry about technological innovations, efficient resource use of pollution control. So the soft options have been to import technologies and not worry at all about how efficient or environment-friendly these technologies are or were.

The Indian government invests enormous amounts, often raised through World Bank loans, to bring water to the cities and distribute it practically free of cost to residents. It is difficult to find firm estimates of the extent of the urban subsidies, but it is often just a few percent of what it has cost the government to deliver water to them. When water is a free good, it makes it easy for enterprises to pollute their surroundings instead of investing in environmentally friendly technology. (Gagdil & Guha, 1995b: 80.)

The notion of urban omnivores hence addresses the regional and global impacts of cities. Urban demand for food, water, minerals, fuel wood, and fossil fuels affects very distant populations, forests, and watersheds (Bartone, et al., 1994: 12-13; Hardoy, et al., 1997: 21). Cities have significant extra-urban environmental impacts outside the city proper, on their hinterlands, such as hydroelectric power stations, which are built to meet the increasing energy and water demands of the urbanites (see, e.g. Leitmann 1993, 52-53; Girardet, 1995), as in the case of the Aswan High Dam in Egypt. In India, a considerable portion of urban households burn firewood and their demands are a major factor in the deforestation and erosion in the country; firewood provides often even 50 percent of the cooking energy in Indian cities (CSE, 1989). Also on the global level, regional water scarcities are an increasing problem, and can be particularly acute in the vicinity of large cities. One way to describe all these impacts is to calculate the city’s ecological footprint (see e.g. Rees, 1992), which can

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13 The authors point to at least three global omnivores (World Bank, International Monetary Foundation and International Transnational Corporations) and assert that their interest is mainly to ensure that Indian markets are opened up to their products, and under pressure the Indian government has little option but to concede to these demands. Thus India’s high-cost but low-quality economy tries to cope with this competition. The authors also consider India’s recent development as a massively inefficient process of resource use.
indicate the immense scale of resources megacities absorb from their environment, which indeed, has become global in scale.

**Defining and spatially delineating megacities and other urban areas**

Sidney Goldstein (1994) points out that it is important to harmonize the conceptual framework in urban studies, in order to improve our understanding of urbanization itself, as well as its causes and outcomes, and consequent lack of appropriate data and non-comparability, at the national and international levels. Even when data is available, the wide range of variation in national definitions, classification systems, and measurement complicates efforts to undertake comparative analysis.

The basic term urban area has proved to be problematic to define when assessing urbanization levels in Third World countries. There is uncertainty especially in terms of both the definition and the accuracy of the data. International discrepancy in data confuses urban area definition and comparison: some countries define any settlement, for instance, over 2,000 in population as urban, while others use 100,000 as the criterion. According to Egypt’s official definition, urban it is determined by its administrative role and rural is residential; in India, settlements with more than 5,000 people are considered urban (Moriconi, 1995, in Bayat & Denis, 2000). Thereby it is necessary to specify the criteria used, especially in the case of agricultural populations and inclusion of the rural counties. A big country’s statistics on its urban areas affects the whole picture of urbanization worldwide; China and India have their own systems of delineating urban places, can easily distort international comparisons. In order to overcome variations in defining urban areas, the United Nations\(^\text{14}\), which provides international projections on population and development, has sought to standardize its urbanization data: a settlement of over 20,000 people is an **urban area**; over 100,000 people is a **city**; over 1 million is a **metropolis**, and over 10 million people is a **megacity** (United Nations, 1995). Nevertheless, considering the country specific definitions, these have not become common usage. David Drakakis-Smith (1987: 2) has directed criticism at standardized UN criteria which may overlook each country’s own definitions: “Perhaps we should be less insistent on standardized definitions and simply accept what each country considers ought to be its own definition. If this reflects what is historically, culturally and politically ‘urban’ in that country, so be it. Why should some arbitrarily acceptable figure be artificially imposed?”

Population registers are in many cases considered superior sources of place of residence and migration data, since they provide information on every resident and on every residential move within the country. But also they have some disadvantages because their maintenance requires a high degree of administrative sophistication and of public cooperation, which is

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\(^{14}\) The Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at the United Nations Secretariat.
scanty in Third World countries. People who migrate to cities do not necessarily register their move, if they do not intend to become permanent residents there. Censuses can provide the type of geographical coverage that gives information for cities of different size, e.g., data for subdivisions within megacities. But the speed with which urban change occurs in many urban areas makes reliance on a census quite frustrating in many cases. Sample surveys are useful to some extent, although their disadvantage is quite small data samples. (Goldstein, 1994.) Formation of small spatial or statistical units can be useful in construction of larger units as well in order to achieve more appropriate information from cities (ibid.; Dewar, 1994).

Concerning delineating especially the largest urban areas, Goldstein (1994) argues that the question of depicting megacities and their population through spatial definitions and concepts, needs to be scrutinized firstly by defining what constitutes a megacity. Thus it is quite an arbitrary decision, whether 5, 8 or 10 million persons should be the minimum population for an urban region to qualify as a megacity. When selecting megacities, the following variables in defining the criteria ought to be taken into account, in addition to the size factor: financial resources; industrial or commercial structure; political role; educational facilities; scientific personnel; service function; and position in the world system. This artificial classification in terms of size may result in an essential world city, such as London, not qualifying if the criteria is 10 million people, because it had declined to 9.7 million. One problem is also that despite the fact that certain areas are encompassed by specific political boundaries and administered by a single authority, they may not accurately represent the full area constituting the megacity. Hence the issue of as how city boundaries delineate megacities is most essential: some countries include only the inner core of the city whilst others overextend and incorporate suburban districts and also rural areas that are tied to the city by several criteria. For instance, Metropolitan Lagos has no officially delineated boundary (Aina et al., 1994: 204-205). One telling example of the over-extension problem can be taken from Bangkok and its expansion since the 1970s, when artificial boundary changes dramatically increased its size and the city made a noticeable leap upwards in the city ranking at the international level:

The city of the province of Phra Nakhon, Bangkok, was combined with another city, Thonburi in the 1970s. Hence Greater Bangkok was formed, consisting totally of 2.5 million people. After that the Thai government decided to merge the two adjoining provinces of Phra Nakhon and Thonburi into the Bangkok Metropolitan Area, a single city. When movements between the two provinces had earlier been treated as interprovincial movement, later all such movements were regarded as residential change within the city, even though the outlying districts of both provinces, especially Thonburi, remained rural. Thereafter, the city's population ‘doubled’ when the new city region had 4.7 million people in 1980. Since then this Thai capital has been one of the most primary cities in the world. In the 1980s it was even 46 times greater than the second largest city of the country,
5. Population Growth and Cities

Chiangmai. (see Goldstein, 1994; also Douglass & Zoghlin, 1994.)

The Chinese cities also often annex a number of adjacent districts into their administrative areas in order to ensure control of vital urban supply needs, such as reservoirs or power plants, thus incorporating large rural areas. (see Drakakis-Smith, 1987: 2.)

The international level statistical data from cities are far from satisfactory because they are usually very out of date (Dewar, 1994). Cairo could be used as an example to demonstrate this statistical problematic. For instance, according to the UN (2000: 92), Cairo had an average of 10.5 million people by 2000, whilst the Cairo General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP) estimated that Greater Cairo already had 12 million people in the beginning of the 1990s (Edwards, 1994, pers.comm.), and its population was estimated to be 17 million in 2000. Hence the delineation of the megacity area also affects international statistics and the order of cities in regard to their size, i.e., whether only the city proper is included (e.g. Cairo), or the total metropolitan area (cf. Metro Manila). However, the population of the Cairo proper area, i.e., the Governorate of Cairo, is usually added with the population of the two neighboring governorates, the towns of Giza and Imbaba in the Governorate of Giza on the south-western bank of the Nile River, and the town of Shubra El Kheima in the Governorate of Qaliubiah on the northeastern bank (Population Growth and Policies in Mega-Cities, 1990: 1).

Furthermore, the concepts of urbanization and urban growth are often used synonymously, but they also have stricter definitions. Urbanization describes different changes in people’s lifestyles, the social process by which a population adjusts to an urban way of life. The urbanization level is the proportion (percentage) of the total population that lives in urban areas, or the number of people living there. Urban growth refers to the expansion of urban areas in terms of the growth in the proportion (percentage) of the total population living in urban areas, or the growth in the number of people living there, and/or growth in the number of urban centers. The urban growth rate is annual urban growth based on the percentage of the urban population at the end of the previous year. (see, e.g., Clark, 1982: 38-39.) However, urbanization is often used as a more generic concept also including aspects of urban growth, as well as to indicate the physical spread of built up land. In this study, urbanization has been studied mainly from geographical standpoints, with less focus on sociological aspects.

United Nations world urban population statistics shows that population growth will be the most rapid in Third World urban areas, averaging 2.3 percent per year during 2000-2030, consistent with a doubling time of 30 years. This is in contrast to the situation of the rural population, which is expected to grow very slowly, at just 0.1 percent during the period. This is

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15 UN report uses the term ‘less developed countries’. 
leading to a redistribution of the population: whereas in 1950, 30 percent of the world population lived in urban areas, the proportion of urban dwellers had risen to 47 percent by 2000, and by 2007, the number of urban dwellers will equal the number of rural dwellers in the world. The urban proportion of the world population is expected to reach 60 percent by 2030. In Third World regions the level of urbanization is 40 percent, and will rise to 56 percent by 2030. (United Nations, 2000: 1-2.)

The first continent that experienced a rapid growth of megacities was Latin America. Today it is a highly urbanized region with 75 percent of its population living in urban areas (Ibid.: 2). However, today the growth of large Latin American urban agglomerations is stagnating. A new growth pole for megapolization is in Third World Asia where around half (12) of the world’s megacities (23) will be located by 2015. Today the urbanization level in Asia is 37 percent, whilst in Africa the situation is similar, 38 percent. Both regions are expected to experience rapid rates of urbanization; by 2030 55 percent and 53 percent, respectively, of their inhabitants will be in urban areas. At that point, even 83 percent of the population in Latin America (and the Caribbean) will be urban. However, Asia with its 2,605 million people and Africa with 766 million will be the centers of urban growth; both of them will have the highest numbers of urban dwellers of any major area of the world. (ibid.: 2, 5.)

In spite of the fact that urban areas will encompass an increasing share of the world population, the proportion of people living in megacities is still relatively small, in 2000, 4.3 percent and by 2015, still only 5.2 percent. The largest shares of the increase in the world urban population will go to cities with less than half a million inhabitants; metropolises between 1 and 5 million people; and megacities with more than 10 million inhabitants, in order of importance. The trend towards concentration of the population in the larger urban settlements has not yet resulted in a marked decline of either the share or number of persons living in small urban areas. (ibid: 2.)

In 1950, the only megacity was New York, with 12.3 million people, whilst by 1975 there emerged five megacities, two of which were located in Latin America. Between 1975 and 2000, some megacities maintained quite high rates of population growth, for instance, Dhaka in Bangladesh grew at an average annual rate of 6.9 percent, and Lagos, Nigeria, at a rate of 5.6 percent. These were followed by Asian megacities, such as Mumbai16, Karachi and Jakarta. By 2000, the number of megacities increased to 19, and within 15 more years, the number will rise to 23. In the future, just a few

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16 Several Indian cities have been renamed officially, however, in practice old names often prevail. The previous Bombay is now Mumbai and Madras is Chennai, which I also have noted in the study. More recently, also Calcutta has been renamed as Kolkata, however, I still adhere here to the old name. Its new Bengalese name has been criticized for being a mere change of pronunciation, and its spelling “does not shake off the colonial legacy ... if historical names are to be really revived, then it should have been Saptagram” (see The Times of India, 1999).
megacities will experience growth rates above 3 percent, and most of them will have very low growth rates, below 1 percent annually. It seems that population growth is not only slowing down in Latin America, but also in other regions. Nevertheless, very high growth rates in the past will continue to multiply the number of city population long in the future. There will be only two megacities in Africa by 2015, but it can be expected that in the near future there will be more cities on the list. In all, only four megacities will be located outside of Third World in 2015. Tokyo will maintain its position as the largest urban agglomeration in the world, followed by Mumbai. There will be at least 5 cities with a population of 20 million people. (ibid.: 3, 8-9.) (See Tables 1 and 2.)

Table 2. Population and growth rate of the 20 urban agglomerations with more than 10 million inhabitants, 1975-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban agglomeration</th>
<th>Population (in millions)</th>
<th>Growth rate (percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico City</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>São Paulo</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buenos Aires</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhaka</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karachi</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Manila</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio de Janeiro</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evolving complex spatial patterns in peri-urban areas

Regarding the world’s ongoing urbanization process, Africa is a particularly interesting case. Despite the fact that its urbanization levels are quite low, the present rates of increase are among the world’s highest. Anthony O’Connor (1983: 15-16) reminds us that this combination of low levels but high rates of urbanization implies that tropical Africa particularly provides almost “unparalleled opportunities” for the outside observer, or the resident, to see cities in the making. Hence also studying small, urbanizing regions will provide interesting insights into the overall urban growth process in the continent. The speed at which megacities are growing can be explained by many social, economic, and political factors, but the demographic context is very significant (Chen & Heligman, 1994: 30-31).

Since the early stages of urban growth, the late 1950s, megacities have been perceived as centers of limitless possibilities. In-migration from rural areas has long been a predominant factor in megacity growth. As the definition of what constitutes an urban area or the urban population in a given country is generally rather inconsistent, also measurement of migration, i.e., who is a migrant, implies some complex conceptual questions, for instance, again in terms of comparability (see Angotti, 1993: 25). As a solution, it has been suggested that governments should enforce their national population censuses. Research on migration is not always
conclusive, is mostly quite old, and often concentrates too much on individual reasons and too little on structural and societal forces. Better education, information and communications seem to promote migration as well as great urban/rural differentials in terms of economic conditions or economic opportunities. In several countries a major reason for migration is the lack of arable land. In Latin America, for instance, a key problem is the concentrated land ownership structure rather than a lack of land. (Tannerfeldt, 1995: 17-18.) The causes of in-migration are complex and variable, with different push and pull factors applying with varying intensity in specific contexts and times (Dewar, 1994):

- **economic factors:** economic opportunities in cities are greater than in rural areas; lifestyles in urban areas are regarded as better; many people cannot support themselves from the land and have to seek alternatives due to, e.g., rural overcrowding and a decline in productivity;
- **landlessness:** as rural households grow and multiply, not all members can have access to land for farming, so they have to move to urban areas. Slum-dwellers have often been forced to migrate to cities due to the privatization of land and then forced into extreme poverty;
- **ecological and environmental factors:** pressure on the land and poor management practices have led, through erosion and other forms of ecological deterioration, to a declining resource base. The effects of drought and other natural disasters have devastated large parts of the rural region and led to a large-scale influx to urban areas;
- **social factors:** improved communications, centralized educational systems, and others factors have led to a clash of values, which has given rise to dissatisfaction among rural youths and a desire for urban lifestyles. In Africa especially, a ‘gender normalization’ is occurring, with the influx of women, previously left in the rural areas, joining their spouses in cities; and
- **political factors:** civil wars and regional conflicts cause broad migration flows to other countries and the relocation of huge numbers of people. The urban bias in investment priorities as well as politics that is dominated by the urban elite also affect urban growth patterns.

Concerning social factors, HIV/AIDS is one of the potentially most influential but least predictable variables affecting urban growth dynamics. It has taken extensive root in the urban areas of many countries, particularly to the north of South Africa, but the scale of its spread is unknown. Also, a tendency associated with rural-urban migration is oscillating migration and circular migration between city and countryside. In addition, many urban workers adhere to rural values and aspire to return to the countryside once they have made enough money when working in the city. (Dewar, 1994.)

The ‘two-step’ urbanization pattern has given way to ‘one-step’ migration in many countries like Egypt: villagers often migrate directly to the largest city and bypass small towns or secondary cities. The small towners migrate
ARE MEGACITIES AN ECOLOGICAL PROBLEM FOR HUMANKIND?

to the largest cities as before. This one-step pattern is easily explained by the uneven distribution of power, goods, industries, services and cultural amenities. (Ibrahim, 1992a.) In Mumbai the supply of jobs has been much greater than its capacity to house its new and old residents. People come to the megacity because it has a certain quality found nowhere else in the country (McNeil, 1995; see e.g. Weyland, 1993: 66.) Ignacy Sachs (1988) explicates migration to megacities by the 'life lottery theory': always someone at least can be lucky enough to find a better quality of life in a large city.17 It has to be addressed that a great majority of the in-migrants come from other urban centers, which is typical of Cairo, too (Bayat & Denis, 2000).

Yet today’s megacities are growing from the inside out: their natural growth, high fertility rates, are a major factor for their population increase. In general, natural growth is estimated to make up 61 percent of the entire annual urban growth that took place in Africa between 1990 and 1995; 73 per cent in Latin America; and 44 percent in Asia. The natural urban growth rate usually increases in urban centers with a young population, but on the other hand, urban dwellers also tend to have fewer children. (Tannerfeldt, 1995: 16-18.) Half of the African population is under the age of 15, therefore population increase is inevitable even if every couple limits their number of children. As a result, the urban population will grow most rapidly because it is younger than average. (Schlyter, 1998.) Cairo gains an average 350,000 additional inhabitants each year, mainly due to its natural population growth (Population Growth and Policies in Mega-Cities, 1990: 1).

Whilst many recent Asian and African megacities have high growth rates, other megacities with early urban growth since the 1950s have been experiencing stagnation or decline in their growth. In 1999 Cairo’s average annual growth rate was just under 2.0 percent, which is half of the growth rate that took place during 1950-1960s. Quite similarly, Delhi’s growth rate was an average 3.2 percent in 1999, whilst it was nearly 5.0 percent in the 1950s (United Nations, 2000: 97-98). It seems that these cities have reached a kind of saturation point; for instance, the largest Mexico City and other Latin American cities, as well as Calcutta, are experiencing out-migration from their central districts, which is much due to a multitude of urban governance problems and congestion. From the low-income to the very affluent people seek residence outside major urban areas.

Some megacities have extremely high population densities in their central areas. Cairo’s density is among the highest, with some areas reaching 100,000 or even over 135,000 people per square kilometre (Population Growth and Policies in Mega-Cities, 1990: 1). Only the cities in India, such as Mumbai, can exceed Cairo’s density (Society for Development Studies, 1996). In some inner city districts (for instance in Caracas in Latin America, or some South-east Asian cities) people are crammed into 'superblocks',

17 On the background of in-migrants, see e.g. Zenié-Ziegler, 1988; Weyland, 1993.
high-rise and high-density slumified buildings. These crowded inner-city areas indicate that it has been difficult for the governments to meet the demand especially for low-cost urban housing and services.

The primary need of people, whether in-migrants or young couples/nuclear families originating in the city, is to acquire a house of their own, a factor which also determines the complex dynamic in the spatial expansion of an urban area. In this process, physical structures and social lifestyles in the city undergo multiple changes in which urban-rural interactions play an important role. Urban land has become ever more scarce and costly, and intensified land use has led to a high concentration of urban dwellers in various types of random or unplanned settlements in the periphery of the city, as informal settlements (National Institute of Urban Affairs, 1990: 3; see e.g. Kamphoefner, 1996). Informal areas also function as filters for in-migrants, comprising a noticeable part of the shifting population and, as a result, these areas usually grow more rapidly than the rest of the city. Hence the peri-urban areas can be considered the places or borders where the processes of change take place the most intensively in the city, as ‘centers of gravity’.

In regard to urbanization as a social process, new views are emerging concerning the traditional rural-urban dichotomy. Rurban fringe or peri-urban areas often refer to the place where the city has expanded into agricultural land, and also indicates the rural lifestyle which often characterizes these areas (Nadim et al., 1980: 36). However, it has been assumed that the key feature is the gradual ‘ruralization’ of the city by the in-migrants: the “cities of peasants” thesis (cf. Ibrahim 1992a; Abu-Lughod, 1988). There are some signs that the demographic changes of the last 20 years may have evolved a more complex spatial pattern due to the decreasing number of in-migrants in cities. Simultaneously, villages take on urban characteristics to a greater extent. The empirical evidence, for instance drawn from Cairo and Dhaka, shows that migration has become more complex and multi-dimensional in nature and the manufacturing and service sectors have rapidly expanded into rural areas. Hence, there is taking place a convergence as also the gaps between urban and rural areas are narrowing due to the poor households in both areas having insufficient access to service provision. (Afsar, 1999; Bayat & Denis, 2000.)

Furthermore, in Indonesia desakotas (capturing the sense of city-village integration) reflect in situ changes, processes of urbanizing the countryside where rural people do not have to change residence or move to cities. Simple transport modes like the bus or the scooter have been effectively extending the scope of the cities to as far as 100 kilometers around them, resulting in the increasing salience of rural non-farm jobs as a source of employment and income, and substantial circular migration between city and countryside. This is a process in which both villages and small towns are becoming part of the expansion of cities, as extended metropolitan regions (EMR). This change has been observed in India and China, among other Asian countries;
in Delhi, villages have maintained administrative independence, which is a
problem for EMRs, as they lack coordinating urban management. (Yeung,
1994; Drakakis-Smith, 2000: 21-22.)

The value of urban land is usually far higher than that of agricultural land,
even if the rural area is irrigated. In India, building on urban land requires
bricks, which can be formed from the soil of agricultural fields, and baked
with wood from village trees, eventually leading to the reduction of valuable
agricultural yields. (Gagdil & Guha, 1995b: 67.) In Egypt, the situation of
urban encroachment is quite unsolvable, as the comment by the Advisor at
the Ministry of Reconstruction and New Communities shows – yet, it is
difficult to ascertain, whether this is just an excuse from the government’s
side:

[All over the Nile valley] the gradual encroachment of urban settlements into
agricultural lands is a real problem. Law prohibits it, but we do not have efficient
means to stop this development. And where else could the poor people go?
(Badran, 1994, pers.comm.)

Greater Cairo continues to merge with several cities, especially in north
(Hanna, 1994). Gradually neighboring rural villages become part of the large
urban agglomeration, if they are close to the rural-urban fringe. To cite an
example, some low-income areas, like Imbaba, are former villages (Ehlers,

On a national level, up till now, the development of primary cities has
been encouraged by national government policies at the expense of
secondary cities. Strong urban domination by primary cities is a peculiarity
especially in the Arab countries and in Third World urbanization. One or two
very large cities dominate both the hinterland and other smaller urban areas,
as opposed to the pattern of ‘urban balance’. The biggest city has
substantially outdistanced the second largest, as in Egypt: Cairo is more than
two (or even three) times bigger than the second largest city Alexandria. (see
Ibrahim, 1992a; Khalifa & Mohieddin, 1988.) It has been speculated that
Cairo has a potential to become the world’s largest megacity by 2030
because of an assimilation process in which its satellite cities become part of
its expansion. Some satellites have been built in order to alleviate pressures
on Cairo itself, but perhaps they have been located too close to the megacity,
unlike the ‘new cities’ located at a greater distance in the desert (Hafez Ali,
1994, pers.comm.). CEDEJ (Centre d’Etudes et de Documentation
Economique, Juridique et Sociale), a Cairo-based urban research institute,
seeks to convert the negative image of the city towards a more optimistic one
(Moriconi-Ebrard, 1997, pers.comm; see also Observatoire urbain…., 1994:
25).18

18 On counter-urbanization measures, the formation of new cities in the Egyptian regional
planning, see, e.g., Myllylä, 1996.
On an international or global scale, major urban areas can be seen merging into a massive *polynuclear urban system*. Already in the 1950s, Jean Gottman (1990: 156-157) recognized in the Northeastern U.S. a chain of metropolitan areas that he referred to as a *megalopolis*, which comprised a vast urban region stretching 600 miles between Boston and Washington and housing 30 million people. Theoretically speaking, the term megalopolis is often confused with megacity, however, it better refers to a conglomeration of 1-5 million population metropolises, for example, in Japan, or on the northeastern coast of the U.S. He has identified six to seven such megalopolitan systems around the world, with populations exceeding 25 million. Soon the following can be added: two Brazilian nuclei growing fast one towards the other, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo; in California, Los Angeles-San Francisco; and an Indian corridor (Mumbai-Surat-Baroda-Ahmedabad) is forming (Misra & Dung, 1998). The ‘super megalopolis’ regions in the Third World are Greater Shanghai, Ganges, and Greater Dhaka (Meier, 1993). It is suggested that these high-density urban forms will eventually connect the urban cores within Latin America and Asia particularly. The term *ecumenopolis* is used to indicate a *functionally integrated urban whole*. Gottman believes that stabilizing efforts won’t arrest the proliferation of metropolitan systems, and their clustering constitutes megalopolitan formations in certain parts of the world. Furthermore, he suggests that all these polynuclear regions (except the U.S. formation which is stabilizing) will continue expanding and “weaving” an almost continuous and universal urban system which may reach the tens of billions inhabitants in its “ultimate phase”. Although such a future is still very distant and many factors could intervene in the course of the process, he believes it is not an impossible scenario.

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19 Contemporary situation shows seven such clusters, with more than 25 million people each: American Northeastern Megalopolis (from Boston to Washington as a ‘prototype’); Tokaido Megalopolis in Japan (from Tokyo to Kobe); Great Lakes Megalopolis in North America (Quebec-Milwaukee); urban constellation centered on Shanghai in China; Megalopolis of northwestern Europe (Amsterdam-Ruhr-Lille); Megalopolis in England (Dover-Merseyside; and, Italian Megalopolis (Genoa-Marseille-Pisa).
Cairo has already extended to the western desert border, and is neighboring the Pyramids.

Urban encroachment into agricultural lands, where the chimneys of small brick factories extract the black mud for the construction of urban settlements. The skyscrapers may also be included in informal settlements if they have initially lacked the building permits.
Urban agriculture: crops grow and water buffaloes may turn a waterwheel in the midst of informal settlements.

The children of a family from Faiyum oasis are potential in-migrants to Cairo. After arrived to the city, the identity of the newcomers is, perhaps, neither rural nor urban, but they probably maintain a foot in both camps.
5.2. A NEW GEOGRAPHY OF CENTRALITY: GLOBAL AND NON-GLOBAL CITIES

Take a closer look at the foundations of Cairo’s older, central quarters where blocks of the 20th century apartments stand above medieval private houses, which, in turn, may consist of some hieroglyphic stones snatched from Pharaonic temples – or Delhi’s Mughal fortress, which has been converted into a public park or a shelter for a bazaar. Thus today’s Third World megacities are literally built on ancient city structures. Despite constantly modernizing urban processes, history is strongly present in these cities and gives richness to the urban fabric.

Modernization has favored centralization and biased growth, which are predominant features of all cities, the foundation of which also lies on the accumulation and concentration of resources and affluence. The surplus generated is shared unequally, on all regional levels, and thereby the primary city or capital advances at the expense of rural and smaller urban areas. There exists socio-economic inequality: a) between the city and the countryside; b) between urban areas; and c) within the city itself. (Smith, 1996: 5.) I will not start to elaborate here the modernization paradigm in development; suffice it to say that it can be viewed as a special way of seeing the world (see e.g. Banuri, 1990b). Modernization also entails certain subprocesses, such as industrialization, urbanization, secularization, and rationalizing bureaucracy (Marglin, 1990). Thereby a ‘developed society’ is often understood as an urbanized society (Escobar, 1990). Due to lopsided development, 30-60 percent of the population in megacities is poor. In our times, the urban poor are becoming ‘a new majority’ in the Third World’s population and this group will outnumber the poor in rural areas (Sachs & Silk, 1991). Urban poverty has grown even faster than rural poverty because of macroeconomic adjustment, inefficiencies in the urban economy, and misallocation of public resources (Bartone, et al. 1994: 10). The fact that today more than half of the world’s poor population live in cities, implies 90 percent of the poor in Latin America, 40 percent in Africa, and 45 percent in Asia. They also comprise the majority of the population groups in cities; for example, in Calcutta and Delhi even 60 per cent of the residents are poor, and in Cairo more than half of the population. (Urban Transition..., 1989: 18; Richards & Waterbury, 1991: 282-283.)

The spectacular growth of squatting and other informal settlements is the result of the inability of the poor to pay rent or house purchase prices, and the state’s incapability to house people and offer them adequate services; confronted by improperly functioning land markets, the poor often have little choice but to occupy environmentally hazardous areas (see Gilbert & Ward, 1985: 62-64). Banuri (1992: 6) argues that population growth and poverty have to be considered primary causes of environmental degradation that allows the decisionmakers to solve the problem only by economic and technical means, in the other words; to cure only the symptoms, not the
societal causes, such as, social inequality, injustice and illegitimacy, i.e. the power structures (also Harrison, 1993: xi). In the same vein, Malik (1989: 219) stresses that it is a question of ignorance, repression and rigid social stratification. In India, the income distribution is highly skewed: the estimated income of the low-income groups is only eight percent of the wealthier groups (Society for Development Studies, 1996). Despite continuous economic growth in Egypt, the standard of living of Cairo’s population has not risen concurrently: in 1993 unemployment comprised 20 percent of the population (Al Ahram Weekly, 1994), and the richest 5 percent has received more than half of the national income, while the less wealthy population of 75 percent has received only one fifth of the income (Mohieddin, 1982 in Richards & Waterbury, 1991: 281).

Anthony King (1991: 3) remarks that the 1980s started a major paradigm shift in urban studies due to the notion of ‘global’. Robert Potter and Sally Lloyd-Evans (1998: 115) point out that contemporary urban studies have been shifting away from theorizing merely the internal processes affecting the city structures, towards an approach that focuses on global economic and social processes influencing the city structures and built environment, and consequently, social and political organization of the city. They notice that global processes are not leading to uniformity between cities, but far from it: despite various urban problems common to cities, urban processes seem to be leading to further differentiation between regions and places. Third World cities have increasing similarities between their central business districts (CBDs) and more affluent residential suburbs due to modern high-rise office blocks, multinational headquarters and the retailers from the North. In addition, the development of motorways and mass rapid transit systems, among others, has dramatically altered the socio-economic structure of cities. All these forces, and urban management policies in general, have had converging effects, much influenced by local elite groups, who also have introduced Western consumption and other lifestyle patterns in the city. However, Western popular culture and products are not accessible to all sectors of the population, due to their internal inequalities. Many other factors such as productive activities, social structure or housing quality are also becoming increasingly divergent among Third World cities. In addition, trends towards further localization can be identified. Thereby, urbanization as a global process can no longer be considered as a direct correlate of modernization. (ibid.: 2, 26, 116-120.)

Potter and Lloyd-Evans (1998: 70) interpret the worldwide development occurring during the last three decades as the dual processes of global divergence and global convergence, reverse trends both representing globalization. Divergence refers to the sphere of production and the fact that

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places in the world system are becoming increasingly diversified (which gives the city a ‘cosmopolitan quality’/Gilb, 1989), for instance, like the dispersion of manufacturing industries to low-labor cost locations, and the rise of transnational corporations. While Nigeria represents a raw-material exporting nation, Bangladesh is a low-income agricultural exporter. Simultaneously, the reverse trend, convergence, is increasing similarity, which appears to characterize world patterns of urbanization; convergence is in the sphere of consumer preferences and habits. Changes toward homogenization befall especially very large cities, assisted by the behaviors of the elite and other upper-income groups. By the same token, Saskia Sassen (1994: 4) remarks that in the composition of the world economy there occurs a transformation, with a combination of global dispersal of economic activities and global integration. Thus megacities can be seen functioning here as ‘gates’ of globalization processes. In all, having such a twofold role, it is basically misleading to ask, whether cities are generative or parasitic.

According to Sassen (1994: 1-4) the world development has constituted new regional hierarchies of cities, a new geography of centrality that cuts across the old divide of poor/rich countries: the notion of global cities. New forms of territorial centralization of top-level management and control operations have come forth. Sassen defines global cities as strategic spaces, from which the world economy is being conducted, served and governed. Corinne Lathorp Gilb (1989) defines global cities as multifaceted centers of world trade, finance and industry – they do not have to be places from which power comes, but at least cities through which power flows. Sassen notes that the new geography of centrality not only includes the principal cities such as Tokyo, New York or London, but changes the order of Third World cities: some national capitals are losing their power to the new global cities. For instance, São Paulo has gained a more important position as a business and financial center over Rio de Janeiro. Bangkok, Hong Kong, Manila, Mexico City and Johannesburg, among others, have all been recognized as parts of an emerging network of world or global cities (Friedmann, 1995 in Potter and Lloyd-Evans, 1998: 69; cf. Gilb, 1989). As the industries move out of megacities, the banks, which finance the movement and new location, move in (Misra & Dung, 1998). Gilb argues that cities with domestic political unrest and economic restraints, such in Cairo or Karachi, have not been able to become global cities; she also considers that no African city plays a truly global role. Furthermore, there is a sharpening inequality in the

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21 Roland Robertson (1995) reminds us that the term glocal originates from Japan, where the issue of the relationship between the particular and the universal has historically received great attention, and later on, the term has been used in business when advertising on a global basis to differentiated local markets. Globalized business uses ‘localness’ as an explicit part of marketing strategy, when products are devised and sold in ‘local package’ (see also ‘time-space compression’ in Harvey, 1996: 242-247).
concentration of strategic resources between each of global cities and others in the same country.\textsuperscript{22}

What are then the specific factors creating unstable, unattractive environments for ‘globalization forces’ in Third World cities? The concept \textit{urban pathology} is used to describe a situation in which negative effects outweigh positive ones in city growth (Teune, 1988). Urban pathologies include a multitude of issues, such as congestion and overcrowding; malfunctioning infrastructure and services; violence and crime such as drug-trafficking, gangsterism, and prostitution; wide-scale poverty including beggars, child labor, street children and other homeless people; refugees from rural areas; epidemics and other health diseases (HIV/AIDS, malaria, plague, typhoid, cholera, leprosy, etc.); apartheid and social cleansing; and civil wars, natural as well as man-made disasters and accidents. The most extreme perceptions state that Third World megacities “degrade human nature”, humanity, and not uplift it (Hamer, 1991), or life in a mega-city is “poor, nasty, cruel and inhuman”, and “short”, where the gap between the poor and the rich is increasing; and the “victims of cities” are the children, the elderly and women (Laquian, 1991). Environmentalists often consider these large cities as symptomatic of environmental decay due to overcrowding, “bulging with the disordered growth of shanties, congested with traffic, and poisoned by acrid air pollution and a lack of sanitary facilities” (Campbell, 1989). Environmental pollution is perceived as one of the most notable degrading factor in city life. For example, Calcutta is described as “a city of nightmares” or “the wickedest place in the universe” (Narain & Ganguly, 1986 in Dogan & Kasarda, 1988b).

R.P. Misra and Nguyen Tri Dung (1998) discern three contrasting views concerning the roles of megapolitan regions in national development: megacity as the prime socio-economic mover; megacity as a parasite; and megacity as the true mirror of the national scene. For the third one, they argue that problems like poverty, unemployment or racial conflicts are not problems of the city, but rather, they are problems produced by the social, economic and political structure of Third World societies. Furthermore, they prevail regardless of the type of the pattern of settlement. However, it could be argued that, in a large city, when these problems are more concentrated due to congestion, they become more obvious and severe.

\textsuperscript{22} As a matter of fact, Delhi, and especially Cairo, have been among the imperial or core cities in the 13\textsuperscript{th} and 14\textsuperscript{th} century world system. Instead of airlines or fast information and communication networks, these ‘world cities’ were bound together by seas, rivers, and great overland routes (Abu-Lughod, 1989: 32-33).
One response to the urban crisis in Delhi: a self-employed hair stylist working in the street. The line between formal and informal sectors of employment is often blurred. The characteristics of the informal sector (or the unregistered economic activity) are often described with the following attributes: self-employment; illegitimate; foot-loose and bazaar-type economy; micro-enterprise; home based; family ownership and management; tax avoidance; non-formal skills; indigenous resources; lower circuit activities; low value work and operations; low/simple technology; minimum fixed capital; less than 10 workers; no access to institutional credit; poor work environment; and easy and free entry and exit. In Delhi, the informal sector has absorbed even 67 percent of the workforce. (Lall, 1995; Flanagan, 1995.) It is also reckoned that the sector is far from homogeneous and it does not always consist of, e.g., just small-scale enterprises (see e.g Bibangambah, 1992). Sassen has remarked that informalization is one side of the global economy, which demands deregulation at the top and flexibilization at the bottom (Schlyter, 1996).

As cities increasingly become the loci of economic growth, and as capital becomes less dependent on the assistance of the nation-states, ever more attention has been paid to the ‘competitive advantage’ of cities, that is, their ability to provide efficient and effective social and physical infrastructure to allow firms to compete in a global economy. (see McDonald, 1998). Therefore, if a city is unable to provide a reliable supply of water and electricity, or it is unable to get its workforce to work on time with effective public transportation, then capital is less likely to succeed in a globalizing economy and/or will leave for greener pastures. In South Africa, with over 80 per cent of the country’s GDP produced in urban areas, the need to create
5. POPULATION GROWTH AND CITIES

A competitive investment and production environment is critical to the country’s economy. So if factory workers in Cape Town are constantly off sick with tuberculosis due to a lack of clean water in Crossroads, or if workers in Johannesburg miss work due to a fire that has destroyed a hundred shacks in Soweto, it causes a significant loss in productivity for South African firms. (ibid.; see also Bartone et al., 1994:11.) But, on the other hand, it is appropriate to pose here an ethical question: isn’t it rather depressing if the health of the poor population becomes important for authorities only as a working reserve, primarily for the interest of transnational companies, and not because these people comprise the large majority of the residents in the city? However, the main reason as to why the employment situation and environmental conditions are being improved in poor settlements is probably of a secondary concern for their residents in practice.

What is less obvious is that these cities don’t merely insinuate problems and misery, but instead, there are services, culture, information, opportunities and hope. Sassen and Patel (1996; also Perlman, 1990) point out that despite the popular images of megacities centered around the urban pathologies, cities are productive areas and there is an enormous potential among the poor population, for both the city development itself, as well as for the city’s role as a global actor. Pietro Garau (1989) suggests that emerging global cities should be viewed by at least four distinct user categories: the poor person, the affluent person, the tourist, and the expatriate businessperson. He believes that poor urban migrants are an asset rather than a problem to a city, since their work input is an important part of the economic growth processes of Third World cities – meaning that also urban slums have a positive impact on the quality of life, and more of them are needed. Garau offers a rather sardonic observation that the actual losers in cities are the urban elite, whose quality of life deteriorates and they “pay taxes” in the form of congestion and pollution. In addition, he also expresses his “irritation at all parafuturistic models of the world based on hyper-communication technology”, in which megacities are assumed to become linked with even most remote villages by integrated telecommunications systems. (see also Bell, 1999.) As Mary McNeil (1995) describes Mumbai’s busy informal economic activity, “it is here that the new city is being born, and where the future of its economic development lies”. In addition, it is argued that informal housing should not be seen as a part of the country’s housing crisis, but rather as the urban poor’s contribution to its solution; a creative process (El-Batran & Arandel, 1998).
ARE MEGACITIES AN ECOLOGICAL PROBLEM FOR HUMANKIND?

5.3. HYBRIDITY CHALLENGING CONVENTIONAL SOCIO-SPATIAL DIVISIONS IN THE CITY

A plane flying over a large city by night exposes its urban sprawl, such as Cairo’s star-like form shaped by lighted streets and houses. As usually even the poorest dwellers also have some source of electricity, this is the urban agglomeration that can be observed in its real size. But the daylight reveals another kind of city, as the megacity encompasses numerous divergent subcities within it.

Dynamics in urban ecology

Ecological conditions in the city have always been linked to social segregation within the urban area. Already in 1935 Rio de Janeiro, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1997: 95) observed that social hierarchy in the city could be measured by an altimeter: the higher the place, the lower the social status, and the poor did not have a choice but to settle the high hills in favelas. As Paul Harrison (1993: 171) has put it, “the typical Third World city is an island of steel, concrete and glass surrounded by the ocean of wood, tin and plastic”. In urban studies this notion of ‘polarization’ or ‘dualization’ process in the city has prevailed for long; the dual cities or socio-economically divided cities have been interpreted as a result of lopsided development. (see Sachs & Silk, 1991; Epstein, 1988.) In urban ecology studies, sociologists, economists and geographers have sought to analyze the socio-economic features of urban neighborhoods in order to understand the social relationship and patterns of city (see further Flanagan, 1995: 221-232, 255). The dualism seems to be used both in native or vernacular vs. foreign or imported (European, colonial) urban structures and functions on the one hand, and the socio-economic differences among the population, the planned vs. unplanned cities on the other. The modern industrial colonial period has been regarded as one of the main determinants of this development. It is also worthwhile recalling here that generalizations such as dichotomies always tend to be vague to some extent; thus while some scholars consider them valid devices, others reject all dualist thinking (see more e.g. King, 1990; O’Connor, 1983: 21, 25-26).

Malik (1989) suggests three types of subcities in the Middle Eastern context. The inherited city, previously inhabited by influential citizens, has been left with a marginal economic and political influence as all those who could afford to move out have done so. Today, it has kept some of its cultural bases, social and community structure, i.e., continuity of urban tradition, and therefore attracts tourists and international cultural agencies. In pursuit of modernization, entire areas of inherited cities have been replaced by an imported urban framework. The new city was not a natural consequence of the internal organic dynamism of its socio-economic needs, but an ‘urban transplant’ radically different in its cultural tradition. “It was a
city set divorced from everything that had gone before, and therefore, a fundamental departure from the inherited urban know-how and matrix”. It was a socially segregated city that was not meant to be accessible to most of the citizens, serving the new urban order of dominance. The third type of city is the (spontaneous) slum city, which, seen as a threat to the affluent areas in the city, is considered responsible for its own cycle of poverty and thus marginal to the urban system. (ibid.) In Cairo, the inherited indigenous city, medina, has turned into a congested slum, while the new modern city center with its marble and iron skyscrapers has become the new economic focus. Informal settlements are located in the edges of the city. In addition, new subcities for the affluent have emerged as islands outside the urban area, but within the proximity of the city, whilst the informal settlements form new urban sprawl corridors. (Myllylä, 1994.)

In Indian cities there can also be found colonial origins; a dual city formation in which the urban morphology is a mixture of indigenous and European patterns, or ‘Indigenous’ and ‘Anglicized’ areas (Kumaria, 1998). There is a congested old section with the main market place and irregular, narrow, and crowded streets, and little open space, and often the residential neighborhoods surround the commercial streets. The European pattern exhibits a remarkable contrast with wide streets, large homes, parks and spacious grounds, though this pattern is undergoing considerable changes. Some cities have exclusively European patterns, while others show varying degrees of blending as well as conflicts with indigenous patterns. This ecological pattern has generally promoted population segregation according to function and social status. The centers of Calcutta, Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai have become so cosmopolitan in the context of Indian culture that people from all regions have migrated there and established their own small neighborhoods based on caste, religion, and language. (Nagpaul, 1988.) In Delhi, city’s division into New and Old Delhi reflects the distinction between the colonial and the native city. While New Delhi comprises well-planned areas with greenery, broad roads and full infrastructure facilities, Old Delhi is congested, ‘slummified’ and has infrastructure deficiencies.

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23 Madaniyya is connected to the Western concept ‘civilization’ as well as medina to the ‘city’, but Islamic concepts still have vital differences compared to their Western counterparts. (Ateshin, 1989: 166-70, 192.)
Various urban fabrics in Cairo and Delhi.

The new European style city of Cairo by Tahrir square. Until the late 1950s, the city was spacious and cleaned daily (Abdel-Malek, 1994, pers.comm.)

The inherited City of Islamic Cairo. A damaged minaret stands in the midst of the congested district of Darb al-Ahmar. Next to the mosque is a traditional house with wooden lattice-work screening, mashrafiyyas.

The public water supply of Ruqayya Dudu (1761); these were numerous especially in the most active parts of the Islamic Cairo (see, e.g., Raymond, 1994: 245-246; Raymond, 1995: 116-117).
The inherited City of Old Delhi.
However, in India, the situation is far more complex than the dual structure actually indicates. Indian cities, predating the colonial era, have rather complicated structures due to political, economic and cultural implications originating from different historical periods. (Kumaria, 1998.) In Mumbai, it has been observed that the two cities, that of the poor slum dwellers and that of the wealthy living in high rise buildings, have developed a *symbiotic relationship* over time: for the poor, the possibility of jobs outweigh the costs of living without a solid roof over their heads or secure land tenure, and for the wealthy, household help live in slum areas. The poor often choose to live in a certain slum in order to be close to their jobs. If they were forced to move, the wealthy would lose their access to cheap labor. (McNeil, 1995.) The observation of symbiosis between urban areas corroborates O’Connor’s (1983: 39) studies in Africa when he challenged the common juxtaposition of indigenous and colonial elements, in which the latter always is seen as the dominant one. On the contrary, he claims that there is interdependence rather than dominance, and the whole notion of dualism ought to be rejected.

In addition, he (ibid.: 27-41) argues that “if the whole range of tropical African cities is to be forced into a simple typology, so that reasonably valid generalizations can be made, then at least six categories must be recognized: the truly indigenous city and the Islamic city, the colonial city and the ‘European’ city, the dual city and the hybrid city”. William Flanagan (1995: 285-286) suggests that despite its failure as a literal description, the dual-city model is useful in distinguishing between the city as a center of concentrated corporate power and individual wealth on one hand, and the city as a desperate environment for poor people in search of shelter and jobs on the other. Furthermore, the image of a dual city may be a useful political slogan to draw attention to the real problem of the biased division of wealth in the city. Therefore, since the metaphor has an effective “intuitive appeal” it is likely to persist.

When some authors seek to find certain urban ecology models (e.g., ‘The African city’, or ‘The South Asian City’) by using factorial analysis, others criticize any urban structural archetype that attempts to make large-scale generalizations. Nevertheless, Potter and Lloyd-Evans (1998: 135) argue that some models, as a matter of fact, do highlight certain common similarities, which increase our understanding of particularly more traditional city structures.

Hence, dual city discussions are giving space to more complex perceptions Third World city development. According to O’Connor (1983: 40-41), more and more cities might be regarded as moving into the category of *hybrid cities*, which can be defined as:

… those cities which combine indigenous and alien elements, in roughly equal proportions, but in which they are to a large extent integrated, rather than merely juxtaposed as in the dual city.
The above definition shows that one essential denominator for hybridity is the notion of integration between diverse areas, which could be called ‘urban symbiosis’. O’Connor names Lagos, Nigeria, as an example of a hybrid city, in which its indigenous Yoruba core and its colonial city center, instead of functioning as separated entities, share the heart of the city. In several African cities he also discerns ‘cellular structures’, in which foreign influences are evenly diffused and ‘Western’ forms are infiltrating ever more through the whole urban fabric. In general, at least in the African context, urbanization processes have been making cities (at least) physically more hybrid, which would imply a substantial degree of convergence taking place with respect to the contrasting six types of cities listed above. (ibid., 41, 200-201.) Hybridity is thus the outcome of various, mingling elements in the city. Evelyn Early (1993: 39, quoting Abu-Lughod, 1971) points out that in Cairo over time, the British-style areas have constantly become ‘baladized’ or traditionalized, and in turn, the medieval old city became modernized, and between them lies a transitional area of a business district with a “unattractive melange”: it does not have clear characteristics of its own, and it is also affected by the general homogenizing structures and functions of the public sector.24

Furthermore, the peri-urban areas, ‘borderzones’ or places of various boundary crossings have also become significant places in the formation of hybrid cities (see further, Pieterse, 1995). A description by Sassen and Patel (1996) would also serve as a definition of large hybrid cities, as it points to the potentiality of human resources:

Large cities around the world are places where a multiplicity of transnational and transregional processes assume concrete, localized forms; and where people from many different regions, countries, and villages converge. They are thus intrinsically diverse … The large city may bear the marks of a dominant corporate culture, but it also contains a variety of other cultures and identities that reflect humanity’s diversity and potential.

24 Early (1993: 40; see also Wikan, 1996: 39-41) notes that since the wealthy afrangi (modern) quarters have lost the privilege of geographic isolation, they seek to distance themselves in other ways. Afrangi and baladi (traditional) quarters may appear to be contiguous, but in the minds of their residents a concrete barrier exists between the two. Thus perceptual boundaries have become rigid in the city. A market area, for instance, can function as a horizontal, hardly noticed separation. Vertical separation occurs in high-rise buildings, where parquet-floor apartments lie just below a real barnyard of animals raised by the doorman (bawwaab), who lives with his family in a shack on the roof.
Maps 5 & 6: “Two worlds, one space?”

Traces of dualism can be recognized in the urban ecology of Delhi and Cairo; however, their formations are more complex.

Map 5: (adapted from Kumaria, 1998). In Delhi the dual city does not show up clearly, but rather a hybrid one: the poor areas are located near the affluent areas, industrial areas, highways and river, both on the outskirts and in the inner commercial areas. A large part of the informal areas are located on the eastern bank of the river Yamuna. The elite is mostly concentrated in the peripheral zones, while middle class areas are dispersed all over the city. In all, there is no sharp differentiation between the lower class and elite class areas, but rather, the spatial structure is dominated by the middle class areas. Like in Cairo, Delhi’s mixed land use is due to a structure that is a complex interplay of various societal factors, and simply because of the necessity for a very large number of (low-income) people to walk between home and work. Thus, the Western models with concentric zones (e.g. Burgess) are not relevant here either. (Kumaria, 1998.)

Map 6: (adapted from Fowler, 1994: 182 and El Kadi, 1990). In Cairo, a large part of the residents of the informal settlements are used to walk, not driving to work by car. Mixed residential and commercial neighborhoods have historically been predominant in the city. (Hassan, 1992.) The squatter settlements are located on the fringes of the city (El-Batran & Arandel, 1998) and slums in the central areas.

The term linked to the ungovernability of cities, which is due to rapid population growth is **hyperurbanization**. It is defined as a rate of urbanization that is too great for urban systems to accommodate adequately in terms of formal sector job creation, the provision of social and utility services, housing programs, etc. (Dewar, 1994; Harrison, 1995: 169). Manuel Castells (1993 in Harrison, 1995) suggests that the urban space of the ‘new marginality’ takes two forms: the first is the ‘tolerated ghetto’, where the poor are permitted to reside conveniently out of sight of the new rich, and the second is the space of the ‘street people’ who have an ‘uncomfortably open presence’ in the urban environment. Thus, while the affluent areas somewhat imitate their Northern counterparts, the housing and working environments of the poorer population manifest the ‘street level solutions’. (see also McGregor, 1995.)
Configurations in the informal city

There are at least four distinct types of poor urban dwellers in Third World cities: the homeless and street sleepers; tenants in slums and tenements; squatters; and occupants of shantytowns (cf. Potter & Lloyd-Evans, 1998: 138). There is no general agreement on the exact definition of the terms ‘slum’, ‘squatter settlement’, or ‘shantytown’; however, the term slum is often used as a more generic word for all of them. Both squatter settlements and shantytowns are referred to by means of a wide variety of other descriptions, such as irregular, makeshift, unplanned, self-help, marginal, illegal, spontaneous and peripheral settlements. (Flanagan, 1995: 156; Potter & Lloyd-Evans, 1998: 139.)

A slum and its definition vary from country to country, depending upon the socio-economic conditions of each society. Slums can be studied through two central characteristics. Physically, a slum often located in the central area of city with infirm housing structures, over-crowding, faulty alignment of streets, poor ventilation, inadequate lighting, a paucity of drinking water, drain clogging during rains, an absence of toilet facilities and non-availability of basic physical and social services, among others. Thereby, unlike a squatter settlement, a slum denotes permanent buildings which have become substandard by neglect and subdivision. Socially, a slum is a way of life, has a special character, and has its own set of norms and values, along with deviant behavior and social isolation. In India, people living in ‘formal’ slums pay rent and there is some basic infrastructure, but in the ‘informal’ slums the living conditions are worse and people are squatters. (The Government of India, 1998: 1-5; also Hesselberg, 1997: 25.)

People who occupy land without legal title to it are called squatters and live in a squatter settlement. Obviously, a squatter’s house may not necessarily be part of a slum. However, the question of whether the occupation of a lot (or a house) is illegal or legal may be a difficult one, and may become more complicated over the time. (Flanagan, 1995: 156; Potter & Lloyd-Evans, 1998: 139; see also Fernandes & Varley, 1998.) There is also considerable variation among squatter settlements in regard to the economic condition of inhabitants. At the upper end of the scale, squatter housing becomes indistinguishable from modest middle-class, legitimate housing, and at the lower end, conditions may resemble those of the crowded slums in the same cities. One of the most striking features of squatter settlements is the speed with which an area is invaded and settled, for instance, in Mexico squatter settlements are called pueblos paracaidistas due to their rapid appearance, as if they have ‘parachuted’ from the sky during one night. Since these land invasions are usually planned and organized by people themselves, there is no question of settlements that are usually epitomized as ‘spontaneous’. (Flanagan, 1995: 156-157; Potter & Lloyd-Evans, 1998: 140-141.) Every country has given informal areas specific and characterizing names (see e.g. Lynch 1988; Epstein 1988). There can be found over 50 different names for informal settlements (see e.g. Peri-Urban...
Network, 1992). For instance, in Argentina they are villas miserias; in Colombia invasiones or urbanizaciones piratas; in the Philippines barong-barong; in Calcutta bustees. An important point is to recognize the diversity of these settlement types, varying with respect to tenure, legality, building materials, speed of occupation, size, location, the origin and nature of residents and their aspirations (Potter & Lloyd-Evans, 1998: 141).

A shantytown, or makeshift settlement, is defined by land renting and its very poor physical fabric. ‘Shanties’ are built from waste materials available in the vicinity of a settlement, such as tin, cardboard, waste wood, mud and other temporary materials. Squatter settlements and shanty towns are interpreted as drawing to them more enterprising families and individuals who are prepared to seize the chance to establish a claim to urban permanence and mobility. Squatters have demonstrated through their activities that they possess motivation, skills and some resources to provide basic shelter and infrastructure for themselves. In contrast, the central slums draw the poorest of the poor and there is no incentive for occupants to upgrade their rental housing. (Flanagan, 1995: 159; Potter & Lloyd-Evans, 1998: 139-140; Hesselberg, 1997: 26.)

Squatter settlements and shantytowns are usually located on abandoned or otherwise unused lands. In addition, the poorest tend to locate in ecologically hazardous places: near polluting industries or dumping grounds, containing high risks for health and security. As people build shelters on peripheral lands, without any organized transport, water or power supply, often political bosses, doubling as slumlords, may help organize the basic amenities for them. The squatters often rely on politicians, thus forming an important vote bank for them. But as cities expand, these once peripheral lands become highly attractive for developing higher-income housing or office buildings and acute conflicts may develop over clearance of slums (Gagdil & Guha, 1995b: 67, 79; Douglass, 1992.)

There is a great heterogeneity in these areas, where also the leadership comes mainly from hut owners and well to do businessmen in the slums, along with a few educated persons. (Nagpaul, 1988.) The dynamics of a squatter area often gradually proceed to more solid structures, as makeshift huts are replaced by cement and brick houses. Squatter areas often keep on growing because more people move in, and enjoy the benefits of extended municipal health and sanitation services in the area. (Flanagan, 1995: 157.)

Latin America was the first continent experiencing large squatter movements. For instance, the whole notion of squatter settlement belt around the city of Lima already emerged from the 1950s. When people arrived in the city, they first invaded the land and organized themselves in order to make collective claims on the land. Today, the phenomenon it is not regarded as ‘illegal’ any more but rather, is widely accepted by the public. Squatters are well organized, for instance, into various ‘kitchen cooperatives’. Non-governmental organizations help them in establishing some basic services, and eventually, it has become more difficult for the city
authorities to evict them. On the other hand, people also comprise an important vote pool for the mayors, whom they have to contact in order to improve conditions in their areas. (Gutierrez, 1999, pers.comm.)

In Mumbai, estimations suggest that 55-75 percent of the population live in slum and squatter areas, which comprise a minimum of six million people. Nearly two million people live on pavements, while half are squatting on public lands and the rest on private lands. A survey of 4,000 households in nine Mumbai slums showed that 40 per cent had 2-4 people in one room; 35 percent had 5-9 and one percent had more than 10 to a room. The city has one of the largest slums in the world, Dharawi, with at least half a million dwellers, sheltering 85,000 families. In the city 35,000 families are squatting near the railroad tracks. Indian squatter settlements often seek vacant land in the proximity of railroads, where huts may be located only ten feet from the railroad tracks, making it a hazardous place to live for residents. Like all settlements, also slums may go through a maturing process, although it may be a long one. Some residents in Mumbai’s slums have lived on a particular patch of pavement for even forty years. They may evolve neighborhood associations by which they can arrange infrastructure, such as electricity, for their area, or get their children into informal schools. (McNeil, 1995; CSE, 1989.) The slums of Calcutta, in turn, shelter 40 per cent of the population. Of these, two-thirds live in temporary buildings and more than 57 percent of families have only one room to live in. Half a million people sleep on the streets of Calcutta. (MacGregor, 1995; CSE, 1989.) Some poor groups live as ‘pipe colonies’, in which discarded, cement pipes from industry serve as houses for the poorest.

In Dhaka, dwellers live in shelters, which have only about two square meters of land per person. Although the government has expressed reluctance to improve services for slum residents in order to discourage further migrants from the rural areas, the need for some basic services continues to exist. In addition, the government has been trying to assign specific areas to poor people. (Hoque et al., 1994; see also Islam, 1996.) The in-migrants in Jakarta are located in kampung (or village) -style, high density, unplanned communities in which housing, infrastructure and public facilities are inadequate. To rectify the position of the migrants, the city authorities established the Kampung Improvement Program, which aims at rehabilitating low-income communities through broad slum upgrading initiatives. (Djamal, 1996.)

In Delhi, the housing market is acutely distorted due to the monopoly of land held by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). As a result, land use for housing has remained below the norm: the informal incremental land supply accounted for 17 percent of land acquired by the DDA 1981-1991. An average 48 percent of residential land in Delhi is in informal settlements. Only 41 percent of households own legally entitled houses. The Rent Control Act discourages the rental market to respond to the demand. Around 85 percent of residential housing stock is constructed with permanent
building materials, but only 52 percent of it is in compliance with housing regulations. (Society for Development Studies, 1996: 24-25.) The total number of squatter settlements in the city in 1993 was 996 and the average settlement size approximately 280 *jhuggis*, shanty colonies (Misra et al., 1998.) The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has undertaken, through its Slum Improvement Board measures, to provide semi-permanent tenurial rights, as well as hand pumps, mobile toilets, night shelters, etc. The NGOs have improved the health status by introducing medical services and cleaning campaigns in slums. The multiplicity of authority has led to duplication of services in some settlements, while many others are entirely without them. (Society for Development Studies, 1996: 24-25.) The annual flood from the river Yamuna affects temporary units, but unavailability of affordable land, people accept this situation. The result is that the quality of housing stock is not improved due to the frequent rebuilding of the shelters. (ibid., 1996: 24-25.) Sanjeev Sharma (1998) calls the non-networked areas in Delhi a ‘City-beyond-network’.

The vulnerability of the poor settlements manifests itself occasionally in Delhi. In 1999 a fire in the large slum cluster of Vinay Ghat, which is located on the bank of the river Yamuna, caused the death of 30 people and left tens of thousands homeless. The area was comprised of 50,000 *jhuggis*, shelters constructed from waste materials and mud, inhabited by rag pickers. The area was stocked with inflammable material, including PVC sheets used as the roofing for the dwellers. Straw huts and tenements, which were made of cardboard, wood, mud, and bricks, were burnt to cinders. In all nearly 2,000 *jhuggis* were destroyed. People were furious, since the arrival of the city’s fire fighters to the area took hours. Moreover, fire-trucks could not enter the site due to narrow alleys and open drains; the lack of proper roads into the settlement. This sad case shows that slums usually do not have access to basic urban services, including ambulances, etc. (*The Hindustan Times*, 1999.) The initial reason for the incident remains unknown, but slum fires in India are often caused by wood used for cooking and heating, and also by unauthorized, haphazard electricity connections.

Cairo’s informal settlements have a number of common features, such as incremental housing construction by small contractors; non-compliance with building and planning regulations; and a lack of facilities and infrastructure. The settlements may be located either on public or private land. (El-Batran & Arandel, 1998.) While land invasion accounts for very small proportions of informal settlements, and the majority comprises privately owned houses which are built on purchased agricultural land; however, they often lack planning, construction permits and basic urban services (Assawi, 1996, in Bayat & Denis, 2000). Typical informal housing is comprised of brick-and-concrete buildings with one to five stories. Due to the nature of their informality, as well as problems in definition, is evident that the estimates on their numbers vary greatly in the city. According to some estimates, Cairo has some 111 informal settlements (*manatiq al-ashwa`yyat*), which house
over seven million people (Bayat, 1997b; cf. Soliman, 1992), but official estimates count more than 1,000 settlements sheltering 12 million people (see Assawi, 1996, in Bayat & Denis, 2000), which is closer to the calculation according to which more than 80 per cent of Cairo’s residents are housed in informal settlements (Salem, 1994; also Nedoroscik, 1997: 46-47). Sometimes ‘informality’ also includes the skyscrapers built on agricultural land (Attia, 1995, pers.comm.).

Large human conglomerations, such as Third World cities, may be favorable places to give birth to novel but also somewhat peculiar human behaviors in finding solutions to housing shortage in the city. First it would appear that Cairo does not have those shantytowns emerging by riversides, roads and streets typical of Delhi, but when looking at the fringes of the built-up areas, or the rooftops of houses, one can notice an extra layer composed of shelter constructions or makeshift huts; the ‘Second City’, which is actually an informal housing structure above the formal one. As long as the structures are built of non-permanent materials, such as waste wood, cardboard, or packing containers, the owner of the building allows them. It is estimated that there are over half a million rooftop dwellers in a variety of accommodation (Myllylä, 1994; Main & Williams, 1994).

On the edges of Cairo there is a ten-kilometer long informal housing area called as the ‘City of the Dead’, where the poor use the existing structures of the old cemeteries as shelters. The area consists of five different cemeteries, dating back to the seventh century. It has been estimated that today more than one million people live there. (Nedoroscik, 1997.)26 It is hard to define where the tombs end and the living city actually begins. The area has always been home to a shifting population. (Rodenbeck, 1998: 58). In the Cairo Master Plan the area appears as a grey, undetailed massive area, as if it still serves merely as a necropolis.

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26 All types of tombs, both old and more recent, have been invaded by the homeless: some rent out the tomb-dwellings as living quarters, while others have taken them over. The ‘invaders’ have adapted the tombs in creative ways to meet the needs of the living: for instance, gravestones and grave markers are used as desks, headboards, tables and shelves. Overcrowded rooms are multipurpose in nature, serving as living room, dining room, and kitchen. The lacking infrastructure is a problem in the area: electricity may be brought into the tomb, either legally or illegally; a latrine or toilet may be installed but formal sewage systems are not allowed; running water is an exception; and solid waste disposal is lacking. (Nedoroscik, 1997: 43-47; see also Watson, 1992.)
The informal cities in Cairo and Delhi.

Riverside shantytowns in Southern Delhi.

The *Second City* above central, Islamic Cairo. Rural lifestyles are common on the roofs, where families have their rural-style ovens for which they need scrap wood in the city. “Livestock and poultry are crammed into every corner. Roofs host goats and sheep; balconies have chickens and pigeons” (Early, 1993: 40).
The City of the Dead: the Northern Cemetery of Qaytbay and the Bab al-Wazir Cemetery on the west side of the Salah Salem Ring Road, seen from Muqattam hills in Cairo.

The Bab al-Nasr Cemetery extending from the ancient Fatimid gate. People have built homes and shops (sugarcane) on top of the tombs.
A paradox can be seen in the Egyptian housing situation. The spectacular growth of informal settlements coincided with the oversupply of formal housing units: in the mid-1980s there were more than a half million vacant units in Cairo, which were out of reach for the most of the residents. (El-Batran & Arandel, 1998.) Informal housing, representing a large proportion of the Egyptian housing market, is financed entirely by private investment. The result is low-quality developments deprived of basic services and infrastructure. As in many other Third World cities in the world, when these areas reach a population size large enough to exert political pressure, the government may be forced to provide them with infrastructure. In general, the authorities in Egypt have adopted a laissez-faire policy, ignoring illegal occupations, while at other times taking drastic action such as bulldozing poor areas (Kharoufi, 1997; Yousry & Aboul Atta, 1997). For instance, the unplanned area of Dar al-Salam, which the in-migrants have formed on agricultural lands, illustrates some kind of autonomy from the state and from the functioning of the entire urban system, i.e., it exemplifies the government’s inability to manage the complexity of urbanization (Kharoufi, 1995; see also Deboulet, 1996).

The Egyptian government’s attitude toward these settlements has experienced some external pressure, since the international development agencies have pushed forward structural adjustment policies, which have led to some attempts by the government to upgrade several informal settlements. Also, this has guaranteed that the government is able to have better control over the large urban area. One massive upgrading program initiated in 1993 was a response to the emergence of an Islamist movement and terrorism attached to certain informal settlements. The highly financed upgrading program offered infrastructure to a limited number of settlements with the most urgent political control, but did not leave much space for community participation. The failure of the government in responding to the informal housing situation in Cairo was due to several factors: strict rent control legislation which discouraged formal private investments; the inability of the public sector to fill the gap; and the withdrawal of the government from the rental housing market. (El-Batran & Arandel, 1998.) For the majority of Cairenes, demand for modest, low-cost housing has run ahead of the government-sponsored, massive construction programs (Doughty, 1999). Asef Bayat & Eric Denis (2000) criticize the commonly held assumptions that the large informal settlements are ‘abnormal’ and associated with political violence and social deviance. They share the positive view of many scholars mentioned earlier in this study that informal agglomerations often perform a significant function in the national economy, adding that these settlements can offer the inhabitants low-cost housing, food (from urban agriculture), strong kinship and social safety nets, among other benefits. Thus, despite the existence of conflict and competition within neighborhoods, many of the assets of living in informal settlements go beyond their disadvantages.
In addition, the Islamist movement is run by young, educated middle class people, and not by the poor living in these areas. However, the unrest and discontent among people may be a fertile ground for radical political groups. (Rashwan, 1994, pers.comm.)

Alan Gilbert (1994) states that problems of shelter and land are so severe in Third World urban areas that one cannot pretend that they could be solved - hence they can only be reduced. Governments may remain unwilling to improve their situation, basing their view on the illegal nature of settlements, which can release them from the responsibility of providing services – or, due to lack of funds, they claim that they are unable to do very much. (Jordan & Wagner, 1993.) It is now appropriate to look at more closely at the micro and macro-level constraints that the city authorities and people face in urban management, especially in environment-related, brown agenda issues. In that way we can better assess the role of non-governmental actors in an urban governance framework.

6. People and City Authorities Facing Environmental Crisis

Although cities are engines of economic development, governmental failure to manage the impacts of rapid urbanization is threatening human health and environmental quality. These costs fall most heavily on current generations, particularly the urban poor, who are the most affected by bad health conditions, reduced incomes, and lowered quality of life in all. In addressing the ‘brown agenda’, policy makers and planners will need to incorporate a blend of preventive and curative measures in response to the complex issues of rapid urbanization, poverty and environment. (Bartone et al., 1994; 8-12.)

6.1. State and Nature of Environment in Megacities

After having analyzed the spatial structure of cities, urban environmental problems, their state and nature will be dealt with in detail in the following sections. First, I will give a brief introduction to the state of the environment in several cities, i.e., to indicate the ‘weakest links’ between society and

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27 Municipality, Local government, Local authority are in many instances used in the same sense. Municipality often means the incorporated government of a town or an administrative division with an agglomeration. Local government is broader and may include local branches of the national government, as well as regional institutions. Local Authorities (with capital letters) are the same as a Municipality. The local authorities (without capitals) are used to mean all public institutions at the local level. (Tannerfeldt, 1995: 64-65.) I use the term city authorities to refer to all relevant public institutions within the megacity area.
The most critical urban environmental concerns in Third World megacities are the following (e.g. Bartone et al., 1994: 25-32; WRI et al., 1996: 19-23):

- **uneven and unequal access to basic infrastructure and services**: clean and sufficient water supplies, sewerage/drainage systems, electricity, garbage collection, health and education services;
- **pollution from urban wastes and emissions**: municipal and industrial wastewater, stormwater drainage, municipal solid wastes, hazardous wastes, and ambient as well as indoor air pollution;
- **shortages or destruction of natural and cultural resources**: unsustainable patterns of resource consumption include depletion and degradation of water supplies, inappropriate land development, inefficient urban fuel consumption, and loss of natural and cultural heritage;
- **urban transport externalities**: increasing motorization, poorly operating public transportation, inadequate road maintenance, insufficient bicycle paths and walkways, poor traffic management, and lack of enforcement and education are all contributing factors to congestion, road accidents and vehicular air pollution; and
- **exposure to natural and man-made hazards**: urban areas are subjected to natural hazards (severe storms, floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, wildfires, etc.) and anthropogenic factors, including prolonged exposure to pollutants, chemical contamination and industrial accidents.

This set of the most critical urban environmental problems has been recently named the **brown agenda**. It is roughly categorized into two groups: those concerns relating to environmental health, and those relating to industrialization. The former is linked to inadequate shelter and services: lack of a safe water supply, poor sanitation and drainage; inadequate solid waste management; use of low-grade domestic fuels in heating and cooking; health risks from overcrowding; and the occupation and degradation of environmentally sensitive lands and the interrelationships between these. Problems linked to the latter one include uncontrolled emissions from factories and mobile sources and improper disposal of hazardous industrial wastes. The costs of these problems fall most heavily on the urban poor. (Leitmann, 1999: 10; Bartone et al., 1994: 11-12) In addition, these ‘brown’ problems are often contrasted with ‘green’ problems, involving issues from
natural resources management to global warming. As pointed out by Josef Leitmann (1999: 10) this dichotomy may lead us to false positions, since cities are often the most important users of natural resources as well as sources of greenhouse gases.

A comprehensive understanding of urban environmental problems must take into account a group of complex natural, social and economic relationships. These complex features that make urban environmental management particularly difficult include, for instance: the pace and intensity of the urbanization process; city size and population growth patterns; the complexity of urban and regional ecosystems; issues that cut across environmental media, economic sectors and political jurisdictions; the spatial scale on which particular urban based environmental problems occur; urban land use and environmental relationships; a multitude of key public and private actors; and equity concerns for both present and future generations. A city’s level of economic development is one of the most significant determinants of environmental conditions; at a minimum, it determines the ability of a city and society to respond to environmental problems. (Bartone, et al., 1994: 12.)

**Ecological polarization and environmental equity**

Hence, when we seek to define ‘environment’ in the Third World context, and more specifically, in their big cities, the dimension of the concept appears to have special characteristics. Environmental questions are solidly intertwined with socio-economic and political questions, that is; the power structures in society. The negative impacts of rising levels of environmental degradation are greater for citizens living in slum and squatter settlements than for the elites and the growing middle class in the city (Douglass & Zoghlin, 1994). One persisting myth has been that poverty causes environmental deterioration and that the urban poor generate wastes (Lee, 1994), while, on the other hand, the poor have been regarded as both the agents and victims of urban degradation.

Most environmental problems are political problems. They arise not from some particular shortage of an environmental resource such as land or fresh water but from economic or political factors which deny poorer groups both access to it and the ability to demand changes ... poorer groups’ lack of piped water supplies is not the result of a shortage of fresh water resources but the result of governments’ refusal to give a higher priority to water supply. (Hardoy et al., 1997: 23.)

This situation indicates strong inequalities within the city and its social, political and economic structures. The occurrence of ecological resources and environmental degradation generates a phenomenon which could be called ‘ecologically based social polarization’ and which is also spatially segregated. The rich people can move away from deteriorating, polluted districts, while the poor have to stay. There can also be found another type of
polarization: during the summer months, when hot climatic conditions are worsened by air pollution, for example in Cairo, these ‘seasonal urban environmental refugees’ can migrate to their Alexandria summer houses. Furthermore, the former type of polarization can be understood not only within a city but also between the North and South:

Wealth allows us to avoid direct contact with the environmental hazards we create, while poverty means the problems stay close to home ... Increasing wealth tends to shift environmental burdens away from human population centers, often creating regional and global threats to natural ecosystems ... this allows wealthy city dwellers the luxury of having little direct physical contact with the hazards arising from their resource-intensive lifestyles. (McGranahan, 1994.)

Assessments of equity issues and income status have revealed significant linkages between economic status and various types of environmental problems. Inadequate water supply, sanitation, and solid waste, and high levels of indoor air pollution as well as land degradation are associated with a low-level or economic development, while higher levels of economic development are associated with industrial and energy-related pollution. (Bartone et al., 1994: 16.) Affluence is not unequivocally harmful or beneficial to the physical environment. The poor create environmental problems for themselves and their neighbors, while the affluent create problems for the wider public. A more affluent urban lifestyle employs more resources and creates more waste, but the rich devote part of their wealth to measures which protect themselves from environmental hazards. (McGranahan et al., 1996.) Thus the upper and middle classes can afford to purchase environmental services, clean water, sanitation and garbage collection, but in the case of clean air, the city population is more equal: vehicle-based air pollution does not discriminate since when moving around the city one is exposed to nitrogen oxides, particulates and other pathogens. When it comes to industrial pollution, then the social position again determines how much one is exposed to pollution. Small-scale industries, such as lead smelters or tanneries are usually located in the middle of poorer areas. It is also typical in many cities that large-scale industries are located in the proximity of urban centers and residential areas. In Mexico City, for instance, the highest concentrations of dust particles in the air are found in the low-income sections of the city. (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989.) Some studies have found that when public services are not accessible, the peri-urban poor have to pay private vendors ten to twenty times more for clean water than those living in areas served by public piped water supplies (Bartone et al., 1994: 10).

The numbers indicating serious environmental problems, the deficiencies in housing, infrastructure and services as well as pollution in Third World megacities are daunting – it is not difficult to end up with a rather appalling future visions of these regions. For instance, the skewed urban land markets
in most cities mean that between one third and two thirds of the population
are unable to afford safe, healthy and legal housing (Hardoy et al. 1997: 22).
It has been estimated that in 1994 more than 220 million people in Third
World urban areas lived without clean water, sanitation and other basic
services. In many urban areas, more than 90 per cent of the residential
wastewater is discharged without treatment. Also industrial wastewater
(including heavy metals and other toxic compounds) is mostly discharged
untreated into surface water or on land, causing pollution of both surface and
ground water supplies. In all, environment-related statistics probably
underestimate the actual number of people with inadequate access to
infrastructure and services. A water tap within 100 meters of a house is often
considered adequate by governments; in spite of this, there is no guarantee
that the household is able to secure its sufficient share of the resource. In
smaller cities the situation can be actually worse than in large cities, because
of the lesser availability of water taps. Statistics on national coverage also
often hide inequalities within a city. In the case of sanitation, the proportion
of the urban population lacking sanitation services and infrastructure is
double compared to those without access to potable water. (See WRI et al.,
1996: 19-21; Bartone et al., 1994: 26.) Infrastructure developments undergo
continuous competition with the increasing number of people in the city. On
the other hand, environmental degradation is a costly state of affairs. For
instance, urban air pollution costs India at least USD 1.3 billion a year while
water degradation leads to health costs amounting to USD 5.7 billion every
year, nearly three-fifths of the country’s total environmental costs (HDR,
1999). Thus, it is understandably impossible to know the exact numbers of
ecological degradation and structural deficiencies in cities; but the above
numbers, at least, give a picture of the scale of problems that pose a
challenge to megacities and their people.

In addition to the structural causes of environmental problems, in Third
World cities different environmental questions have multiple origins. The
following issues are not necessary primary causes but rather, interactive
components:
- the spatial concentration of people along with rapid population growth,
in which, as stated earlier, natural growth is a more important factor than
in-migration;
- the modernization project and global convergence, encompassing the
idea of growth, and materializing in the intensification of industrial
production, demand for private vehicles, and mass-consumption;
- poverty, the lack of basic resources (referring to political power as well as
housing, services and infrastructure), means that people have no choice
but to overuse or deplete their immediate living habitat; and
- spatial expansion is the inevitable result of the concentration of people,
industries, commerce, vehicles, energy consumption, water use, waste
generation, etc.
In the following three predominant environmental questions central to the brown agenda will be looked at more closely in selected cities: the provision of clean water and sanitation; solid waste disposal; and air pollution. All these examples will serve as a point of departure for discussing ungovernable cities.

The provision of clean water and sanitation
In India the very poorly functioning urban infrastructure creates everyday constraints for its citizens and even the affluent groups cannot avoid being exposed to various annoyances. The per capita demand for water is steadily increasing in the capital Delhi, where the worsening situation is described as hindrance to the development of the whole country (Chatterjee, 1997):

The appalling state of urban infrastructure in India not only makes for arduous living, but is the single biggest stumbling block to greater productivity for all Indian cities. Residents have purchased their own sources of power ... but being ‘powerless’ is only part of the frustration of daily life in the Indian cities. Most residents start their morning by switching on the water pump. The Municipal Corporation Delhi supplies water for an hour each morning, and half an hour in the evening, but if there’s no electricity, there’s no water. And when the overhead water tank is empty,Delhites must buy from private vendors. According to a recent Indian census estimate, 20 per cent of urban households never has access to safe drinking water, only 23 per cent have toilet facilities, and the drainage system covers only 66 per cent of the urban population ... These are the figures on paper. In reality, things are much worse. Access to safe drinking water does not necessarily mean water piped into homes. Only half of urban dwellers have household connections. About 30 per cent must walk half a kilometer daily for water ... Between 1991 and 2001, the already overpopulated country is increasing by 163 million people; 89 million live and work in urban areas. But with poor roads, recurring brownouts, inconsistent telephone connections, and unhealthy sanitation, many of her cities will cease to be the growth centers they are in the rest of the world.

There are many seasonal shortages and cuts in water and power supplies and the peripheral, illegal areas in which poorer groups live are the hardest hit. Most slum inhabitants obtain their water from standpipes. There are always long queues and long journeys are necessary to obtain supplies. In the Beckbagan slum in Calcutta, the public taps have been dry ever since installation. These shortages are further exacerbated by loss from leakages due to poor maintenance and illegal diversion of water from the mains. In Salt Lake City of Calcutta, around 4,000 hectares of lagoons and wetlands near the eastern fringe which were once intensively used for fishing were filled in, with the dual purpose of removing silt from the nearby river and providing housing for 100,000 middle income families. However, this landfill has affected the normal drainage cycle of the city, since the wetlands used to absorb excess rainwater. (MacGregor, 1995; CSE, 1989; see also Chatterjee, 1996.)
Drainage has two aspects, flood protection and storm water disposal. Sewerage treatment is vital to maintain healthy living conditions as well as check environmental decay. In Delhi, in total 17 drains empty into the Yamuna and Saibi rivers, but half of sewage finds its way into these drains, causing unhealthy environment in areas through which they pass. The city is grossly inadequate in sewerage facilities: 70 percent of the population does not have access to regular municipal sewerage system. Increasing pollution in the river Yamuna is one of the indicators showing this condition. In terms of volume, sewage from domestic sources is the most serious problem in Third World megacities; however, industrial wastewater is becoming an increasingly important source of pollution. In heavily industrialized Delhi, the production of wastewater comprises 25 per cent of domestic waste, and 67 per cent of industrial wastewater remains untreated. The rivers become places for both waste disposal and a source of drinking water. DDT factories, tanneries, paper and pulp mills, petrochemical and fertilizer complexes, rubber factories and many others also pour their wastes directly into the waters. The river Yamuna flowing through Delhi collects daily nearly 200 million liters of untreated sewage and 20 million liters of industrial effluents, including half a million liters of DDT wastes. From Delhi to Agra, water is unfit for bathing and drinking and this pollution has naturally serious health implications. (Misra, et al., 1998; Society for Development Studies, 1996: 24; CSE, 1989).

Drinking water in Chennai is basically unfit for human consumption: one survey showed that even 96.5 percent of samples tested showed faecal contamination. Leaking sewers and defective and poorly maintained water pumps and treatment plants are also responsible for contamination. Raw sewage is dumped into rivers and streams. Poor drainage systems cause flooding during rains and leave stagnant pools of water, which become ideal breeding grounds for many disease-carrying insects. Overcrowded, unsanitary conditions affect the health of the inhabitants and help spread cholera, typhoid, dysentry, diarrhoea and malaria. When 73 million workdays a year are lost due to water-related diseases, this has a significant impact on the national economy, too. (CSE, 1989.)

Parts of Jakarta have sunk 30 to 70 centimeters in the past 20 years due to land subsidence and extensive use of water resources. Simultaneously, groundwater depletion has resulted in leakage of salt water into water tables under the central areas of the city. The backbone of the sanitation system in the city is an open ditch system that serves as a conduit for all wastewater. Domestic wastewater is estimated to contribute 80 percent of surface water pollution, although industrial discharges are a growing concern. Pollution of the city’s waterways is considered to have “surpassed maximum tolerable limits”. Settlements in upland areas in the southern part of the metropolis is exacerbating both flooding and drought in the region. In the Java Sea by Jakarta, increasing levels of liquid, solid and toxic wastes from industrial and processing activities cause declining fish productivity and lead to increased
morbidity and mortality from the spread of infectious diseases. (WRI et al., 1996: 6-7; UN ESCAP, 1989, in Douglass, 1992.)

Like Jakarta, Mexico City suffers from collapsing structures due to over-pumping of groundwater. The city serves as a good example of how urban growth can quickly outstrip the natural resources of a region. Due to the absence of an adequate, nearby surface water source, the city must depend on the local groundwater source or import water from hundreds of kilometers away. Water is pumped from 1000 different sites and restricting consumption has not yet taken place. (WRI, et al., 1996: 64-65.) In Lima, the formal water supply system cannot meet the growing demands; an average 25 percent of the population has to purchase their water through informal systems, such as tanker truck delivery. In addition to the declining water resources due to pollution and saline intrusion, the considerable amount of loss and leakage occurring during water transportation, handling and household usage cause severe water scarcity. In informal areas especially, people have to rely for a long time on standpipes and water truck services, which are more expensive and of poorer quality than a properly installed water pipeline infrastructure. (Perähuhta, 1998.)

Surface water resources in the Lagos region are dominated by the Lagos Lagoon system and estuary. The estuary, with an area of 80 square kilometers, serves as a waste ‘sink’ for the disposal of liquid, solid and gaseous wastes for the entire megacity. The main water pollutants originate from food processing industries, sawmills, slaughterhouses and domestic sewage, leading to eutrophication and harmful effects on fish. The water supply is not adequate in the city, as only less than 50 per cent of the population has access to public water supplies. Water losses due to leakages and illegal connections, as well as high industrial consumption (which is even a third of supply) worsen the situation. (Aina et al., 1994.)

Upstream from Cairo (i.e., to the south of the city), the River Nile receives large flows of mostly untreated domestic, agricultural, and industrial wastewater. Between the Aswan High Dam and Cairo, 43 towns and approximately 1500 villages discharge their waste into the Nile, thus also determining Cairo’s drinking water quality. (Egypt-Canada..., 1993.) Most of the water supply in Cairo is withdrawn from intake points in the middle of the Nile, and ground water sources provide about eight per cent of the supply. The purified water goes into storage or pump stations for distribution, and at this point, as it enters the distribution system, Cairo’s drinking water is usually clean, but the high level of chlorination leaves its traces in the water. However, some problems in the water distribution system or storage sometimes lead to erratic water supplies and/or contamination entering the drinking water in several areas. Erratic water pressure and unreliable supplies may cause pollution from contaminated groundwater or sewage from leaking drains and sewers when entering the drinking water distribution system through damaged joints. (El-Gohary, 1993.)
The River Nile flows through the city of Cairo

Many neighborhoods, especially in Cairo’s informal areas, do not have running water in their houses. They have to buy it from dealers traveling door-to-door, or carry it home from public. In some instances, people living in informal settlements have reason to assume they will eventually receive the basic infrastructure in their area, since other districts next to them have succeeded in doing so. The poor areas have to undertake strenuous efforts to raise funds for potable water and sewer connections. Standing sewage is a constant problem, as residents cannot always pay the high fees demanded by certain ‘evacuators’. Sometimes sewage pumping vehicles used by residents of these settlements are dumping the waste into old irrigation canals and other waterways. (Nadim et al., 1980: 73, 123.)

Cairo is the main industrial center, where more than half of Egypt’s industrial activity is located. This includes chemical, textile, metal, food, engineering and cement production operations, as well as smaller scale activities, such as tanneries, gasoline stations, marble and tile factories. In 1992, only half of industry conducted some type of effluent treatment before discharging into the collection system. Limited data availability has restricted evaluation of different pollution concentrations from effluents from discharged wastewater; no accurate information is available on the amount of toxic substances. (see El-Gohary, 1993.) The continuous growth of Cairo makes the assessment of the drinking water and wastewater networks difficult. Expansion of water supply networks without the parallel construction of sewerage systems, or the rehabilitation of existing systems have lead to serious water pollution problems. The operation problems in the domestic sewer networks are common, especially when they become under-
dimensioned. A large part of the wastewater collected by sewerage systems is not treated or receives ineffective treatment. (Finnida, 1994: 21-22; Newman, 1994, pers.comm.)

**Solid waste disposal**

In Third World cities, mass consumption by the upper and middle classes has been followed by huge solid waste mountains. The composition of household waste is becoming more inorganic, including plastics and other materials difficult to reuse. The municipal authorities take care of only a small part of the collection. Hence, open dumping and burning garbage are common views in urban quarters. In most cities, waste disposal is handled by a special trade of waste or rag pickers.

During the 1990s, Manila produced daily an average of 4,000 tons of waste, which was generated by domestic, commercial, industrial and institutional sources. It has been estimated that for this amount, approximately 12,000 cubic meters of disposal space would be required on a daily basis. Less than half is collected and hauled to a few dumping sites, which are filled to capacity. The inability of local governments and the metropolitan administration to develop a policy on solid waste disposal and management is illustrated by the city’s largest garbage dump, known as ‘Smoky Mountain’. It covers some 22.6 hectares, with an elevation at its highest point of 18 meters. The rotting mass of organic material produces a haze over the dump, coming from methane gas created by the decomposition process. The site supports and shelters 20,000 people, some of whom have lived there for more than 40-50 years. People refuse to be relocated by the government, because they are afraid of losing their source of livelihood, scavenging. However, since the 1990s, most of the dumping sites have been closed. Garbage, silt and other solid wastes find their way into road gutters, open ditches, *esteros* (canals) and flood drainage mains. This, in turn, damages marine life which is referred to as a ‘red tide phenomenon’, and as result, the depletion of seafood has removed an important source of protein from the diets of Manila residents. The Pasig River that created the lush green vegetation of the city is now biologically dead. Another problem is that garbage, which is thrown into Manila’s waterways, clog them and contribute to flooding during the rainy season. Also the disappearance of canals contributes to such flooding. Thirdly, illegal construction of dykes and the conversion of traditional fishponds along the shores into residential areas are identified as factors that aggravates the flooding problem. (Douglass, 1992; Oreta, 1996; Endriga et al., 1988 in Jimenez & Velasquez, 1989.)

It is estimated that one-third of Lagos has no refuse collection service. Waste is disposed of either through private or community efforts or left at various illegal dumps, or in valleys and swamps. The implication of these activities is the pollution of surface and ground water; air pollution and the destruction of ecosystems, as well as the exposure of people who live or
work close to dump sites to health hazards. (Aina, et al., 1994; see also Onibokun & Kumuyi, 1999.)

There are various estimations on the amount of solid waste generated by Delhi, ranging from 6,000 to 12,000 tons per day. Municipalities take care of 30-40 percent of the collection. Open landfills spread infectious diseases to neighborhoods. Like in other cities, there are no incentives for people to produce less waste. The informal rag pickers help to transfer the waste material into recycling trade, and it is estimated that they can convert 9-15 percent of the waste generated. The effect of incinerators is not considered good due to high levels of toxic compounds originating from plastic waste. In addition, also groundwater is threatened in the vicinity of landfills, since raining bring the toxics downwards, and as result, Delhi’s groundwater is extremely contaminated by lead and other heavy metals. (Society for Development Studies, 1996: 24; Misra, et al., 1998; Singh, 1998, pers.comm.)

In Cairo, the poorest and some middle class areas are lacking waste collection, therefore vacant sites, such as many small Nile canals and road sides, are filled with plastic bags of solid waste. Thus different environmental systems are interconnected: burning garbage in the neighborhoods is perhaps the most apparent cause of local level air pollution, which contains toxic components for human health.

**Air pollution**

Mexico City air pollution is caused by traffic and industrial activities. In the beginning of 1990s, the city adopted a strategic plan containing five elements in reducing air pollution: improving air quality (unleaded fuel, industry use of natural gas, sulphur pollution abatement equipment); improving transportation (limiting private traffic, monitoring emissions); modernization of industry (reducing emissions); improving air quality in highlands (reforestation, banning the logging of wood, protection of sensitive areas); and, establishing an environmental protection plan (including popular participation). This program, which is not very common in the Third World, had some success in its initial stage: air quality improved and frequent smog alarms were not necessary. However, in the mid-1990s the situation worsened. The Environmental Agency was not very hopeful in a situation in which regulations and restrictions in using cars were circumvented by purchasing a second car and using bribes in emission tests. Lead-free fuel was more expensive and therefore many drivers removed the catalyst from their cars. Industry also used bribes in evading regulations. (Garcia, 1994).

Vehicle emissions also constitute the most important source of harmful pollutants in Jakarta. The residential sector also contributes about 40 percent of particulate matter, largely from the burning of solid waste by households and by refuse recyclers; industry contributes the greatest share of sulfur oxides. (The World Bank, 1994 in WRI, et al., 1996: 6.)
In Cairo, air pollution originates from traffic and from different types and sizes of industries, as among the biggest environmental ‘hot spots’ in the Mediterranean region. In some poorer districts atmospheric lead is even 50 times greater than the air quality standard for lead in the United States (Kamel, 1995). During several months in the Fall of 1999, a grey cloud darkened the sky above the city. Air pollution levels were three times higher than maximum international standards and the Cairenes suffered from typical health symptoms of smog. The phenomenon was caused by emissions from industry and traffic combined with open combustion of garbage in the streets. The Minister of Environment arranged an emergency meeting with the representatives of the 27 biggest industrial units in the city, in order to hasten the installment of cleaning technology. The authorities also banned the burning of car tires in those industries, which used them as fuel.

Figure 2: Delhi’s air pollution perceived by a child living in a Kanak Durga Camp slum. (Prabhakar, 10 years)
In Chennai, the major polluting industries are the fertilizer and chemical industries and thermal power stations, whilst various industries, power stations and domestic fuel are the main polluters in Calcutta. Unlike other Indian cities, where a large proportion of air pollution is generated by domestic stoves or open fires at home, traffic and industry are the main contributors of air pollution in Delhi. (CSE, 1989.) Its air pollution could be considered the most urgent problem, followed by solid wastes. Rising incomes combined with a demand for greater personal mobility and inadequate public transport have resulted in a rapid increase in automobile (scooters, motorcycles, mopeds and cars) ownership and use in Delhi. Growing motorization coupled with limited road space; inadequate separation of working space from living space and space for movement; an ageing and ill-maintained vehicle stock; a sizeable share of two-stroke engine technologies; an absence of efficient public transport and lower quality of fuels have all led to traffic congestion resulting in longer travel time, greater fuel consumption, growing air pollution, discomfort to road users, and degradation of the urban environment. (Bose, 1998; Singh, 1998, pers.comm.)

According to Delhi’s Central Pollution Control Department (CPCD), which is the principal authority in air quality issues, vehicular pollution constitutes even 60-80 per cent of all air pollution in the city, which has more than three million vehicles. Of these, 80,000 three-wheelers, and another 80,000 two-wheelers play a key part in the degradation of air quality. (Chakravarti, 1998, pers.comm.) There are also problems with the drivers’ behavior; people do not obey rules; traffic moves slowly; roads are crowded with pedestrians and cows; vehicles are old; public transportation is absent; and the ongoing two-wheelers’ boom. The authorities have noticed that it is impossible to get rid of old cars, many of which are even 30-40 years old. Tropical climate and dust as natural ecological conditions worsen the air quality and photochemical smog is a common sight above the city, particularly in winter. Cleaner technologies like catalytic converters and the introduction of unleaded gasoline or compressed natural gas, which have been introduced in the country, will probably decrease air pollution levels. (Dutta, 1998, pers.comm.) Nevertheless, the total passenger travel demand for road transportation in Delhi is expected to grow over 300 percent from the early 1990s to 2010, in which the number of private vehicles is remarkable. So far travel demand in Delhi is mainly catered by road, but the share of public bus transport has been declining, comprising only one percent, which is due to inadequate attention to the public-based transport system by the city authorities. This is also the main reason why Delhi has more vehicles than the other Indian cities. (Bose, 1998.)
Traffic, congestion and air pollution.

Delhi has over three million vehicles. More than 160,000 autorickshaws and motorcyclers are among the main culprits of severe air pollution, as they contribute half of the total carbon monoxide CO emissions and over 80 percent of the hydrocarbons (HC) in the city. It is also estimated that a motorcycle pollutes even 10 times more than a new car. Inspection points with emission tests already exist, but only half effective. (Bose, 1998, pers. comm.)

All-day round congestion in Giza, Cairo. As vehicle speed averages less than 16 km per hour, fuel consumption and emissions are high. Also Cairo has an estimated three million vehicles, most of which are old. Fuel price subsidies exacerbate air pollution problem in the city. (Stephens, 1993; Nasralla, 1994, pers.comm.)
City size and spatial levels

Rapid urban change *per se* need not produce serious environmental problems. A case in point: Curitiba, a city of 2.2 million people in Brazil, is a quite rapidly growing city, with far fewer serious problems than many other cities which have grown far more slowly (see e.g. Rabinovitz, 1992). Jorge Hardoy, et al. (1997: 21) have criticized the degree of attention paid to megacities. However, environmental problems become particularly serious where there is a rapid expansion in urban population with little or no consideration for the environmental implications, and for the institutional framework to ensure these implications are addressed (Hardoy, et al., 1997: 21). Some problems are more likely to grow along with city size as has taken place in Bangkok, Jakarta, and São Paulo, where annual car and truck usage per resident is expected to increase exponentially with the size of the urban area. Economic development exacerbates many problems because, e.g., the quantity of urban wastes generated per capita also tends to increase steadily with increased per capita income. (WRI, et al., 1996: 46.)

When shifting from the environmental problems in households and neighborhoods, to city, regional and global levels, there is a shift from issues of health to those of ecology and sustainability. Threats from broader environmental burdens are more indirect, affect life-support systems in indirect ways, and take more time to materialize. Rapid population growth can act as a compounding factor at every level. Local environmental problems are often most severe where the urban population is growing rapidly, and migrants are particularly exposed to environmental hazards. Citywide problems are typically more severe in larger cities. And more people, particularly more affluent people, generally mean a greater global environmental burden. (McGranahan, et al., 1996.)

Environmental problems vary from city to city and region to region, influenced by a city’s size and rate of growth, income, local geography, climate, and institutional capabilities. Especially where local governments are weak or under-financed, rapid economic or population growth can exacerbate these problems. Environmental management tends to be more difficult in very large cities: the financial resources needed to provide services to tens of millions of people are enormous. In addition, the situation becomes more difficult since these largest cities often are made up of many local jurisdictions with overlapping responsibilities. It must be also noted that environmental issues often vary according to the stages of economic development of a country, which can be represented in an environmental transition model. Unsanitary residential living is associated with poor neighborhoods and low stages of development and income. As income levels rise, then brown agenda issues affect smaller proportions of the urban population. Manufacturing industry increases as development and income levels of cities improve: this often leads to water and air pollution. The impacts are city and regional and intensified in some neighborhoods. Finally, an ‘environmental transition’ has extensive air pollution associated with
motor vehicle emissions in some cities that experience specific climatic conditions. This arises from consumption patterns and production where there is dependence upon motor vehicles. In the model there is some spatial and stage-of-development overlap and the three stages will increasingly occur simultaneously. (Pugh, 1996b; Bartone et al., 1994: 14-15.) (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Transfer mechanisms over different geographic scales.**  
(modified from Hordijk, 1999; see also Bartone, et al., 14-15).
An interesting comparative analysis of three cities carried out by Gordon McGranahan et al. (1996) shows that city-size and household-level health problems do not go hand in hand. In fact, the study suggests that the opposite is more likely to be true: many of the worst environmental health problems are probably most severe in smaller cities. There can be found numerous environmental risks in and around people’s homes and workplaces; for instance, when the household is lacking a source of water at home, this is not only burdensome for women, but restricts the hygiene practices of the family. High levels of toilet sharing also lead to poor sanitary conditions, creating more opportunities for faecal-oral diseases to be transmitted between households, and, finally, can lead to open defecation and faeces being mixed with solid waste. Without household garbage collection, waste easily accumulates in the neighborhood, providing ideal habitats for flies and rats. Where biofuels are used without proper ventilation, indoor air pollution may be severe and contribute to respiratory illnesses. McGranahan et al. found certain differences in the severity of environmental problems according to city level, by selecting household environment indicators in poor, middle-class and affluent residential areas. In some cities, the macro-level questions were much more severe than in others, but on the other hand, when looking at the neighborhoods, the level of the problem seemed to be the opposite. For instance, on the macro-level the megacities of Jakarta and São Paulo faced more serious problems than the smaller metropolis, Accra, but at the micro-level Accra’s situation in terms of the health of the population was much worse: 46 per cent of the households had no water source at home, 89 percent no home garbage collection, 82 percent had pests/flies in the kitchen (which present serious health risks particularly to women and children). However, the affluent neighborhoods of Accra had roughly the same level of access to environmental services (water, sanitation) as the São Paulo averages. Scholars note that water consumption increases with affluence both because it becomes more convenient and affordable to use, and because new demands for water, such as for washing cars, develop.

Pollution of the waterways was a serious problem in the vicinity of all three cities, as was found by McGranahan et al. Many of São Paulo’s and Jakarta’s water quality problems were related to industrial activity, which was particularly intensive in and around São Paulo. Even faecal water pollution was more of a city-level problem São Paulo, where the sewerage system reached some three quarters of the residents, but the majority of the sewage was released untreated. In São Paulo, solid waste generation (11,000 tons per day) was two times higher than in Jakarta, and ten times higher than in Accra. The majority of solid waste in all three cities were collected by the city authorities, but with its large size and high waste generation along with high collection share, São Paulo authorities coped with by far the larger solid waste burden. The households in Accra and Jakarta had lower collection percents, and as result, households without home collection dumped their
wastes at collection points, official dumping sites, or illegal sites. When
collection by authorities was intermittent, the environmental burden fell on
nearby residents. In addition, both Accra and Jakarta showed measurements
for suspended particulate matter, which were 2-3 times beyond WHO
guidelines; however, the outdoor air pollution was not a significant problem
for Accra, but rather, the main concerns for the city came from the home
sphere. All three cities faced problems with watershed management, urban-
led deforestation and land degradation. The household environment appeared
to be far better in São Paulo than in the other two cities, reflecting higher
levels of private affluence, as well as organized efforts and capacity among
the city authorities for providing infrastructural facilities. On the other hand,
even on a per capita basis, the sources of city-level problems were greatest in
São Paulo. Jakarta appeared to have the ‘worst of two worlds’
environmentally for it faced severe city-level problems affecting fishing,
agriculture and its watersheds (Douglass, 1989 in ibid.; see also Hardoy et
al., 1997), but, due to a poorly developed environmental infrastructure, had
made little progress towards solving the unhealthy conditions in its
neighborhoods. In all, the study found that local environmental problems
could not only be more severe, but also tend to reinforce each other, thereby
creating a complex of interrelated environmental hazards; bad sanitation may
lead to contaminated groundwater, faeces finding its way into the solid
waste, onto the open land; solid waste is transported into drains, causing
accumulations of water where mosquitoes breed; the mosquito coils and
pesticides used to combat mosquitoes add to the air pollution and chemical
hazards, etc. Problems relating to water supplies, sanitation, food
contamination and insect infestation are even more clearly intertwined.
McGranahan et al. also point out that their empirical generalizations do not
imply fixed relationships between affluence and environmental distress, but
rather, there is a great deal of complexity and more or less ambiguous links:

It would be a mistake to think that low income neighborhoods are all unsanitary,
smoky, waste strewn and pest infested (Bapat and Crook, 1984), that the open air
and waterways of middle income cities are always heavily polluted, or that
affluence has to create a global environmental crisis ... Indeed, part of what makes
environmental management such a challenge is that the connections between
human activity and the environment cannot be reduced to a few simple
relationships, and environmental problems of different scales interrelate. The
generalizations ... do, however, locate what appears to be the weakest links – the
levels at which the most serious problems are likely to surface in the absence of
good environmental management. (McGranahan, et al., 1996.)

Is there, then, such things as ‘the most polluted cities of the world’? Despite
the fact that research on the negative externalities in Third World megacities
is spotty, a few generalizations and comparisons could be drawn with
cautions. It is claimed that some problems are apparently more serious in
some cities than in others (e.g. CSE, 1989): air pollution is a very serious
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issue in Mexico City, Delhi, São Paulo, Mumbai, Manila, and Calcutta, whereas water quality is a major problem in Dhaka, Delhi, Seoul, Karachi, Bangkok and Manila; traffic congestion is particularly serious in Bangkok, Teheran, Mexico City, Cairo, Manila and Lagos; sewerage problems are acute in Bangkok, Manila, Dhaka, and Karachi; and solid waste collection is grossly inadequate in Lagos, Jakarta, Lima, and Karachi. Nevertheless, ranking cities according to their environmental problems is a rather difficult task. A case in point: if the level of particulates is higher in Delhi than in Cairo, but Cairo has a higher level of lead concentrations, which city has worse air pollution?

The poor managing the urban environment

In some cases informal employment also serves as environmental management, although the special groups of waste pickers in many cities are primarily motivated by economic profit: waste picking is an important survival strategy for the poor, particularly for women and children. They may work independently or as loosely organized groups, but also well-organized groups can be found in Asia particularly. The importance of these urban ‘environmental caretakers’ has gone relatively unnoticed.

Far from ‘causing’ environmental deterioration, poverty is more accurately a manifestation of disempowerment, delegitimization, marginalization and exploitation of the lower strata of society. In many instances, it is the poor who actually are the de facto caretakers through the types of jobs generated by environmental disregard on the part of the affluent and the elites. Whether it is street-cleaning for the government, rag picking for large-scale paper makers, or scavenging for materials to use for their own house construction, much of the economy of the poor is derived from deteriorating environmental conditions in the cities [of Asia]. (Douglass, 1992.)

According to my personal, brief observations, solid waste disposal in the Indian capital Delhi seems to go through several ‘stages’. Around some municipal collection points located in low and middle-income districts, garbage lies and roams on the ground beside the collection point, rather than being stuffed inside of it. First waste pickers, or the rag pickers, take away the most useful and valuable items. Then stray dogs and particularly, a large number of ‘stray cows’, come to eat the organic parts of the leftovers, thus contributing to the city cleaning of its organic waste. Finally, a municipal truck, if it comes (at all), transfers the rest of the garbage outside the city to a landfill site. In contrast, in the affluent areas of New Delhi no remnants of household waste can be seen, and clean wide streets are continuously swept clean of fallen tree leaves and branches by the poor, often elderly citizens.
Solid waste disposal in Delhi.

Dustbin in the street.

A scavenger looking for valuable items to sell.
In India, although the majority of workers in the informal recycling sector have been men, street waste picking appears to be done mainly by women and children from the lower castes. It is one of the few income-earning possibilities open to women, many of whom are poor migrants or offspring of migrants from rural areas. For instance, there are between 20,000-30,000 waste pickers in the Indian city Bangalore, which will soon become one of the megacities with its 7 million people. The waste pickers in India have been studied by Marijk Huysman (see, e.g., 1994) who has studied particularly waste pickers in Bangalore, and Caroline Hunt (e.g., 1996), who has focused on child waste pickers in the same city. The researchers found that waste picking is not an occupation of choice but when other opportunities are lacking it became a necessity. Waste pickers collect recyclable materials such as plastic, metal, paper, rubber, glass, batteries, bones and coconut shells; common items that are collected in Third World cities in general. Most use a stick or other instrument with which to sort through the waste. According to Hunt, in some parts of the city waste pickers have a monopoly and newcomers have little chance of starting work there, while Huysman’s study does not mention the control of certain territories of pickers. A detailed account of daily routines of waste pickers was studied by Huysman. People gathered waste materials from the street and the dustbins and put them in the baskets which they carried on their heads or shoulders:

Around us the city awakes. People wash themselves, milk a cow, scrub the pavement in front of their door or head for work. We meet a lot of waste pickers, mainly women and children. Most of them carry a gunnybag over their shoulder and they seem to know exactly where to go and what to look for. They work fast as they search the piled garbage heaps and bins, searching for, in their eyes, valuable materials. They have to be fast because the competition is stiff and the faster they work the sooner they can go home. Each day they collect as much as 12 to 15 kilos of material.

A general phenomenon is that the waste is usually collected from middle income and upper income areas, but the waste the poor produce is usually unprofitable to even scavengers, who also are not provided with public nor private environmental management services (Douglass, 1992). Hunt’s study showed that almost three-quarters of the collectors sold their collected material to the waste dealer. The average income per day ranged between Rs 10-20 (in 1996)\textsuperscript{28}, men earning more than women and children. The children worked an average of five hours a day and seven days a week. Only a minority of the men contributed their full income to the household budget. Furthermore, it appeared that waste pickers were far from being autonomous producers and depended upon the rates that the factories give for the

\textsuperscript{28} A poor Indian family of four persons usually needs minimum Rs (rupee) 40-60 daily to manage (Varia, 1998, pers.comm.). One Indian rupee (INR) is 0.02139 USD (or 1 USD is 46.75 rupee).
materials. Rates of materials were influenced by the market prices for national and even international raw materials. At this point, their grassroots level environmental management becomes connected to the global context in terms of the waste dumping from North to South. In the North due to the awareness of the environmental impacts of waste incineration and dumping to landfills, shiploads of plastic and paper waste keep on entering the harbors of Mumbai and Chennai. The industries which utilize waste material prefer the imported wastes because of their higher quality and cleaner state and also there is not much difference in the prices of imported and local wastes. This affects the economics of local resource recovery and recycling, and it also has a harsh impact on itinerant collectors and waste pickers. Thus waste pickers are much dependent upon the dealers for the sale of their materials, and dealers who try to enlarge their profit by keeping prices as low as possible by cheating waste pickers through undercounting when the wastes are weighed, etc. In addition, access to waste is becoming more competitive with increasing numbers of waste pickers entering the market.

Waste picking in dumpsites has many dangers and is particularly detrimental to health, as confirmed by both studies. Waste may be contaminated with faecal material, hospital and toxic industrial waste, edible materials (hazardous when eaten), sharp objects etc. Waste provides an ideal habitat for disease vectors including flies, other insects and rats. In their work, waste pickers are in direct competition with dogs and face the associated threat of rabies. On dumpsites and in some roadside bins, fires are either lit to reduce the volume of materials or inflame spontaneously because of the presence of methane and other gases. These could be hazardous in terms of burns and smoke inhalation. Weather conditions could create an extra burden during the wet season, when flooding leads to faecal materials becoming washed into domestic waste in the street. It must also be noted that health risks for children were more severe than for adults, for instance, in situations when waste materials are being burned. Also, women and children are often targets for harassment. To a certain extent, the living circumstances of women waste pickers correspond to those of other poor women in cities: poor quality housing, long queuing to the water tap, lack of access to education and medical care, and only a small minority of the children attending school. It is quite common that boys become influenced by a street

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29 The global economy and the international waste trade are coupled very closely, because global trade links have enabled waste to be moved cheaply, and poverty and international debt patterns have encouraged its movement to Third World countries in need of foreign exchange. For example, Indonesia was the recipient of some 100,000 - 150,000 tons of plastic wastes from the USA and Germany every year during the early 1990s. However, only 60 percent of this plastic could be recycled, and the rest, a quarter of which was hazardous, was dumped in landfills. The Basel convention has had difficulties in controlling this North-South waste trade. Even if the dumping decreases, it is suspected that it will only lead to an increase in transfers of dirty technology and the movement of entire industries to Third World countries. (Clapp, 1994.)
culture that has negative effects on their development; drug abuse is very common in Indian slums in general (Cheridan, 1998, pers.comm.).

Furthermore, measures taken by the Local Authority, the Municipal Corporation, had negative effects on the life of the waste pickers: they and their slums had to disappear to the periphery of the city out of the way of new apartments and shopping complexes. Huysman points out that although no forms of official unionization were found among the women waste pickers, one could speak of a certain level of organization and collective action among the women. They worked at an individual level, but through incentives and cooperation the women were able to collect more waste and sell it in greater quantities. Huysman suggests that with the impetus of privatization, which is the current trend in Indian government policy regarding solid waste collection and management by municipal corporations, it is possible that there could be a far more efficient waste disposal and recycling system in the formal sector. It is also possible that with activities of certain environmental NGOs which promote waste separation at the source and active public participation, this sector will be further marginalized, because other actors will take over certain parts of the civic management of the city.

On the other hand, ENGOs can help waste pickers to gain better profit from their work. Socially oriented ENGO, such as Bosco in Chennai, focus on improving the working and living conditions of waste pickers and try to get recognition for the fact that they are caretakers of the urban environment. Huysman states that large scale interventions may also be required, both by the government and well-organized ENGOs, to replicate the experiences of limited success by the women mentioned above, in self-organizing, self-assertion and looking for group alternatives to improve their working and living environments. But she also asks, what will happen to these women when these national and local policies create sweeping changes at the micro level? Facilities such as clinics, clean water, washing places and safe storage places for collected materials should be provided, for example, through ENGOs. They could also include the integration of groups of waste pickers into small-scale, community-based solid waste collecting. It has been noticed that higher status and a better income for waste-pickers easily leads to a flow of new waste pickers to the site, mostly men and members of higher castes, who push women out of income opportunities if conditions improve. Gender differentiation and attention to women in this occupational group is therefore considered necessary by both Huysman and Hunt. The status of this social group needs to be changed through the formalization of the sector, giving the waste pickers official recognition and protection and also giving their families increased employment security and rights which would allow them the freedom to leave the occupation of waste-picking. The public authorities usually have little respect for these women’s contributions to the maintenance of the city. It is thus very important that government recognizes
the fact that women comprise a special group of workers, also in the recovery and recycling sector.

In general, there has been some ‘gender blindness’ in urban studies, however, the fact is that women head a third of all the world’s households in urban areas, and especially in Latin America and parts of Africa, the figure reaches even 50 per cent or more (Moser, 1993, in Jordan & Wagner, 1993). They are the primary producers, caretakers and users of scarce water and other environmental resources. Women’s difficulties are exacerbated because of social customs and cultural constraints, which limit their access to community decision-making and planning. (see more in Jordan & Wagner, 1993; also Schlyter, 1998.)

6.2. CITY AUTHORITIES AND THE LIMITS OF GOVERNANCE

The achievements of the last few decades in terms of ensuring that even basic forms of services are available to urban (and rural) populations are not impressive in most Third World countries; this is reality especially in many nations whose economies have grown between 10 and 40-fold in the last few decades, and yet their governments are still unable to guarantee safe and sufficient supplies of water, provision for sanitation, garbage collection and health care for a substantial proportion of their population. In the many countries that have undergone structural adjustment and cuts in public expenditure, there may be more justification for their poor performance. (E&U, 1994.) Thus, by the beginning of the 1980s, urban planners increasingly realized that they failed to formulate an adequate strategy to confront the urbanization process in the Third World. The reorientation of ideas was clearly connected to a more general ideological shift to neo-liberal economic policy, which has had a considerable influence upon the design of the so-called urban management approach. It is argued that an important advantage of the urban management concept is that it helps to draw attention to the urgency of the problems of fast-growing cities in the Third World. (Post, 1997; see also Stren, 1992.)

Politicians and planning bodies often tend to view urban development as their domain and are reluctant to share responsibility with the affected communities. For instance, Third World countries’ approaches to the low-income housing problems are usually based on ‘reactive planning’; reacting to crisis situations with disjointed programs whose methods and results are forgotten until the next crisis. This attitude of disjointed incrementalism in national planning is symptomatic of a lack of a national urban policy. As result, the poor are priced out of safe, well-located, well-serviced housing and land sites. (Mulwanda, 1993.) Leitmann (1999: 89-90) points out that in cities, too often researchers and practitioners concentrate on the immediate culprits of environmental degradation, because these are evident and often easier to address, resulting in a ‘Band-Aid’ approach that does not resolve
the root causes of the problem. He argues that attention must be paid particularly to the four underlying causes of urban environmental issues: inadequate governance; poor policies; lack of public awareness and participation; and insufficient knowledge. (see also Bartone et al., 1994: 25.)

Urban environmental problems persist and worsen due to failures in governance systems. The term governance failure refers, on the one hand, to the inadequacy of government responses to new types of complex problems, like absence of popular trust; lack of accountability; limited institutional capacities; extremely poor service delivery record, etc. On the other hand, it refers to the breaking down of traditional structures; the increase in the number of actors in political, economic and administrative systems; the need for better co-ordination of these actors and their functions, etc. (Kooiman, 1993: 2; Onibokun & Kumuyi, 1999; King and Schneider, 1994: 139-141.) Megacities often lack a professional bureaucracy because of low-level institutional capacity, that is, the people, finance, and organizational skills. This can result in an administration that is unable to tackle problems or, even worse, deepens and expands problems. A lack of transparency implies that citizens may not be aware of how decisions concerning their environmental quality are made, or they may not be provided with important information about environmental quality, resulting to limitations in their awareness about environmental problems and responses to solve them. If decision-makers are not accountable for their management of environmental problems in the city, they have less incentive to take actions. When people cannot participate in urban management, decisions are left to professionals and politicians who may not share the public’s priorities. It is not a surprise then that there may be little public enthusiasm to effectively implement decisions coming from the 'top-down'. (Leitmann, 1999: 92-93.)

Urban environmental governance may be restrained by jurisdictional complexity and lack of intersectoral coordination. Effective environmental planning and management in cities are difficult for several other reasons. First of all, in spite of increasing democratization in the 1990s, many of Third World countries do not have fully representative governments. Second, these countries have highly centralized governments, limiting the capacity of local governments to raise revenues, make decisions, and modify procedures that affect the state of the environment in the city. Third, cities face severe deficiencies in their basic infrastructure, a precondition for other activities. Fourth, governments in Third World countries are active participants in the economy, and therefore, the state enterprises are often worse polluters than the private sector. While state enterprises may also be difficult to control because they can avoid environmental regulations, the private sector is less likely to be involved in the provision and management of environmental services. (ibid.: 93.) Corruption, typical of the management of public affairs in many instances, followed by nepotism, bribery and venality, paralyze administrative action and lead to the monopolization of the provision of public service in favor of a privileged few (Kharoufi, 1997).
Key components concerning the policy-making process should be considered here, and how these components interact: the negative effects of the closed policy-making process; the critical role of local and national culture in decision-making; and an excessive dependence on United States-style economic growth. Top policy-makers in donor agencies and borrowing countries prefer to promote development that causes environmental damage because of the following factors: the need to maintain the flow of development funds; the desire to stay in power; a preference for centralized control of the development process; and a perceived need to attract foreign investment. The result is a closed, dysfunctional approach to development decisions that promotes the degradation of limited natural resources. Thus countries and donor agencies have attempted to adopt policies using a fragmented approach that reflects their own short-term economic and political interests. (Gamman, 1994: 3, 150-152.)

In all Third World cities, planning has been dominated by ideas, procedures and regulations imported from Britain, Europe and the United States, while the main forms of urban growth have been high technology, mass-construction, low-cost housing schemes or ‘townships’ that were aimed at favored ‘insiders’. No country in southern Africa has adopted a cohesive urban land policy; urban development continues to occur in fragmented parts that frequently are grafted onto separated townships. Also, the role of aid agencies, particularly the World Bank, has been problematic. While they have concentrated on shelter provision, they have actually reinforced the dominant “non-functional housing estate or township mindset” that has dominated the establishment of urban settlements in the region. (Dewar, 1994.) The main philosophy of urban governance has been modernization. In addition, Earl Sullivan (1983) has suggested several reasons why it is extremely difficult to govern Cairo: the administrative boundaries within the country do not coincide with socioeconomic or demographic reality; the paramount concern for security by the government; the city is overpopulated relative to urban services; migrants from the countryside often do not develop a sense of identity with the city; the absence of democratic traditions and effective democratic political institutions.

Should the government try to do anything other than follow the current trend and take its lead from such cities as Los Angeles and Houston: accommodate itself to the needs and interests of the construction industry and the owners of the increasing number of private automobiles? Should, in other words, Cairo be governed or should it simply be permitted to continue being subjected to the same forces as at present? (Sullivan, 1983)

Rather in the same vein, as Chakravarti (1998, pers.comm.) from the Central Pollution Control Board in Delhi criticizes the current development:
For what purpose do we need superhighways when the majority of our vehicles are old and slow, such as autorickshaws, and there are still more pedestrians than cars in the streets!

A fundamental question is presented by Mark Swilling, AbdouMaliq Simone and Firoz Khan (1999) who argue that we are unable to “see” and therefore “understand the soul(s) of the African city”, because of our persistent attachment to forms of urban modernity that originated in European and American contexts. They imply a simplistic linear conception of urban development that favors rationalizing and codifying, and makes transparent the functions of clearly delineated institutions and governance processes – while in reality, an African city is comprised of

highly idiosyncratic, informal, hodge-podged social orders and territories that ambiguating any clear reading of what is going on (Swilling, et al., 1999).

This is probably true, however, we can also speculate as to whether it is only the researchers who perceive the cities in this way (cf. Heffernan, 1993)? But it cannot be denied that, in fact, African and other Third World cities are shaped, driven and transformed by processes that the state system has virtually no control over, as Swilling (1997) points out. Therefore, also urban studies have to break away from the notion that government (at all levels) is the most important force involved in determining the forms and functions of cities.

Coping with the brown agenda in urban areas requires consideration of each city’s unique set of environmental management issues. Of prime importance are the mutually reinforcing effects of poverty and environmental degradation. Other unique features include the pace and intensity of urbanization, the cross-media and spatial implications of environmental degradation, urban land use and environmental interrelationships, and the wide range of public and private actors involved in causing as well as solving environmental problems. (Bartone et al., 1994, 11-12; Leitmann, 1994). The new commitment to bottom-up approaches in urban development has been accompanied by a greater sympathy for local government. However, too little research there has been undertaken to explain the shortcomings of local government in various Third World countries (Brugmann, 1994; Swilling, 1997.)

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30 The Europeans have often considered cities in the South as lacking order and planning, when, for instance, the purpose of their narrow streets derives from climatic conditions. Michael Heffernan (1993) discerns four European views to ‘Oriental’ cities of North Africa and the Middle East: the ‘dangerous city’; the ‘admired city’; the ‘wicked city’ and the ‘dead city’.
City authorities in Cairo and Delhi

Egypt has a ‘two-tier’ system of administration, in which the central government has a substantial degree of control over local governments. Thus power in Egypt is highly centralized and the implementation of most large-scale urban projects is carried out by agencies of the central government. The country is administratively divided into 26 provinces, of which six are city governorates. Cairo is somewhat unusual among the Third World country megacities in that it does not have a metropolitan region development authority. Planning has been historically carried out by national agencies, such as the General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP), or the Ministry for Development, New Communities and Land Reclamation. Few of the agencies have a clear mandate, and there are several overlapping jurisdictions. Despite the apparent decentralization of power, some efforts have been made to devolve power to the local level. There are five distinct levels of local government – governorates, urban quarters, rural districts, towns and villages – which have legal status. Each local unit has an executive committee and a popularly elected council. Nevertheless, the central government has the power to veto any decision made by the local units that might interfere with its own policy. The Cairo Governorate is responsible for housing, public utilities, land development, slum upgrading, conservation and many aspects of urban planning and project implementation. The Governorate’s headquarters (the governor’s office) is responsible for the coordination of the activities of various departments in the governorate; for instance, the department for water supply and sanitation is responsible for the establishment, management, operation and maintenance of water plants and is also responsible for sanitation. In each governorate, there is an environmental unit which is responsible for the monitoring of environmental problems. The normal staffing of the environment units has been one to two persons, who are not always familiar enough with environmental protection issues. The environment unit reports to the governor, who chairs the Regional Interministral Committee on environmental issues. In addition, the governorates are divided into districts (markaz) which consist of a town (capital of the district) and a number of village units. The district headquarters are run by chief executives. Each district has branches of the governorate-level service departments. The most important organization related to the environmental sector is the engineering sector, which is responsible for: issuing building licenses; distribution of subsidized construction materials; building regulations and control; city cleaning and public parks; construction and maintenance of feeder roads; and environment improvement programs. (Finnida, 1994: 38-40; Population Growth and Policies in Mega-Cities, 1990: 26.)

The Egyptian Environmental Agency (EEAA) was established in order to have better coordination of environmental issues between the Cabinet of Ministries and other ministries and authorities in environmental issues. Its role is merely co-ordinative and administrative, so it does not have
equipment, etc., for environmental research. (Hafez, 1994, pers.comm.) EEAA has established regional branches and supporting environmental units in governorates. The regional branches are an extension of EEAA and they will also have power to enforce the law, however, they are under government control. The problems have been that the units have remained weak. The role of the units is mainly to coordinate with other line agencies. For instance, in the case of monitoring the state of the environment, the unit may identify major sources of water or air pollution and instruct the Ministry of Health to undertake monitoring. Units may undertake strategic studies, such as waste management plans, or feasibility studies for specific projects to be implemented by other agencies, for example, water treatment or sewage collection. The priority areas where environment units could take such role are e.g. solid waste management, drinking water quality. (Finnida, 1994: 38.)

There are multiple hindrances in urban environmental management in the country, due to scattered legislation and unrealistic standards (Finnida 1994, 56-57; Gomaa, 1994, pers.comm.):
- enforcement of laws and regulations has been insufficient;
- monitoring of water and air quality and pollution sources has not been comprehensive;
- coordination among monitoring institutions has been weak (no intercalibration);
- a strong sector organization;
- the EEAA does not have sufficient power;
- many institutions are working in the same field of activity;
- pollution control equipment does not function properly due to poor planning and poor management (due to lack of funds, spare parts, training etc.);
- cost-efficiency is low and tariffs do not cover maintenance costs;
- public awareness on environmental issues is insufficient; and,
- environmental impact assessments have not been required so far.

The Ministry of Housing, New Communities and Public Utilities has had difficulties in articulating appropriate strategies and it has involved too many administrative details which might more efficiently be dealt with on a lower level. The National Organization for Potable Water and Sanitary Drainage has not succeeded in creating a coherent sector development plan, for example.

The GOPP has sought to limit Cairo’s spatial expansion with the recently completed Ring Road, which can be considered a mechanistic response to urban growth. The road, however, has enabled a development which did not belong to the initial plan; more rapid encroachment of urban housing into agricultural lands. (Attia, 1995, pers.comm.) Other constraints include:
- budget deficiencies that force the system to acquire an orientation towards solving immediate problems, thus ignoring long-term needs and dealing with issues in isolation from the big picture;
- the difficulties in achieving long-term planning may be ascribed to the realities of political life, in which ‘long-term’ implies the time until the next cabinet change;
- environmental challenges are both interdependent and integrated, requiring comprehensive approaches as well as popular participation; and
- the various institutions facing those challenges tend to be independent, fragmented, working within relatively narrow mandates.

Those responsible for managing natural resources and protecting the environment are institutionally separated from those responsible for managing the economy, for example. (Hassan, 1992.) In the 1990s, some of the international donors, such as the Canadian International Development Agency, froze several environmental schemes and turned their focus to institutional strengthening of Egypt’s Environmental Agency. This was the result of mismanagement of funding by enterprises and authorities in several projects. (Fraser, 1994, pers.comm.)

The Indian federal system has a three-tier institutional infrastructure, with the Central government at the top, state governments at the second level and local governments at the local level. The responsibility for providing basic services and implementing and monitoring many development programs (e.g., urban planning, the water supply, public health, slum improvement) mainly belongs to the local government. India possibly has the largest number of democratically elected local governments in the world: more than 250,000 rural and urban local bodies managed by almost three million elected representatives. While there have been certain operational problems and the financial position of many local governments is not as strong as needed, an institutional system has been developed to decentralize the administration and establish the first-point contact between the government and the people. (The Government of India, 1996: 48-50.)

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is the major municipal authority having the responsibility for the provision and maintenance of civic services in the largest part of Delhi, since it has jurisdiction over the entire National Capital Territory of Delhi, except for two small urban areas falling under the New Delhi Municipal Committee (NDMC) and the Delhi Cantonment Board. Besides the MCD, these were established for the civic administration of New Delhi (which is the exclusive zone of the Government of India having central government institutions, and the Cantonment areas respectively). They have to depend on the MCD for water, sewage disposal and electricity, purchasing them and distributing to their respective areas. Besides these authorities, there is also the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), which is at the metropolitan level, an autonomous body concerned with the overall development of the city through the acquisition, and development of land, its allotment for different uses and construction of houses. After it has developed the residential areas and industrial estates, it hands them over to the MCD for the provision and maintenance of services
and infrastructure. In addition, a number of central ministries provide certain services in Delhi. (Jha, 1998.)

Nevertheless, as in Egypt, the majority of local governments in Indian cities have inherited a weak resource base and have failed to rationalize user charges of services and infrastructure. In some larger cities the management of urban development may be better developed, in others there is no organized system of management and in the case of some local governments, there is a multiplicity of agencies. (The Government of India, 1996: 48-50.) As a result, the municipal level is very weak due to this mismanagement and lack of resources, such as trained staff (Singh, 1998, pers.comm.) Over two-thirds of MCD expenditures goes to wages for a large number of employees, which is considerably high compared to other Indian cities. Private participation in the delivery of services is limited to a few areas. Public services are provided by local bodies, as well as the state government and the central government. (Society for Development Studies, 1996: 24-25.) Drakakis-Smith (2000: 49) points out that the present situation with numerous governance problems is due much more to the segregationalism of Delhi’s colonial past, than the contemporary urban planners.

A number of development initiatives by the central government have been undertaken to decrease the congestion of Delhi to the surrounding priority towns, but without much success. The National Capital Region Plan to develop growth centers to Delhi in the neighboring states has been under planning for a long time. (Society for Development Studies, 1996: 24-25.) Many government responses have collapsed due to contradictory policies and overlapping jurisdictions on the questions of sanitation. For instance, the responsibility for providing sanitation has shifted several times between the DDA and the MCD, and the slum ownership has also repeatedly changed hands between the two bodies. In some instances, the DDA has succeeded in relocating people from unauthorized colonies to new locations, each family receiving a plot free of cost and being entitled to build houses on them. But often these sites have been provided without any consideration given to the essential services, i.e., when construction of houses has been done in a hasty and unplanned matter. During this process of administrative inconsistency, Delhi’s slums have degenerated even further. (National Institute of Urban Affairs, 1990: 15-16.)

In India, the Ministry of Environment and Forests was set up in 1980s, a focal agency of the central government for planning, promotion and coordination of environmental programs. Apart from regional offices each of the 45 states has an autonomous environmental agency, the pollution control board (PCB). The environmental policy tools of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in Delhi include, for instance, cooperation between the sector ministries, and arranging public hearings at the state level; it also invites participation from industries, commerce, technical and research institutions, and NGOs in environmental issues. (Chakravarti, 1998, pers.comm.) A PCB can issue notices to the polluters to adhere to norms or
face closing down the unit; however, it is difficult to take legal action towards polluters, but they nonetheless must be dealt with in the court of law. Given procedural delays in the judicial system, it takes long time before final verdicts are given. Often authorities themselves violate the laws and regulations; to cite an example: Delhi’s Indraprastha power station. One of the main problems is also the lack of environmental awareness among the people. The situation is somewhat better with new projects, in which the approval of polluting enterprises is a must. But the main problem is that environmental clearance is given on an *ad hoc* basis without any proper environment impact assessment or merely at the insistence of donor agencies. (Vyas & Reddy, 1998.)

Where top-down, urban governance has failed, in other, albeit exceptional cases, progress in environmental issues could be made by one influential person, bypassing the normal environmental management authorities, as the following example shows.

*Too few ‘Environmental Superheroes’*

In Delhi there can be found an unusual case of an environmental lawyer, M.C. Mehta. He initiates local to national level environmental cases in India’s Supreme Court. He has also a special status to sue the Indian government if the laws are not implemented, that is, if the “state does not fulfill its duties” (Mehta, 1998, pers.comm.) However, he usually sues the government as a body and does not target individual persons. There are strict laws in the country, but the problem is that they are not implemented properly. People direct their complaints to him, and in some cases, he has to conclude that the state officials have violated the law and they ought to be prosecuted, if not jailed. Thus the key in fighting against environmental violations is to know how the judicial system functions. His work has been much enabled by a judge of the Supreme Court who has been sensitive to environmental issues. According to Mehta, the Supreme Court of India is one of the most environmentally friendly judiciaries in the world, yet the litigation is hard to carry out.

There are numerous cases Mehta has dealt with quite successfully. The first one was the case of air pollution in the Taj Mahal district in Agra (since 1984), with which he spent more than 16 years, since the case was not finished until 1998 (the case was listed even 400 times), after which the monitoring procedure has continued. Thus the process can be very long and strenuous. The case implied either the closure of polluting industries in the neighborhood of the building, or ordering to shift the energy source in industrial plants, from coal to gas.

In many parts of India religious beliefs and traditions determine the behavior of millions of people within their immediate living environment, both in villages and cities. Mehta’s second successful case was the river Ganga (or the Ganges) clean up project. As he described it,
ARE MEGACITIES AN ECOLOGICAL PROBLEM FOR HUMANKIND?

... in this holy river the whole life cycle, life to death, has always been connected, and now it was polluted – it was about faith versus pollution.

He refers to the rigid religious perceptions of people who believe that the river has healing and other positive health effects and thus keep on bathing in it and using its water. He started the case with only two industries in 1983. The initial push was a result of a personal observation on the severe state of the Ganga. He happened to see a person throwing a burning item to the river, which suddenly burst into high flames, due to the very high level of toxic chemicals dumped into the river. He also observed that people who used the river water also suffered from skin diseases. Since the Ganga is the holiest of all Indian rivers, he introduced a new concept in the country concerning the right to a healthy environment. He also appealed to the relevant laws, e.g., the Constitution and the Water Pollution Control Act. The Court was convinced by his evidence and began to search for a new way to tackle the issue. As a result, an announcement, or order, was published in the national newspaper stating that those industries carrying out polluting activities should make an appearance in the Court, or otherwise they could be closed down. Finally even 10,000 industries appeared in the mid-1980s, during a time when environmental awareness in the country had not yet emerged. Hence, he also helped in pushing environmental thinking forward, performing as a “one man movement” as can be often heard to be said by Indian scholars and development practitioners.

The third successful case was the relocation of polluting industries in Delhi. The city had previously around 42,000 small industries that were illegally opened. He filed a case against them, to get them to move away from the residential areas, and the government allocated land for the industrial activities outside the city. More than 12,000 hazardous industries were closed down or shifted outside the city, in total it has been question of over 50,000 industrial plants. The process was still ongoing in 1998, when Mehta also initiated the banning of old vehicles and was among those who initiated the adoption of lead-free fuel in four megacities (complemented with the introduction of natural gas); both cases were upheld due to Supreme Court orders. Powerful manufacturers in industry tried to put obstacles in the way, but the introduction of lead-free fuel took place in Delhi and, later on, in the whole country.

Mehta has succeeded in getting a law passed for national level groundwater protection and campaigns. He argues that people’s awareness is the prerequisite for change, because they have to know what is happening around them and what are their rights and duties concerning environmental issues. Thus he suggested environmental studies as a compulsory subject in the whole country, from primary schools to universities, which became a Court order later in the mid-1990s. Furthermore, he pushed forward the policy that environmental programs ought to be shown on national TV on a...
weekly basis. In all, there are not many environment-oriented lawyers in India and, therefore, he is loaded with work because he constantly receives complaints from a large number of citizens. Hence, Mehta’s case is thus quite exceptional in the country (and elsewhere), though probably will not remain as such in the future.

**National policy responses to the ‘urban explosion’**

Virtually every country has responded to the ‘urban explosion’ by trying to limit the growth of their largest, primary cities through anti-urban policies – after having strengthened their position economically and politically for decades or even centuries. These efforts range from restricting in-migration, to dispersing the would-be migrants (to growth poles, new capitals, smaller cities, or resettlement areas), to stimulating regional and rural development. (Perlman, 1990.). Despite the fact that policy responses to urban growth and problems have varied from country to country, some generalization is possible. In southern African countries, for instance, policy shifts have reflected a desire to distinguish between urban ‘insiders’, the absorption of whom into the urban system should be assisted, and ‘outsiders’ who should be excluded. The policies applied are generally strongly anti-urban and can be differentiated into a number of types (Dewar, 1994):

- **influx control policies**: preventing the free flow of people to the cities through direct measures (such as pass laws and forcible repatriation to the countryside) and indirect measures (of which anti-squatter laws, coupled with the limited state supply of housing, were the most common);

- **deflective or diversionary measures**: diverting urban flows away from the largest urban settlements to smaller towns and cities; entails decentralization incentives that makes it cheaper for industries to move to and operate from smaller centers;

- **incentive measures**: improving conditions in the source areas of out-migration, especially the rural areas, through rural development and social investment programs directed at the small progressive commercial farming sector; and

- **urban absorption measures**: accommodating continuous urban growth and absorbing insiders in the system; patterns of urban expansion are informed primarily by the desire to separate poorer people from the settler town or city and urban growth takes the form of sprawling, scattered pockets of development around the original settlement.

The fact that urban growth cannot be stopped or reversed poses challenges in finding new forms in urban governance. In addition, inaccurate assumptions about the countryside being systematically ‘exploited’ by the city are assumptions that are no longer valid in Peru, for instance (see Miranda & Hordijk, 1998). Cedric Pugh (1996a) remarks that urbanization has some positive aspects with relevance to environmentalism, for it is associated with changed lifestyles and attitudes, including lower fertility rates and
aspirations for improving standards of living. Cities are also at the heart of the technical revolution, including possibilities for improving technological and economic applications to environmental problems.

Policies that have tried to prevent, deflect, or divert growth away from the dominant cities have had dismal records and fiscal resources have been wasted in their pursuit. On the contrary, it is argued that mobilizing local resources that would enable people to stay in rural areas would be better option. In general, it is necessary to take initiatives and not act merely in response to the problem. (Dewar, 1994.) Mike Douglass (1992) argues that “the question to be addressed is not how to slow down the migration of the poor to the city … but how to integrate them into urban life in a more equitable manner”.

As this chapter has discussed, it is complex to delineate large cities. Where the megacity begins and ends is difficult to determine, as it is also difficult to ascertain how any city is one entity instead of hundreds of urban quarters and neighborhoods, therefore also affecting how it could be governed (Swilling et al., 1999). In regard to this spatial aspect, we need to rethink what basically constitutes a megacity in the Third World. In all, we ought to keep in mind the problem of definitions when looking at urbanization statistics. Perhaps it could be concluded that the statistical data provides a picture of a formal city, but may leave out a large part of the informal city. Hence the statistics may best serve in showing the larger trends and directions of urban growth.

However, the outstanding disability of many Third World governments to manage even the very basic national and city level issues – such as population censuses – is a fundamental factor in hindering city governance as a whole. Another question is, how much this deficiency is due to political interests; are the governments, perhaps, reluctant to reveal the actual population growth rates to the international development agencies, etc.

As a conclusion, a shift in urban management paradigms is necessary. State-centered, top-down and technological development ideologies have been challenged by new approaches, which emphasize the role of various informal actors, especially local non-governmental organizations. However, the prerequisite is the emergence of collective action in the city: in what situations then does it evolve – and when not? Furthermore, what are the NGO sector’s internal characteristics that might affect their role and relations in urban governance? Moreover, what structures, principles and actors is this new urban management approach based on, and what are the realities? I begin to explore these questions connected to the new urban development paradigm in the next chapter, A Call for Civic Associations into City Governance.
III
A CALL FOR CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS
INTO CITY GOVERNANCE

It could be assumed that in the face of urban crisis – malfunctioning services and lacking infrastructure or congested traffic and pollution – masses of urban residents would rise up to complain and to put strong pressure on governments to take more drastic actions in improving the quality of life in cities. Thus, where are urban protests? An ‘urban silence’ seems to prevail among the residents. But why is collective action still such a scarce resource in most of the urban quarters of Third World large cities? While natural resource questions have created numerous mass movements, it is worthwhile considering why this has been not the case with city environments.

It is important to examine what kind of responses people have invented to cope with day-to-day restraints resulting from the severe state of environmental services and pollution and, further, to find out the conditions in which people initiate and maintain collective action. In the first section of the present chapter I present some interpretations of the possible reasons for urban silence, and also discuss several ways, in which people perceive and cope with these problems at the neighborhood level. I then outline factors that enable the rise of collective action, thereby elaborating various theoretical approaches on social movements, particularly new social movements (NSMs), including non-governmental organizations. I focus on one kind of NSM: environmental or green movements, and then argue that new ‘brown branches’ are evolving within Third World environmentalism due to civic action in megacities.

Civic associations, particularly those established by local professionals, have proliferated to a great extent, and entered the domains of city governments in attempting to offer novel solutions to various urban
deficiencies. Besides revealing the limits of governance, this situation also indicates the rise of a new urban development paradigm of ‘good governance’ propped up by international agencies, and expectations targeted toward the non-governmental sector within the governance. Despite the fact that the turbulent societal conditions in large cities imply enormous difficulties in accomplishing even a few of the principles of this new paradigm in praxis, the change has already started to proceed in the form of discourses and programs among various development practitioners, activists and academia. Realizing that no actor alone can carry out the needed urban reforms, and that more responsibility and resources ought to be given to citizens, it is worth examining the possibilities of civic endeavors within this changing development framework. What are then the internal assets of civic associations affecting their contribution to urban management? Do they have characteristics that prevent them from fulfilling their tasks? Further, how does ‘governance’ appear in urban development discourses? Since one of the central attributes of ‘good governance’ is cooperation between civic associations and numerous other actors in an urban context, what kind of positive and negative collaboration nexuses can be discovered and expected?

7. URBAN SILENCE OR COLLECTIVE ACTION?

What are the key obstacles to and opportunities for neighborhood-level activism in the city – is urban silence a result of apathy, frustration, or fear, perhaps? In fact, there are numerous reasons or ‘barriers’, which I term here: welfare state perception; authoritarianism; bureaucracy; egoism; tolerance; powerlessness; lack of ownership and sense of community; and, improvisation and resiliency. Naturally, many of these reasons exist concurrently, and can also be regarded as common to any city, whilst some are more typical of the Third World. Before discussing these reasons for urban silence, I point out below several incidents or ‘uprisings’ in cities. The central issues on brown agenda – proper shelter, services and infrastructure – have been the reasons for various kinds of protests.

7.1. TOLERANCE, QUIET ENCROACHMENT AND IMPROVISATION: INTERPRETING URBAN NON-ACTION

Occasional uprisings
Delhi’s power cuts and pollution place a strain the whole megapolitan region, and even affects the whole nation, as discussed earlier. For instance, during my stay in Delhi in 1998, in a single week, for instance, some parts of the city were totally three days without power. Cuts in the water supply and the problem of low pressure levels also constantly affected the high-income
areas. As a response, households installed booster pumps, which, in turn, has led to “complete chaos”, particularly during summer, when the households have to satisfy themselves with trickling water (Jha, 1998.). The malfunctioning infrastructure and services have become a hotly debated issue in national news media, in which both the public and authorities give their opinions. One citizen complained in The Hindustan Times (1998):

We do not feel as if we are living in the capital. This whole place is like a rural, underdeveloped part of the country!

Similarly, a comment by a journalist from the Delhi Times (1998) offers some insightful explanations for the modest civic action within an “individual-government” perspective:

Come summer and a familiar drama unfolds in several of India’s cities. As the mercury climbs, the availability of power and water dips. The people respond with localized, often spontaneous protests. This in turn sends the local government scrambling for excuses to prove the problem is beyond their control. These excuses, such as blaming the power shortage on power thefts, often raise more questions than they answer. But as it is difficult to do anything for long in the heat of the summer, the protests die of fatigue ... Underlying this ‘annual exercise’ is a two-dimensional attitude to urban life that is quite deeply entrenched in the Indian psyche: if a problem can’t be solved by the individual it must be solved by the government … [the government’s] loss of credibility did translate into a demand for privatization ... the low price charged for these facilities was one of the reasons the government agencies went broke in the first place ... the failure of private agencies to take on the role of the government has led to a return to individualism with a vengeance. The inefficiency of the government has become an excuse for extreme individualism. Ask any otherwise law-abiding citizen why he breaks traffic rules and he will argue that there is no alternative when the government cannot enforce these rules ... This individual-or-government perspective also causes more to be put on the government’s plate than it can handle. Tasks like keeping local areas clean are ... put in the hands of a distant city authority. And once that is done, the individual abdicates his own role in these tasks ... Governments that cannot risk taking action and individualism gone berserk thus feed on each other.

One can ask, if the situation did not affect the whole city, but only the low-income areas, it would be doubtful whether the issue would have received that much space and attention in news media. However, in many other issues, Delhi is an important site for various peaceful protests, through which people continue especially the Gandhian legacy, because one can observe daily several different groups marching quietly, or shouting slogans, be they schoolchildren and their teachers, Gandhians, Marxists or farmers from distant Indian states.

The political movements in Egypt (and in the Islamic world as a whole) have remained external and alienated from society, occasionally erupting
into unrest (Zubaida, 1989: 135). Musfafa Kharoufi (1994) asserts that violent social movements in the city may be interpreted as a symptom of urban crisis, reflecting the inability of governments to deal with urban problems. The activities of some violent Islamist movements, particularly in 1990s, were “an expression of the rise of urban societies, and they reveal the government’s inability to treat problems at the root of their causes”.

Several cases of collision between the interests of city authorities and the public, have occurred particularly when housing has been under threat; for instance, a major violent incident during the emergency years of the mid-1970s involved the demolition of slums in Delhi. Real estate developers were suspected of being involved in the Mumbai communal riots of 1992-93, which led to large-scale destruction of slum areas. (Gagdil & Guha, 1995b: 79.) Worldwide urban food riots took place in the late 1970s, called ‘IMF riots’, when the International Monetary Foundation pressured nations to solve their debt crisis by cutting urban subsidies, e.g., in food (Datta, 1990). Cairo has experienced food riots and other uprisings in the 1970s and 1980s, which have not been limited to the largest cities (Kharoufi, 1997). In general, when governments cannot cope with situations of unrest, they easily turn to repression and violent responses.

Third World squatter movements represent indirect protests and their main goal is to attain legalization through negotiations with state authorities in order to save their dwellings from being demolished. Their strategies have often been successful when political parties cannot do without the votes of the poor in elections. Since the early 1970s, concurrently with the expansion of cities, direct protests or actions have arisen. Greater demands have been made by the “multiplying urban subalterns” carrying out open protests against both the continued denial of public services and inadequate employment opportunities. In some instances, these groups comprise a powerful force which is able to cause state authorities a great deal of annoyance, as in the case of unauthorized use of electricity and water from public supplies. (Datta, 1990.) According to Manuel Castells (1983: 212; see Lowe, 1986: 177-178), the squatter settlements in the Third World exist at the end of a chain of dependencies; their territorial extent and relationship to the state and the informal economy all merge to produce the dependent city, “a city without citizens”, where the people are responsible for their own welfare and, for them to do so, the state must disregard its institutional rules. The political significance of squatter movements is that they represent “an initial, minimal, and deliberate rejection of the authority of the state”. Squatters can also remain less than a revolutionary force, when government policy involves acquiescence and accommodation rather than confrontation with the large number of groups who have moved outside the law to gain foothold in the city. (Flanagan, 1995: 159.)

The most visible action is the seizure of land by poor squatters, in which they take public action on a more personal level to gain access to basic resources they would otherwise be denied. Figure 4. presents various ways
that residents can perform within formal and informal systems, and the government responses to each type of action. Civic associations represent public action, which is located between the two systems, and the government’s reaction is more towards integration than repression.

In all, the informal sector with its illegal and semi-legal living and working modes comprises one form of political protest. Moreover, incidents in numerous Third World countries indicate that violence is becoming increasingly frequent, as those people born in urban poverty become less tolerant of continued exploitation. Political control of the urban masses is sustained by limited investment in basic needs aiming at abating frustrations. (Drakakis-Smith, 1987: 52.)

**Figure 4. Types of political action by the urban poor**
(modified from Drakakis-Smith, 1987: 51)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTIONAL (formal)</th>
<th>NON-INSTITUTIONAL (informal)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voting</td>
<td>Informal transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Rent defaulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Represention</td>
<td>Resistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Squatting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associations</td>
<td>Illegal politics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade unionism</td>
<td>Insurrection</td>
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<td>Party affiliation</td>
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**Integration**  **Repression**

**GOVERNMENT REACTION**

Hence it would be easy to conclude that there exists a great, suppressed potential for even revolutionary change in large Third World cities. Nevertheless, Johan Post (1997) remarks that empowerment of people takes time and in Africa, for instance, where poverty is widespread and many people are involved in a precarious struggle for survival, it is extremely difficult for them to engage in political action – there are deep ethnic, regional and religious cleavages in civil society. In addition, heterogeneous (and often conservative) urban quarters may not encourage stronger, long-term modes of political action. Mike Douglass & Malia Zoghlin (1994) point out that, contrary to some beliefs that the urban poor are a likely starting place for political unrest, the reality may be different. They found out in their survey of a poor district in Bangkok that only very few, seven percent of
respondents, said they participated in the violent protests in the city in the early 1990s. The majority believed the protests had no distinguishable benefits for society. The low-income communities were found to be politically conservative and tended to seek accommodation and negotiated outcomes with powerful interests and the state. But the authors conclude that such a conservative image masks the more complex avenues and associations of political mobilization. The poor were basically willing to act when issues that have direct bearing on the household and community would emerge, particularly when land tenure would be threatened.

**Causes for presumable non-action**

The first obvious reason for urban silence is the anticipation of a prevailing ‘welfare state’: it is taken for granted that it is the government authorities who are responsible for the improvement of the situation. In Pedro Jacobi’s (1994) São Paulo study, people highlighted the role of government as an important actor responsible for preventing environmental degradation. This obviously indicates the overall understanding that, although there is a role to be accomplished by citizens, the public authorities should direct the process. Most households considered that solutions should come from local government and it is this level of government which is mainly responsible for encouraging changes in behavior, and motivating co-responsibility and collaboration, for instance, promoting involvement by the citizens in a more interactive process. On the contrary, it is argued that despite governments having greatly reduced their role as providers of housing, infrastructure and services, in many cities urban residents have done little to step in, “as if government failures have demoralized all efforts and led people to internalize the lack of accountability and effectiveness” (Uduku, 1994).

Second, a country’s political power structure may provide explanation for a large part of non-action. Simply stated, *authoritarian governments prohibit public gatherings* of people, usually in the name of national security. Instead of democratic practices, one ruling party government may strictly control opposition parties and all activities that could possibly be attached to them. As result, this may strengthen support for radical political movements. The assertion that Cairo, for instance, cannot be well governed is due to the paramount preoccupation with security in the government circles of Egypt, which, in turn, inhibits collective action (Sullivan, 1983). The overall political turmoil and authoritarianism have also prevented many non-radical social movements from emerging, and furthermore, created numerous difficult bureaucratic maneuvers. So the third reason is *governmental inefficiency accompanied by massive bureaucracy and corruption*. In most Third World countries, large bureaucracies inhibit necessary urban change, while citizens find it hard to believe that governments are able to find solutions without causing them hardship or inconvenience (Kooiman, 1993: 2; King & Schneider, 1994: 139-141). Besides, people have to use certain
intermediary or personal connections (such as *wasta* in Egypt) to meet their needs (Hassan, 1990).

Fourth, it seems that pollution and overall *environmental degradation is tolerated because city life has certain highly ranked assets*. City residents enjoy manifold modern amenities, including subsidized commodities, such as food, water and energy, as well as education and job opportunities. In Egypt, Diane Singerman (1997: 5) has found a system in which people have developed “a type of financial consciousness to judge and evaluate economic policy changes”. By maintaining a keen awareness of what people are receiving from the government, they can protect their economic interests. Since they do not have access to formal politics, but “to be political, and remain out of danger, is to consume”. In other words, the government has shifted the issues of formal politics from distribution and participation to the realm of consumption. The government maintains its commitment to providing certain basic goods and services to the *sha’b* (the common people, the grassroots) in return for political conformity (ibid: 245; see also Hoodfar, 1997).

The lack of individual responsibility, ‘*egoism*’, could be the fifth explanation. The dilemma of egoism vs. communality can be seen as a kind of tragedy of the ‘urban commons’ in the city. The growing problems and shortages of urban utilities often lead people to respond by fostering self-initiatives to produce and maintain the public utilities, of which many have degrading effects on the city. Robert Mhamba and Colman Titus (1998) distinguish two main categories in individual or collective action initiatives. Individual strategies may be constructive, but they can also jeopardize public interests in the neighborhood, for example, when emptying septic tanks by pumping street water or throwing garbage into the streets at night. These are short-term solutions, which soon become long-term environmental hazards. One could ask more generally, can there be found an element of altruism in people’s behavior or has it been killed with the heterogeneity of urban society? (Andreasen, 1998). Also Delhi’s severe air pollution can be used an illustrative case of egoism in the city. In spite of all the complaints about it, there are very few conscious efforts to reduce this vehicle-based pollution through one’s own action, for instance, by putting pressure on the government to offer more public transportation – albeit a rather typical issue everywhere. In addition, the Indian government is sometimes reluctant to impose much stricter laws and implement them, since it may become unpopular and lose the next election. Says the Head of the Central Pollution Control Board in Delhi:

Tackling here at the government level Delhi’s severe air pollution is most of all, a political question. It is not fashionable, nor wise for politicians to control private vehicle usage. (Chakravarti, 1998, pers.comm.)
In Cairo, Hopkins and Mehanna (1997) have examined the possibilities for grassroots environmental activism. It was found that while the poor tend to blame each other, the upper middle class tends to blame the poor for environmental problems. Only a few were ready to complain to the authorities or create pressure groups. It was concluded that since people do not consider the solution to be within their grasp, recognition of the problem would not by itself generate grassroots activism. Hence, *powerlessness* could be stated as the sixth reason for non-action. While some examples suggest that the poor have a low level of environmental awareness, others indicate that they are very well aware of the problems in their immediate environments, but feel powerless because they do not have the financial or political resources needed to solve them and/or the scale of the problems is too big and complex to grasp, like city wide air pollution (see e.g. Douglass & Zoghlin, 1994).

The seventh reason is partly connected to the previous one, the lack of *ownership and sense of community* in the socially and ethnically variegated urban quarters (see e.g. Furedy, 1992). Urban anonymity might be beneficial to some (e.g., with lower caste people in India), but it also causes isolation, suspicion and distrust in urban neighborhoods. It is difficult for in-migrants to integrate into a city without existing social networks there. The lack of ownership of the area or district, or living in constant fear of eviction and bulldozers also lead to a lack of responsibility and concern over the place:

> Who owns an area? Is it the Local Authority or the residents? What is the point of doing anything to improve the area if someone else can make a decision, which changes everything? Feelings of control and predictability are crucial for any long term planning and input to develop an area. (MacGregor, 1995.)

For instance, in the Philippines this issue has been explained by a lack of information exchange between the *barangay* (the smallest political unit) and public organizations about community problems. It is suggested that the level of the *barangay* can provide the opportunity to discuss community issues, since they are small enough to allow first-hand knowledge of any important event or activity affecting the community – it is the smallest unit of government in which planning and implementation may take place etc. (Jimenez & Velasquez, 1989.) In another example, the residents of Orangi, the district of the megacity Karachi in Pakistan, were aware of severe environmental problems in the area, but they could not solve them, because they did not have the technical expertise to construct a sewerage system (the technological barrier); they could not afford the costs of a conventional sewerage system (the economic barrier); and/or they were not organized to undertake collective action (the sociological barrier) (see Best Practices from Asia, 1996).

What may apparently look like people’s non-action, may, in fact, hide a high degree of civic responses, located on the borderline of individual and
collective self-help. Continuous *improvisation and resiliency* is, hence, the final explanation. People living in low-income areas have found alternative, informal ways to solve the question of lacking infrastructure and services. Since the city authorities are incapable of offering these brown problem areas even basic urban structures, other ways, often illegal, have been invented – as a kind of street level, self-help distribution of municipal resources. Asef Bayat (1997a) argues that although organized social activism is quite rare among the Cairo’s poor, this does not imply a total lack of grassroots activism. He brings up the phenomenon of the “quiet encroachment of the ordinary”, in which the squatters illegally ‘hook’ up to the city’s infrastructure, by illegally tapping into electric lines and piped water systems, or by renting lines from nearby, legally connected houses – thus exposing themselves to the constant risk of suppression when conflicting with the authorities. Even though NGOs provide some services and donations to the needy, their ability to empower the lower class remains limited. Bayat concludes that current NGO resources cannot match the magnitude of the needs of the urban poor in Cairo. In Delhi, power theft is one of its major problems – from the city authorities’ point of view especially. This sort of ‘self-help’ is manifested in dangerously hanging and creeping electricity and telephone wires above the streets and houses, which is a common view in Old Delhi.

To sum up, what may be regarded as illegal action may be, in fact, a generally accepted means of survival (Swilling, et al, 1999):

> As many African cities are growing without a ... significant expansion of public service provision ... the result will be increasingly large urban populations who survive by creating their own urban systems and livelihoods without regard to what the law may require or public policy intends ... (Swilling, 1997). What, then, does civic responsibility mean under these conditions ... In many cities ... is it rather notions of civic irresponsibility, which make up the locus around which everyday life is actually propelled? ... There is the irresponsibility of broken cities where the absence of resources for maintenance and investment is compounded by public behavior. There is laxness in the discarding of waste, in how structures are left half-built and how public property is ‘appropriated’ for private use to signify class position ... the only way any order in everyday life can be preserved is through endless improvisation and the anticipation of things not working ... Households have pretended to keep the street outside the front door, as the street becomes increasingly vicious ... In short, urbanity in African cities is not a function of the unfolding linear logic of a generic urban modernity, but rather behaviors, dynamics, activities and processes whose own logics are explicable in terms of the specificities of African cities ... (Swilling et al, 1999.)

**Environment in perceptions and actions at the neighborhood level**

Although poor people are aware of environmental problems, they often cannot afford to think of them due to the pressing problems of meeting their basic needs; they do not necessarily have the time (Vyas & Reddy, 1998).
Furthermore, although they may know the implications of their actions or behavior that degrades their living environment, they have to continue because they do not have alternatives. In a low-income area of Bangkok, the majority of residents knew that the quality of the physical environment in their community was a real problem (see Douglass & Zoghlin, 1994); particularly rodents, mosquitoes and accumulated garbage were seen as the most serious problems, with noise, dust, air pollution, and bad water quality also declared as significant. Households had also adopted some strategies to alleviate and prevent these problems.

Similar results have been found in Cairo, where Nicholas Hopkins et al. (1995) carried out a pilot research project, a large survey study (including 5000 persons) on environmental awareness. They found that people were primarily concerned with local problems: those they could see and experience. The majority saw the inadequacy of the solid waste disposal system as the main environmental problem. Second to the waste problem was air pollution and third was water supply, its quantity and quality. Many people noted government favoritism towards well-to-do areas. On the other hand, people from the upper classes claimed that people from the lower social classes tend to destroy the amenities that the government has provided in the city.

Likewise, Jacobi’s (1994) São Paulo study showed that households gave much more emphasis to those aspects that were directly linked to their daily lives: the immediate impacts of environmental problems. People’s perceptions were generally oriented towards the constraints and discomforts that these problems provoke in their daily lives. Thereby they laid less stress on the health impacts of environmental factors, as people did not perceive them as having a direct impact on the daily lives of their families. Their familiarity with environmental damage was related to a set of interactions that included certain socio-economic, political-administrative, informational, and socio-cultural factors, be they obstacles or advantages. It appeared that most households were aware of existing measures for preventing diseases and other negative impacts of environmental degradation. Despite this perception of such problems, households generally accepted living with them. According to the author, research findings from São Paulo’s neighborhoods provide a more in-depth understanding of perceptions and practices in the population, their ambiguities and contradictions, and finally contribute to more in-depth knowledge of the chain of relations between what the households may or may not identify as being environmental problems; what they detect as the sources or causes of the problems; and what directs their attitudes towards possible solutions. The misinformation in environmental problems related to, for instance, the maintenance of water tanks and containers (which can have serious implications); costs and monthly charges for public services such as solid waste collection and sewerage; and risks to health resulting from environmental factors. In addition, the study also confirmed the existence of differences and
inequalities among the central, intermediary and peripheral suburban areas. These inequalities were mainly based on access or non-access to public services and added environmental risks, in which the main problems were air pollution, degradation and pollution of water sources and the effect of uncontrolled solid waste dumping. (cf. Izazola, et al., 1998; Ramaswamy & Chakravarti, 1997; McCarney, 1995.) Nonetheless, extensive generalizations should not be made here, because conditions vary between cities and between city districts. It could be suggested that the closer an environmental issue is to the neighborhood level, the more likely a household feels responsible for it and contributes to its management.

The most common and documented collective, urban neighborhood-level action in the Third World can probably be found in Latin America (e.g. Turner, 1976; Perlman, 1976), and now increasingly, in Eastern and Southern Asia, and to a lesser extent in Africa. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are usually formed to solve the most pressing problems within the Third World neighborhoods. Thus, for instance, land invasions, street cleaning, vigilante (guard) groups, legalizing squatter settlements, water provision, and the like are some of the many nuclei around which CBOs are formed. In their early years, most of the now urban-based CBOs had rural traits (especially the resilient credit system) and their practices have been carried over into urban setting. In Africa, civic associations created by squatters, vendors, building contractors, tenants, mosques and churches can provide the basis for stronger urban civil societies and help in propagating the reform of public policy processes. (Halfani, 1997a; Datta, 1990.) In the Nigerian setting, there is virtually no village or urban area without a functioning CBO. Its name usually reflects the goal, composition or other special attributes of the organization. (Agbola, 1994.) In Cairo, the most important social security networks have been the gam‘iyya, informal savings clubs or rotating credit associations31 (Hoodfar, 1997: 218; Singerman, 1997: 154-155). Today neighborhood self-help associations are more common than ever before, and often work in tandem with government and international agencies (Doughty, 1999), however, their impact is still very limited. Informal communities have organized themselves to provide basic services such as health care, as well as to build mosques.

In India, a multitude of self-help groups has been formed by members of local communities, or neighborhood mutual aid associations, savings associations etc. (e.g. CEE, 1998: 36-40.) Community organizations have also been promoted there by the governments, NGOs and Metropolitan

31 The rotating credit associations are banking systems through which huge amounts of money exchange hands, outside the state control. A group of people join together and contribute a fixed sum of money at fixed time intervals; at each interval the money is given to one of the members. (Singerman, 1997: 154-155.)
Authorities. In Bangkok some CBOs have been formed around community committees, which are headed by a chairman (a leader of the community), and they function as official representatives to outside agencies. The city has a strong grassroots base; however, there is little long-term programming between NGOs and communities, as well as between the government and communities. Besides, there is a lack of NGOs that are directly working on environmental management issues. (Douglass & Zoghlin, 1994.)

Community management of local resources is a complex process that does not rest exclusively on ‘superheroes’, but on a complex range of factors. It may also be too simplistic to see the government alone as responsible for the failure of community efforts. Most successful community projects are not simply a matter of enthusiastic community effort alone, but rather, many other factors are involved, for instance: the backing of an NGO or government department; the motivation of committed individuals; effective technology; and adequate and sustained funding, etc. In all, decentralized participatory institutions are very difficult to establish. Environmentalists cannot bypass local structures – for instance, local political interests and land-ownership patterns are factors with which the environmental movement must contend. (Krishna, 1996: 135-138.)

7.2. HOW DO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS START UP?

What conditions are most favorable for collective action? Some of the most important insights into contemporary collective action and associational life have emerged from the literature on social movements (Fisher, 1997). However, theoretically the relationship between NGOs and social movements has been far from clear. A rough division of approaches can be made: traditional social movement analysts consider social movements as a separate phenomenon from organizations, while more recent approaches, particularly those based on studies of green movements, conceive of NGOs as an integral part of the social movement structure.

Traditional social movement theories
Mobilization\textsuperscript{32} of people has occurred in the last two centuries as the ‘old’ or traditional social movements of the Marxists, the working class, the blacks and the farmers, particularly in Europe and in the United States. The traditional social movement theorists make a distinction between social movements and associations or NGOs. The former are treated as non-institutional entities while the latter are regarded as part of the administrative system, with more or less institutional forms.

\textsuperscript{32} This is basically a military term (Chatterjee & Finger, 1994: 56), but it is commonly used in development discourses.
A social movement is a collective actor constituted by individuals who understand themselves to have common interests and, for at least some significant part of their social existence, a common identity. Social movements are distinguished from other collective actors, such as political parties and pressure groups, in that they have mass mobilization, or the threat of mobilization, as their prime source of social sanction, and hence of power. They are further distinguished from other collectivities, such as voluntary associations and clubs, in being chiefly concerned to defend or change society, or the relative position of the group in society. (Scott, 1990: 6.)

Social movement theorists emphasize the episodic, spontaneous, non-institutional and temporary characteristics of a movement, which usually do not have a clear program. First, it is not entirely but a relatively spontaneous form of collective action, defined by its activity, and it is usually sparked off by one single incident, which evolves into a common concern or problem. Second, it emerges out of political institutions; political routines are broken by social movements; it is about informal politics. Third, it is a process of information exchange, and open space where new identities can be created. Fourth, it does not exist in a vacuum but forms in the pre-existing context; cultural aspects always affect the movement; there is also interaction in the formation of movements; each shapes the others. Fifth, it is a fairly temporary and processual phenomenon. (Tilly 1996; Eyerman 1996.)

Contemporary theories are based on the collective social action approach of sociological theory, namely the pioneering work of Alain Touraine and his cyclical theories; Claus Offe’s and Jürgen Habermas’ linear theories; and historical approaches focusing on resource mobilization. The traditional social movement theories have their roots in the sociological theories of the Chicago School (see Princen & Finger, 1994: 48-55), and are based on the notion that movements are formed around people’s interests and deprivations, and concerns to demand rights of citizenship from the state; to express social resistance to the many ways in which the state and wider society have dominated lower income sectors. It is also considered that movements are resistance reaction to particular, forthcoming and unwanted actions by government authorities. Thus the idea is that something must go substantially ‘wrong’ in society, in order to make people coalesce into movements.

The tradition of analyzing social movements in sociology is encompassed in the study of social change processes. Some consider movements as pathological and indicative of a crisis in the system, and others view them as an aspect of the on-going process of social transformation (Oommen, 1990: 29, 163). Foremost, movements are reform-oriented. Strikes, riots and demonstrations have indicated conflictuality in societies. This can be related to other societal incidents and behaviors occurring at the same time, such as changes in political regimes, industrialization, urbanization and migration, unemployment, inflation, technological change, and even new consumption patterns. Instead of being mere side effects of large structural changes,
violent protests, for instance, seem to stem most directly from the struggle for established positions in the power structure. (see Tarrow, 1984: 12, 27. Perceived deprivation or shared discontent seems to have been the basis of many social movements. However, T.K. Oommen (1990: 37), who has studied Asian movements, criticizes the assumption that the poor are expected to perceive deprivation only or even mainly in terms of material conditions: “The structure of deprivation is moulded both by the traditional structures and new values of a system”. Today, the deprivation theories can not adequately explain why social conditions of relative deprivation have failed to mobilize larger sectors of a population.

One explanation for this failure can be offered: for discontent to be shared, it needs to be articulated and communicated (ibid., 1990: 221), which brings us to the question of leadership and its vital importance for the organization. Organizational resources, the mobilization capabilities of the leaders or elites have proved to be the major and final impetus leading to collective action. (Tarrow, 1984: 14). Social movement entrepreneurs, charismatic or professional leaders, define, create, and manipulate the discontent that is always present in all societies. There can be found a pattern by which the leader initiates the collective action: he starts communicating to the people-at-large the reasons or underlying causes of the ‘crisis’ they face, which is the conscientization of the people by the leader through face-to-face and other direct communication. But leader-centered action implies centralization of communication, which in turn may lead to authoritarianism. However, leader-centered communication cannot continue too long if the movement expands; one person cannot grapple with the demands of a fast-spreading movement. (Oommen, 1990: 221-222.) The next phase is to recruit new potential, (but inferior) local leaders. Therefore, the career of a movement also determines its style of communication. In movements initiated by charismatic leaders, gurus, i.e., persons of exemplary conduct, communication is top-down, highly centralized, and yet the style is widely accepted. (ibid: 19, see also p. 61, n5.) This seems to be very relevant in the Asian countries particularly.

There is a third factor, which may encourage or suppress collective action. Policy responsiveness to social movements appears to be affected by the openness of formal institutions and the regime. Generally, the number of social movements starts to increase with the opening of the political opportunity structure (POS) and political activity; however, in many cases, a movement succeeds as long as its demands are narrow and concrete enough. POS gives an important framework for movement generation and it includes institutions, alignments, available allies, and openness or repressiveness of the regime. A movement’s allies or support groups also play an essential role in its success: there may be only tolerance on the part of political elites, or a combination of sustained outside support, and even strong support by influential groups within the system. (Tarrow, 1991: 32-38; Tilly, 1996.) Thus movements are organized, catch fire, and succeed as a combined
function of the POS and the movement entrepreneurs: they are not directly and only connected to the frustrations and deprivation of the poor. (Tarrow, 1984: 27.) To what extent do the movements promote democracy and civil society? The history has shown that social movements are not inherently connected with democracy. In a very authoritarian state there is not much space for civic performances, containing only two options: to ‘ally’ with the regime or to disappear ‘underground’.

Social movement analyses often concentrate either on the structural components of movements (ideology, organization, leadership, participants) or their processual dimensions (strategy, tactics, mobilization, event, structure). Without minimizing such studies, it is suggested that unless we situate the movements in their “environmental milieu”, much of these analyses are unlikely to be sufficiently illuminating. This milieu has at least two major dimensions: the state ideology and the means defined by it as legitimate, as well as the values of the society in which movements originate and operate. Movements may challenge and protest against the dominant authority structure and/or value system in a society. Alternatively, the response to a movement is moulded by the type of authority structure and/or the value system it confronts. (Oommen, 1990: 183.) Old social movement theories assume that movements do not last forever and they have a natural history of their own, with beginnings and ends. It is asserted that the death of a movement takes place when collective action and its relations to the formal system become institutionalized, as the movement ‘degenerates’ into political pressure. (Touraine, 1981: 100.) Traditional approaches find institutionalization as a failure or as indicative of the transition from a movement to an interest group (Tarrow, 1984: 7-9). Oommen (1990: 47) also argues that all social movements face the inevitable tension between mobilization and institutionalization. Without institutionalization no movement can attain stability; yet the result of institutionalization may be the very collapse of movements – they may become ‘mere’ organizations or associations. In addition, he (ibid.: 19, 47, 117) points out that there is a neglected dimension in the processual aspect of movements’ life-cycles, which are important to study in order to make assessments of their impact on societies. He suggests that once a movement emerges, it has several possibilities: First, it often begins with the formation of an association, or institutionalized as an organizational nucleus, which spreads both vertically and horizontally if a movement has to emerge – ultimately reinforcing rather than changing the system. Second, it continues its mobilizational efforts vigorously along with sponsoring a party or organization to further its strength or gain entry into the formal framework of power. Third, its persistent mobilization leads to revolution, bringing about the change of the system. Fourth, it starts losing its vitality due to the irrelevance of its goal because of changed circumstances. Fifth, it gets discredited by the collectivity or suppressed by the government due to the erosion of its legitimacy. Thus, as many movements function as associational groups or
grow into organized bodies, also means that many studies have also been essentially analyses of associations. In spite of certain differences between movements and associations, a confusion between the two persists, first, because the movement’s observable core is often its associational dimension and therefore movement activities may be studied through associational activities. Second, all crystallized movements will necessarily develop into organizations in order to translate their ideology into programs. Third, the change (growth) of a movement manifests in associational proliferation, each pursuing the same or different goals through different means, strategy or tactics. In the final analysis, movements are usually distinguished by conscious commitment to change, and by a low degree of formalization in their organization, normative commitment and participation.

New social movements located on the boundary of formal and informal

The sphere in which social movements and civic associations arise and organize, is civil society. Mario Diani and Ron Eyerman (1992: 9) argue that social movements have increasingly been conceived of as social networks of interaction between individuals, informal groups and more formal organizations. The notion of new social movements (NSMs) represents a new issue in sociological studies, bringing social movements and non-governmental organizations closer together structurally and functionally. Thus NSMs urge social movement theories into a new era and narrow the gap between the two subjects on social movements and organizations. The difference between NSMs and old social movements can be simply translated through the changing times and realities – naturally, today we still see those episodic movements which do not necessarily turn into organizations.

Jan Pakulski (1991: 26) notes that NSMs are both symptoms of, and responses to societal crises. NSMs are formed particularly around peasants’, women’s, ethnic and environmental interests, and in addition, being local or/and national movements, NSMs are often characterized by their strong global presence. In the Third World particularly, NSMs are connected to democratic reforms. (see Lindberg & Sverrisson, 1995; also Jennett & Stewart, 1989.) Timothy Doyle and Doug McEachern (1998: 54) notice that up to now, comparatively little has been written about new social movements: there is a need for studies that find out the dynamics and structures among movements and organizations at all levels and consider how these movements hold together internally and the extent to which they coalesce to form more coherent organizations. Hence, instead of offering mere narrative descriptions, there is need for studies analyzing the NSMs more thoroughly.

From local to global levels, social movements comprise a wide group of both informal and formal actor groups, NGOs being the most visible
components and motors within the movement. Thus they may lead or create resources for social movements but are not social movements per se. Many contemporary NSMs actually do resemble earlier movements: the old social movement form or structure can be still recognized, or, certain themes and tactics are revived (Tilly, 1996). Movements can borrow from each other broad ideas, forms of public action, organizational models, symbols and slogans, etc. (Markoff: 1996: 26-29).

Social movement structures include patterns of links between movement-specific formations and organizations, as well as groups and organizations drawn into the orbit of movement activities, but formed independently of them (e.g., political parties, religious bodies, ethnic organizations) (see Pakulski, 1991: 32). Today’s social movements appear to be far from mere interest groups, forming complex and ambiguous networks and relations. Doyle & McEachern (1998: 63-65) discern at least five elements within an NSM, illustrated in a three-dimensional space: associations or NGOs; (other) local groups; individuals; networks; and the movement itself. However, the ‘movement anatomy’ they offer can be considered as lacking some essential elements: instead of having just one or two links between individuals in organizations (a kind of ‘underground’ organization model), there can usually be found multiple connections or relations among the individuals (personnel or volunteers) within the function of today’s NGOs.

Moreover, non-governmental organizations represent changes towards hybrid cities. In regard to cultural forms, hybridization can be defined here as “the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices” (Rowe & Schelling, 1991, in Pieterse, 1995). This implies that NGOs – taking novel formations and expanding – are part of the structural hybridization, or the increase in the

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33 One of the most famous NGOs in South Asia is the Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA), which deserves to be mentioned here. It was formed as a trade union in 1972, but today, it is both an organization and a movement: a labor movement, a cooperative movement and a women’s movement. SEWA works according to Gandhian philosophy and its goals are to make the work of self-employed women visible and to increase their earnings and their control over the use of their incomes within households. SEWA works with the paper pickers by, e.g., organizing this group of over 30,000 women to strengthen their bargaining power and giving visibility to their issues, nevertheless, their contribution to the society and economy has not yet been recognized. The total membership is more than 212,000. SEWA has organized a ‘Clean Ahmedabad Campaign’ as the ‘responsibility of every citizen’ as well as a means of employment for the poor. SEWA has provided health services to its members and a special bank offers savings, credit and insurance services. They train special persons to be links between the residential areas of the housing colonies and the recycling units. The SEWA movement has spread to six states in India, and also to South Africa. Today 93 per cent of all workers in India are this type of self-employed workers, of which women constitute more than half. (SEWA, 1998.)

34 It would be interesting to study, how green movements are maintained in various circumstances. One place for a movement to exist or even ‘hide’ is in the Internet, where it can stay ‘underground’ and live its own life in the form of discussion lists, etc.
range of organizational options, which are among the “signs of an age of boundary crossing” (Pieterse, 1995).

Doyle and McEachern (1998: 56-57) formulate the following working definition for NSMs:

These are new in the sense that they challenge a new set of dominant ideas and another constellation of power. There are new issues and concerns to be injected into the political process. Like the preceding social movements, they have a radical edge and visions of a world transformed by their demands. Their radicalism is heightened by their awareness of what happened before: that radical movements ended up being incorporated and their issues and passions tamed. New social movements are characterized by their informal modes of organization; their attachment to changing values as a central part of their political challenge; their commitment to open and ultra-democratic, participating modes of organization (at least in the initial stages); and their willingness to engage in direct action to stop outcomes that they see as harmful. It has certainly been the intention of these movements to disrupt the taken-for-granted routines of normal politics and to push other considerations to the fore.

The above citation implies that NSMs have to be somewhat politically oriented in order to bring their concerns into political processes and public debates. The issue of radicalism could be interpreted in such a way that by ‘being incorporated’ into the system is to be institutionalized and to cease to exist, thus the authors share the view of the traditional social theorists on the movement life cycle. In the Third World context the definition, however, is only relevant to strong, national level coalitions of environmental movements and influential NGOs. But, while local level collective action has had great difficulties in affecting political routines, this position is increasingly changing. On the other hand, NSMs are also often regarded as less politically oriented; some theorists divide social movements into cultural and political movements. For instance, Ron Eyerman (1996) argues that cultural movements, such as green movements, try only to have their own space without making demands on the wider society, whereas political movements, when successful, attempt to bind the rest of society. Also Alan Scott (1990: 16-17) asserts that while old social movements have tackled the questions of social democratic concepts of citizenship and representation, the new social movements have been primarily social and cultural in nature, and only secondarily, if at all, political; their aim is thus not to challenge the political system but to initiate collective action.

The different views on NSMs as political/non-political actors may be merely a reflection of the diversity of the phenomenon. In addition, divergence of opinion is an inevitable part of the growth of the movement (Gupta et al., 1998). Despite the diversity of the phenomenon, several characteristics have been proposed as typical of NSMs (Larana et al., 1992, in Doyle & McEachern, 1998: 61):

- a tendency in NSMs to transcend class structure;
- exhibiting a multitude of ideas and values;
- involving new dimensions of identity;
- the relationship between the collective and the individual is blurred (many movements are ‘acted out’ in individual actions rather than among mobilized groups);
- involving personal aspects of human life (e.g. what we eat or enjoy);
- using radical mobilization tactics of resistance (differing old social movements);
- maintaining elements of autonomy from traditional mass parties; and,
- being seemingly diffuse and decentralized.

As Doyle and McEachern (1998: 55) emphasize, environmentalism was born in environmental movements. Some analysts argue that the history of the green movement is almost non-existent or it is a memoryless phenomenon – whilst some trace connections to poor urban European environmental conditions in the 18th and 19th centuries:

The green movement has started almost from nowhere; there were no ‘collective memories’, especially in the South. It had to create itself when other social movements could be created on pre-existing cultural traditions. (Eyerman, 1996.)

The homes and neighborhoods of the wealthy cities of the world were once environmentally disastrous ... (in) many ways, the sanitary movement of the 19th century was the precursor to the modern environmental movement (McGranahan, 1994).

To avoid ahistorical approaches, it is important to pay attention to the circumstances in which NSMs arise and to the specific characteristics of both the participants and their goals (Doyle & McEachern, 1998: 58-60). Post-materialist or post-industrial arguments offer weak frameworks in interpreting the emergence of Third World NSMs. Old social movement theories may still be relevant to some extent when explaining the rise of Third World movements: they are based on (old) survival and security needs in situations made worse by extreme environmental degradation. When pinpointing to restrictions of traditional social movement theories in explaining environmental movements, it is helpful to refer again to Doyle & McEachern (ibid.: 62-65), who argue that interest group models treat collective political action as being driven mainly by shared goals, and has inhibited our understanding of the often fascinating mechanics and structures of the informal relationships that are characteristic of a social movement.

Environmental movements also vary in focus. Today’s environmentalism is predominantly centered around the preservation of natural resources, rather than ecological and human concerns in urban areas. Very little attention has been pointed at Third World brown problems comprising low-income housing, overcrowding, waste disposal, energy provision, etc.:
One may define an environmental movement as organized social activity consciously directed towards promoting sustainable use of natural resources, halting environmental degradation or bringing about environmental restoration (Gagdil & Guha, 1995b: 98).

The new discourse on NSMs can be considered to have wider implications for the prevailing development paradigm, as argued by Pramod Parajuli (1991). The emergence of NMSs happens to coincide with a decline in the hegemony of development discourse. NSMs challenge the state’s authority and its claim to represent people and pinpoint the relations of domination, economic exploitation and politico-cultural subordination by the state and elites. It is about alternative forms of governance, where NSMs seek and promote personal and collective identity. Parajuli argues that the aim is not to integrate NSMs into nation-states, but rather, to restructure the state so that it can be accommodated within civil society. Their task is also to evolve a knowledge system, which can represent the experiences of the subaltern groups by using alternative ways of producing and validating knowledge. NSMs are “regenerating and rearticulating the existing knowledge of the subaltern groups” – particularly groups of women, indigenous people and the poor – as a valid system of thought. The knowledge of subaltern groups can be used to change the power relations between the various traditions of knowledge. It is not about only political and economic autonomy but also the “power to define themselves, their aspirations and the development process”. (Parajuli, 1991.)

They [NSMs] are seeking to redefine the entire matrix of development and progress, survival and identity, body and health, food and nutrition, time and space, nature and humans, men and women. They envision different ways of achieving equality and democracy, autonomy and identity. (Parajuli, 1991.)

Non-governmental organizations have legitimized themselves through the adoption of statutes, setting rules of conduct and defining organizational goals. In this respect, they resemble formal political institutions. The adoption of statutes symbolizes that they are willing to work within established rules and social norms to a certain degree. Located within these somewhat ambiguous boundaries, considerable tensions surround the relationships of NGOs to the non-institutionalized grassroots groups and networks of social movements on the one hand, and the institutions of the state on the other. (Doyle & McEachern, 1998: 55-56.) Concerning grassroots social movements in particular, they can be seen to differ from local NGOs in the way that movements are based on common interest groups within communities, in contrast to the organizations which often come from outside the community. In all, NGOs could be regarded as both an asset and liability for social movements as NGOs stand on a boundary between the informal and formal.
Environmental movements and their goals are composed of very diverse, specific and even *contradictory* elements, which also make generalizations most difficult. It is thereby suggested that *theories of social movements, both old and new, should be treated as tools, rather than models* into which all experience can be forced. In some cases they may be extremely useful, but in others, irrelevant. Also, “interpretations of the origins and significance of environmental movements are as contested as the movements themselves” (ibid., 1998: 61-62.). Nonetheless, social movements and NGOs have a vital role in *expanding* civil societies:

NGOs and social movements may come and go, but the *space* created in their passing may contribute to new activism that builds up after them (Fisher, 1997).

### 7.3. Third World Environmentalism: From Savannas to Streets

There are numerous green movements focusing on natural resource use, which are well documented, such as the Chipko and Narmada movements in India, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni people (MOSOP) in Nigeria, and Amazon rubber tappers in Brazilia (see, e.g., Ekins, 1992). Andrew Steer (1996) offers several postulates on how environmentalism worldwide has evolved towards a more *socially* concerned issue and why this change is important. The Brundtland Commission Report prompted this important shift, which the Rio Summit 1992 endorsed. While the mainstream of earlier environmentalism was criticized for being elitist and protectionist, and for “putting pandas before people”, the new environmentalism locates people at the center of the picture, not any more as only ‘the problem’ but rather, a solution to environmental problems.

Specific events start up green movements in different Third World countries, however, a more generic phenomenon can be found in the emergence of these environmental movements. Along with urban growth, it could be anticipated that the brown agenda will begin to supplement and broaden the ‘traditional’ green movements. I illustrate the issue by giving a few examples from South Africa, Egypt and India, which all demonstrate the great variance of local to national level green movements of the South, and the growing emergence of new issues and actors, particularly from urban contexts. Furthermore, Chapter IV offers more empirical evidence for this argumentation.

Despite the fast growing numbers of urban ENGOs since late 1970s, it is striking that there are practically no studies focusing on the *relations between* rural and urban-based movements, as a review of the literature reveals. The connecting or detaching links between the two have remained unseen and ambiguous until now. It can be assumed that while in some instances their activities and aims are mutually reinforcing, in others, tension, prejudices and mistrust hamper movements and their success and
consequently, environmental groups have divided into rural and urban ‘camps’. In addition, the evolving ‘brown branch’ may evoke some controversial issues arising among the urban groups themselves, for instance, concerning the position and role of the poor in development. Thus, only some rough interpretations can be suggested here.

**Racist Environmentalism in South Africa**

An obvious shift in environmentalism and environmental policy making in South Africa offers an example of the importance of exerting pressure to change global agendas in order to highlight urban environmental research. This transition reflects the situation also in several other African countries to some extent. In South Africa there is an ongoing shift from natural area conservation to recognition of urban ecological problems. This is occurring along with the growth of urban centers, such as Johannesburg, which will become a megacity within a few years.

In Africa, ‘environment’ has been associated with wilderness, untouched natural areas and game reserves. In South Africa the approach to environmental questions has reflected the interests of the privileged minority of whites: establishing and maintaining conservation areas for animals and plants. Little attention has been paid to the environmental problems in the low-income communities which form the majority of the population in the country. (Ramphele, 1991 in Patel, 1996: 36; Cherrett et al., 1995; see Bullard, 1994). David McDonald (1998) points out that it is little wonder that black South Africans paid little attention to environmental debates in the past:

The history of environmental policy in South Africa is a cruel and perverse one. Under apartheid, thousands of black South Africans were forcibly removed from ancestral lands to make way for game parks, and billions of Rand were spent on preserving wildlife and protecting wild flowers while people in the townships and the homelands lived without adequate supplies of clean water, food, or shelter. Whites-only policies in national parks meant that black South Africans could not enjoy the country’s rich natural heritage, and draconian poaching laws kept the rural poor from desperately needed resources in national parks – all in the name of nature conservation (ARA, 1991; IDRC, 1995) ... At best, ecology was seen to be a white, suburban issue of little relevance to the anti-apartheid struggle. At worst, environmental policy was seen as an explicit tool of racially-based oppression. (McDonald, 1998.)

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35 Robert Bullard (1994: 98), who has studied environmental racism in North America, defines the concept as referring to “any policy, practice, or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individuals, groups, or communities based on race or color. Environmental racism combines with public policies and industry practices to provide benefits for whites while shifting industry costs to people of color. It is reinforced by governmental, legal, economic, political, and military institutions ... Racism influences the likelihood of exposure to environmental and health risks as well as of less access to health care.”
In a country like South Africa, in which ‘environment’ has been perceived as a class-based and racial issue, Western-type radical environmentalism would be most absurd, and viewed with great suspicion and resistance, as reminded by Zarina Patel (1996: 52-53). For example, eco-sabotage would be viewed with a great degree of discomfort in the country, which has a contentious history of violence against human rights. Besides, radical approaches do not address issues of poverty and quality of life.

In the 1990s, however, environmental discourse in South Africa underwent a dramatic change. Since the unbanning of the ANC and other anti-apartheid organizations, there has been reconceptualization of environmental issues and a rapid politicization of environmental debates. Organizations like the Environmental Justice Networking Forum (EJNF) have made the links between poverty and ecology a priority in the country. The old view has been replaced by a new perception among South Africans and a new environmental justice movement has started. (McDonald, 1998.)

The traditional ‘big five’ of ecotourism - lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo - will be joined by the new ‘big five’ of the South African environment: housing, electricity, water, sewerage and refuse removal (McDonald, 1994, quoted in Patel, 1996).

Hence, an environmental justice movement has taken root in South Africa recently, challenging the top-down, racist environmental policies and administrative practices. It acknowledges that environmental initiatives are akin to post-apartheid, democratic objectives, links environmental questions to social justice issues and advocates citizens’ ‘right’ to a clean and healthy environment. Over 450 ENGOs are allied to EJNF alone and there has also emerged a ‘rainbow coalition’, including environmentally concerned groups and individuals that cuts across race, class and gender. Yet the largest and best-funded environmental groups are still middle class and suburban, and the media continues to focus on flora and fauna in their environmental reporting. (McDonald, 1998.)

The delivery of basic services like sewerage and sanitation can be regarded as the single most important environmental concern in the country, because it directly affects the largest number of people, the black South Africans. Beside the government and the majority of voters, the middle class, white South Africans also have an interest in urban upgrading – if for no other reason than to reduce crime rates and instability in urban areas and to relieve the ‘eyesores’ of squatter camps along major roads and highways. The private sector is expected to constitute a major source of funding for infrastructure investment, but another question is how to ensure their investments in areas with little potential for profit. (ibid.)
The Environmentalism of the retired professionals in Egypt

There are two particular incidents that have contributed to the rise of environmentalism in Egypt. In the first case, a shipment of irradiated milk was arriving in the country from West Germany in 1987. The issue was politicized by the Greens in Germany, who also warned a few Cairene intellectuals of this threat. However, the German Greens eventually succeeded in stopping their government from carrying out this dumping activity. The Egyptian media covered the case widely and some recommendations were given to establish a similar Green party in Egypt, in order to protect the country’s environment and people. The journalist Abdel Salam Daoud’s column in the Al Akhbar newspaper became a forum for those Egyptians who were interested in establishing a Green Party. (Ragab, 1994, pers.comm.) Several concerned activists formally requested approval from the ‘Parties Committee’ for the establishment of the Green Party. When the committee rejected the whole idea, the party activists took the case to court and the Party was legally recognized Spring 1990. (Al Ahram Weekly, April 15, 1990, in Gomaa, 1997: 20)

A second, similar type of incident occurred in 1990 when an Italian ship, coming back from Saudi Arabia, passed through the Suez Canal with a full cargo of sheep infected with stomach parasites. The captain of the ship ordered his crew to dump the cargo into international waters in the Mediterranean Sea. On a three-kilometer stretch of beach near Port Said, 300 dangerously infected carcasses washed up to rot in the sand. Having a hint from a resident of the town, the members of the Egyptian Green Party went to the site. Before this, the governor of Port Said had told the press the sheep had been dug up and disposed of, when actually this was not the case. Later on, the (former) chief of the Environmental Affairs Agency, who also was a friend of the governor, suddenly denied in his media presentation there were any sheep at all. The Greens took journalists to the scene and badgered local police to get the governor to clean up the beach, which was done properly the next day. (Reidy, 1991; Ragab, 1994 pers.comm.) Hence the party in Egypt began as a response to a certain environmental problem; the dumping of hazardous waste that could expose Egyptian people to the severe health risks of pollution.

In the Third World, Green parties are still in their infancy, and the Egyptian case is not an exception. It is the only non-governmental formation within Egypt’s official political structure devoted to environmental issues. The establishment of the Party was an example of growing social concern and an effort to influence the government’s environmental policies – the first such development in the Arab world. Egyptian Greens consider themselves not so much a political party as the conscience of the nation. They can be regarded as a policy party, whose main interest is the implementation of their environmental policies, regardless of whether their party is in power, as opposed to a power party, whose principal aim is to govern. In the legislative election of 1990 in which the Party had seventeen candidates nationwide in
spite of knowing very well that those candidates would never make it to the assembly. Nevertheless the Party decided to participate in order to promote its policy proposals and to attract supporters. Their program emphasized the relation between environmental protection and economic development. The party’s failure to win parliamentary seats has, however, hindered its ability to have an impact on environmental policy and to influence the government within the system. (Gomaa, 1997: 17-19.)

Despite the fact that Egypt has adopted a multi-party system, in reality there is only one party, Mubarak’s National Democratic Party (NDP), which holds 99 percent of the seats in the Parliament (as in 1997). In addition, the Party’s members lack political experience, and therefore it has not been difficult for the government and other environmentalists to brush them off (Reidy, 1991). Since it has been difficult for the Party members to win seats, they have adopted new tactics, and tried to recruit independent members of Parliament. Some of the previous Party members feel that its energy has been lost in political competition rather than promotion of environmental questions. As a result, some of the previous and present Green Party members have established (either together or individually) associations, which are quite free, because they are outside the rigid and competitive political system. This position also basically gives better chances to tackle environmental issues. (Takla, 1994, pers.comm.) However, the NDP has, in fact, close relations with a few environmental organizations because of overlapping membership, which, in turn, have hindered Green Party attempts to coordinate its efforts with ENGOs. The political loyalty of NDP members to their party has been an obstacle for the Greens in lobbying the members. (Gomaa, 1997: 19.)

In spite of the Green members being educated, as Jennifer Reidy (1991) puts it, “they are not necessarily liberal and they certainly are not young. Most of the leaders look like they remember the end of the British protectorate ... the inner spark to change the world is still there, but they do not have the energy of youth and political savvy”. The party has organized into 42 different committees, but in practice, they have few plans to combat air and water pollution and population growth. The Party’s plans and tactics imply a philosophy which is very different from other Green parties around the world. Whereas European and American activists seek societal reforms through radical action, the Egyptian Greens almost “expect other people to do their work for them: other politicians, other journalists and other environmentalists”. Therefore Greens are perceived as passive, slow and preferring to get governmental approval before undertaking any popular activity (ibid.); this is very understandable in light of internal politics in the country. Western-style radical protests are out of question due to emergency laws, which prohibit gatherings of more than five people, and thus official permissions have to be obtained for larger meetings (Kelany, 1997, pers.comm).
The budget of the Party is small, so during the first years they could not have afforded a newspaper or newsletter and the office was bought by their own money – a vicious circle for the Party’s functionaries, explained the Deputy President, Ibrahim Kelany (1997, pers.comm.). Money-raising problems are partly caused by the law which restricts opposition parties from taking donations from outside of Egypt, not even from the United Nations Environment Program, international NGOs, nor from other Green parties (Reidy, 1991; Kelany, 1997, pers.comm.). They have to also deal with bureaucrats, who have been little aware of environmental questions (a case in point: the former Minister of Environment had his background in the military testing of biological and chemical weapons). However, the critics say that the Party’s biggest problem is the lack of a wider constituency: the support of the grassroots and the young particularly, who comprise a quarter of their 1,500 members (keeping in mind that even 80 percent of the country’s population is under 40). Also women are a small minority, comprising only eight percent of its members. In their initial policy statements, the Party members have considered poverty as the worst form of pollution and urged economic development and environmental awareness as the solutions. Worst of all, however, they could not attract sufficient publicity so there are not many who know about them:

At one of our pre-election rallies last fall, the people were chanting ‘khodar! khodar!’ which means ‘vegetable’, instead of ‘khodr’, which means ‘greens’ ... they liked us because they thought we were going to give them food (a comment by a Green representative quoted in Reidy, 1991).

This misunderstanding, meant to serve as a humorous anecdote, hits straight to the core of the Party’s fundamental deficiency: its activities have been apart from the public because they have been an elitist group comprising only scientists and academics, and could not have met the basic needs of the majority of the Egyptians. The Party however, is aware of this deficiency, and aims at improving the situation (Kelany, 1997, pers.comm.). Hence, it may be perhaps too lavish to discuss a green ‘movement’ in this case.

The Egyptian Greens succeeded, like their German counterparts, in achieving publicity for the campaign to stop illegal dumping that could harm the health of the Egyptian people. But today it seems that this ‘sheep-incident’ has remained the Greens’ first and only big ‘fight’. The Egyptian Steering Committee, an umbrella organization for ENGOs in Egypt, has demonstrated some influence in protecting natural resources in the country. In mid-1990s, some Saudi Arabian tourists illegally hunted Egyptian wildlife in the deserts. The Egyptian ENGO coalition succeeded in stopping the activity by lobbying and putting pressure on the Saudi Arabian government. (Hafez Ali, 1995, pers.comm.)

Before the Green Party, there were already several urban issue-oriented ENGOs in Cairo. It appears that their position has been strengthening over
time, and today especially, the Green Party’s existence is overshadowed by various associations, in particular those which have been able to cater to the needs of low-income groups. In Egypt, the history of non-governmental organizations focusing on relief, education and health is quite long, since it dates back at least to the 18th century. Nevertheless, upgrading poorer human settlements represents a more novel issue (Cooperation with the Arab States 1993: 9-11). NGOs with apparent urban environmental concerns have evolved since the 1970s and particularly in the 1980s, due greatly to international United Nations conferences, in which several Egyptian early environmentalists participated, and consequently, started to create their own groups, ENGOs (El Kassas, 1994, pers.comm.). Currently there are a few ENGOs that constitute a new force in Egyptian politics, which emerged in the formation of a new environmental law in 1994. Salwa Gomaa (1997: 20) has found in total 62 ENGOs, of which a great majority is based in Cairo. The ENGOs initiated by middle and upper class people with university degrees (‘professionals’) have been the main civic organizations in Cairo (Gomaa, 1995; see also Ben Néfissa, 1995: 46).

Generally, the growth of environmental concerns in Egypt appears to be the interplay of three factors: firstly, external pressures from foreign donors on the government to meet certain environmental standards. There is also willingness among donors to support financially these environmentally sounder projects. Secondly, the government’s desire to pursue the goal of sustainable development is crucial in order to deal with the imbalance between the country’s overpopulation and its limited resources. Policymakers seem to have recognized that development and environmental protection are inseparable, mutually dependent concerns. Thirdly, the Egyptian government desires to be a role model for other Third World countries and thus to maintain a position of leadership in the Arab world by following the international community in its environmental concern. (Gomaa, 1992, see also 1997: 20-21.)

The Environmentalism of the poor in India
Unlike many other Third World countries, India has a long tradition in open civil action on environmentally related issues. Civic groups have also been the main catalysts disseminating environmental awareness in the country. Thus it is worthwhile to illustrate its green movement and its variations more thoroughly here.

In a nation the size of India, with major differences between individual states and regions, social movements and ENGOs are characterized by a richness in approaches, traditions, and activities. (Riddell & Robinson, 1995: 138.) The Indian environmental movement has its roots in natural resource

36 ‘Having an NGO’ can also be interpreted as a search for a measure of economic and political power, which, in turn, could provide opportunities for project funding from foreign donors (Myllylä, 1997).
conflicts, especially in forest, land and water issues and large infrastructure projects connected to them. The numerous local groups which comprise the environmental movement have taken action in order to stop economic activities that destroy the environment and impoverish local, mainly rural, communities. Thus these (potential) victims have gathered together and organized into action groups.

Two green movements have gained more attention than others: the Chipko (‘Hug the Trees’) movement and the ongoing Narmada (‘mega-dam’) movement, which both have manifested the conflict between the rich (including the urban elite) and the poor (see Ekins, 1992: 89-111, 143). The main underlying stimulus behind the movements has been the unequal distribution of natural resources, which is embedded in a certain development model that has been implemented in the country’s economy. Struggles against government authorities, multinational agencies and smaller enterprises, and the question of local ‘non-scientific’ knowledge versus modern scientific knowledge, have emerged to characterize the movements. These wide movements have also deeper cultural and religious significance; for instance, Chipko originated in the watershed of one of the holiest rivers of Hinduism. Both environmental movements have induced national and international debates on the direction of economic development in India, as well as on the type of society and ecology most appropriate to this culturally and ecologically diverse nation. (see Gagdil & Guha, 1995a.)

In addition, Krishna (1996: 93, 103) evinces that the appeal to religious beliefs to maintain particular forms of behavior is a potent political tool, which has been found in environmental movements. She notes that environmentalism started to emerge in India in the 1970s, at the same time as the series of United Nations environmental conferences took place, and it focused on wilderness issues; this early form of environmentalism created a climate of receptivity among the urban elite and many of today’s leading environmentalists have their roots in addressing wildlife issues. In the latter part of the decade, Indian environmentalism was given impetus by certain movements having a specific goal, for instance, the Chipko movement which brought up the linkages between development and environment, and involved the rural poor (and not just scientists and city people). In the 1980s,

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37 Gagdil and Guha (1992) have elaborated the social organizations characterized by various ecological features, and given an ecological interpretation of the caste (jati) system, which still prevails also in today’s Indian cities. Different endogamous groups and the division of labor, have remained distinct and have been assigned different status within the society for more than centuries. This transition probably permitted the elites to assign tedious and low-status tasks to various food-gathering tribes, a process which was rationalized in the varna system. It divided the society into Brahmans or priests, Kshatriyas or warriors, Vaishyas or traders, Sudras or peasants and higher-status artisans, and the lowest on the ladder, Panchamas (‘Untouchables’) or lower-status artisans and laborers. The process was also rationalized by the elite in two ways: it was justified first on the grounds that these groups were biologically distinctive and second, by attributing birth in lower status groups to sins committed in a previous life. (Gagdil & Guha, 1992: 82-84; see also Nasr, 1990: 88-93).
India experienced growth in various new social movements, which also helped the rise of environmental activism. The Bhopal catastrophe increased both academic research and media attention on environmental questions, and thus helped in extending the environmental debate. In the relatively short period of three decades since the emergence of environmentalism as an organized movement in contemporary India, mere protesting against (local level) environmental damage has matured to questioning the course of development, as a ‘basic needs’ approach. (ibid., 32-35.)

In the late 1980s and 1990s, environmentalism was based on the strengthening of protest movements among the people most affected by ill-planned and badly executed government or donor development projects. As the movement has expanded to comprise a number of issues, it simultaneously has become more atomistic, having a variety of philosophical and strategic approaches (e.g. Gandhians, Marxists, conservationists, socialists, radicals, liberals, democrats, humanists etc.). Thus from within, the movement is fraught with contradictions, whilst from the outside it may appear to be ideologically homogeneous. Nevertheless, this has a short-term benefit as it enables activists to project a seeming consensus, wherever it is needed (e.g. Narmada movement has brought together many NGOs, despite their divergent political positions). Today, Indian environmentalism is a real “kaleidoscope of changing patterns, composed more or less of the same elements in different combinations” (ibid.).

Gagdil and Guha (1995b: 2) claim that the vibrant Indian environmental movement at large has been a village-based activity with a defensive approach. In this multiplicity of movements they distinguish seven major strands: two of these are focused on nature conservation (e.g., the wildlife conservation movement, which largely attracts urban elites); three of them on aesthetic, recreational or scientific grounds; and the other two on the basis of cultural and religious traditions. The dominant strands are those whose primary concern is the question of equity, as the ‘the environmentalism of the poor’, in order to distinguish them from the environmentalism born out of affluence that is such a visible presence in the advanced capitalist societies of the West. The authors discern other four broad strands within these movements. The first emphasizes doing justice to the poor, and it largely includes Gandhians; the second emphasizes the need to dismantle the unjust social order through struggle, and primarily attracts Marxists. The third and fourth strands emphasize reconstruction, employing technologies appropriate to the context and the times. These might arise either out of the concerns of scientists, or more significantly, through the revival of community-based management systems. (ibid.: 98-99.)

Furthermore, Gagdil and Guha (1995a) distinguish between the material, political and ideological expressions of the movements. In these conflicts two opposite groups have formed: on the one side, are social groups gaining disproportionately from economic development (industrialists, urban consumers and rich farmers), and on the other, the poor and relatively
powerless groups, such as peasants, pastoral nomads, tribals, etc. The material context is provided by wide-range shortages of, threats to, and struggles over natural resources. Political expression is found in the organization by social action groups of the victims of environmental degradation. They have embarked upon several distinct (but interrelated) sets of initiatives: through organizations aimed at preventing ecologically destructive economic practices; using media and walking tours in message promotion; and, programs of environmental rehabilitation (soil conservation, afforestation etc.). Despite modes of actions can be generally interpreted as political, the people involved come outside the political system. All political parties have supported lavish and ecologically destructive, centralized technology such as nuclear power stations and gigantic dams. The ideological expression is based on the criticism of Western development models. While within the movement there is a general agreement on the failures of the present development model, there is little consensus on and inadequate effort at working out the plausible alternatives.

The following distinct ideological perspectives can also be found within the movements among others (Gagdil & Guha, 1995b: 107-112). Crusading Gandhians regard environmental degradation as a moral problem, its origins lying in the wider acceptance of the ideology of materialism and consumerism, which draws humans away from nature and encourages wasteful lifestyles; they suggest a call for the return to pre-colonial (and pre-capitalist) village society. Ecological Marxists see environmental problems in political and economic terms, arguing that it is unequal access to resources, rather than the question of values, which better explains the patterns and processes of environmental degradation in the country. They organize the poor for collective action and for confrontational movements, and have the goal of redistributing economic and political power. They also have some hostility to tradition and corresponding faith in modernity and modern science. The representatives of these two ideological views are actually the extremists of the Indian environmental movement. The third group, Appropriate technologists, are located between the two, and they strive for a working synthesis of agriculture and industry, big and small units, and Western and Eastern, or modern and traditional technological traditions, etc.  

Indian groups have a broad repertoire of protest tactics, many of which fall under the principle of satyagraha (literally ‘truth force’, linked to non-violent resistance) paralleling with the Gandhian mode (Gagdil & Guha, 1995a). For instance, there can be singled out the following overlapping and complementary tactics among others: a collective show of the communities’ strength by, for instance, having a meeting near a center of official power (pradarshan); a sit-down strike (dharna), having a narrow target, such as stopping an economic activity; surrounding a key authority figure by protesters and heckling him till he accedes to their demands or is rescued by the police (gherao); a road blockade, which is more radical than others (rasta roko); and the ‘struggle march’ (sangharsh yatra), e.g., in the Narmada movement comprising even thousands of kilometers, is made to focus public attention on specific natural resource conflicts. For instance, the autorickshaw drivers in Delhi
Gagdil and Guha (ibid.: 32, 98-99) categorize the poor who live in shantytowns in “parasitic” cities, as “ecological refugees”. The authors also mention briefly that some equity movements may involve socially conscious “omnivores” who work with these ecological refugees. In addition, the urban affluent population, deprived of exposure to pollution, might also be viewed as “victims” of ecological degradation. However, both the authors as well as Krishna (1996), emphasize that Indian environmentalism is based on the struggles of ecosystem people in forests and villages. By saying that urban environmentalists (or “sympathetic if not patronizing elites”) are little concerned with the aspirations of urban migrants and slum dwellers, instead by focusing on tribals and forest-dwellers, Krishna fails (p. 265) to take into account the intense urban environmentalism taking place in all Indian (mega)cities. Furthermore, she gives an interpretation that it may be the “seductiveness of the subsistence lifestyle” that makes it difficult for urban environmentalists to relate to these ‘intermediate’ groups. In her view, environmentalism in India has thus subdued class conflicts and emphasized local or tribal identities. One feature that emerges within the Indian NGO sector as a whole, is a tension between rural and urban NGOs, which can be considered a hindrance for NGO cooperation and coalition building. (see Gupta et al, 1998.)

The NGOs themselves need to come together and get over their bickering about who is good and who is bad – whether the urban ones are bad ones as compared to the rural, grassroots ones – because all types of institutions are needed within a country’s civil society, from those who read and write to those who act, campaign and organize. (Agarval, 1998.)

To sum up, Table 4 presents some comparisons between Egyptian and Indian green movements. How do the two cases fit into theories on social movements, especially NSMs? How does it compare to the situation in South Africa, where environmentalism is becoming ever more an urban issue due to the post-apartheid climate, and as result, has very special characteristics inherently linked to the politics in the country? The Egyptian Greens, in contrast to South Africa, are working outside the main politics in their country, thus having difficulties in “injecting new issues into the political process” (cf. Doyle & McEachern, 1998: 56-57). The Indian environmental movement, however, has succeeded in bringing its concerns into public debates to a greater extent. In all, no movement has succeeded in rising to the status of political party, or influenced environmental issues through formal politics in Egypt or India.

Egypt and India have been under British colonial rule, followed by different political regimes: in Egypt an authoritarian, one party regime and in

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1998 arranged a ‘rasta roko’-style road blockade against the government decision to phase out old vehicles. In addition, collective protests using one or more of the tactics have been closely accompanied by coverage in the media with the help of sympathetic journalists.
India what can be considered a functioning democratic system. While the Egyptians have not ‘confronted’ their government, Indian groups have taken a very defensive role towards the state; however, both movements have opposed external forces that have threatened local environmental resources and people’s lives. Probably due much to openness in the political opportunity structure and charismatic popular leaders, India has had a long tradition of civic action with an extensive repertoire of non-violent protests. In Egypt, civic protests and other gatherings are illegal and often suffocated, therefore environmentalists have preferred to be cooperative with the state.

Egyptian environmentalism can be characterized by the weak existence of the Green Party; as a ‘micro-movement’ with a limited number of achievements; run by a small number of middle and upper class professionals; and lacking the support of the grassroots, especially the poor. However, it could be argued here that today, Egyptian mainstream environmentalism is made by urban ENGOs, which have a potential to influence in national level policy-making. The Indian movements have comprised a great variety of small and large civic formations, from professionals to the poor; they enjoy a richness in tactics and actions; and have combined the informal and formal actors in which the ENGOs have played a vital part when being in the core of the movement. However, it appears that Indian mainstream environmentalism is still much a non-urban movement, and it has not taken into account the various ENGO coalitions in cities – such as those of slum organizations or waste pickers39, among others – and therefore the latter could not have gained a large scale public attention, too.

The characteristics of NSMs outlined by Larana et al. (1992, in Doyle & McEachern, 1998: 61) are valid mainly for Indian movements. In addition, while Indian movements have based their functions on historical or cultural tradition, Egyptian environmentalism can be described as ahistorical. Unlike in India, in the Egyptian case the ‘post-materialist thesis’ might be relevant, and it also supports the observation that the principal actors in Third World green movements usually appear to be those least exposed to actual deprivation (Mahev, 1995: 3).

39 For instance, the United Bustee Development Association, a scavengers NGO coalition in India.
Table 4. Comparing Indian and Egyptian green movements.

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<td>democratic political system</td>
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<td>TRADITION SMS</td>
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<td>natural resources conflicts; inequity (internal&amp;external)</td>
<td>dumping of hazardous waste (external)</td>
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<td>LEADERS MEMBERS</td>
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<td>professionals, academics journalists in Green Party</td>
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<td>EXPRESSION GOAL</td>
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<td>preventing pollution</td>
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<tr>
<td>TACTICS</td>
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<td>modest; restricted and controlled; media usage</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFFECTED GROUPS</td>
<td>rural poor, ecological refugees</td>
<td>middle to upper class</td>
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<td>POSITION TO STATE</td>
<td>diverse, influential, and defensive movements</td>
<td>one, co-active micro-movement</td>
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8. NGOs’ Roles and Relations in Urban Governance

8.1. On Historical Background of NGO Sector

An extensive proliferation of NGOs has taken place since the mid-1970s and strengthened so that the 1980s can be regarded as a real decade of flourishing associational activity worldwide, and perhaps the 1990s as a decade for NGO coalition building. To cite some examples, Bangladesh has over 10,000 environment-related NGOs and India more than 12,000 ‘development’ NGOs, whilst the Philippines has 18,000, mostly rural and small NGOs (Princen & Finger, 1994: 1-2; see also Fisher, 1997). There are over 14,000 registered NGOs in Bangladesh (see Aminuzzaman, 1998). Asia has the largest number of NGOs today, while in Latin America NGOs evolved as more visible actors already during the 1960s and 1970s (McNulty, 2000). In spite of the large numbers of these organizations, in most parts of the Third World there is a lack of directories and other related materials, including well-documented and analyzed cases (e.g. Ng’ethe, 1989).

The worldwide strengthening of the positions of the non-governmental organizations in development cooperation has taken place since the 1970s, and this is due to several reasons. With the end of the Cold War, governments have increasingly withdrawn from public service provision, and simultaneously, the role of the commercial and third sector, including NGOs, is now being emphasized, both in developed and developing countries. In attempting to reduce the level of public support, especially the NGOs are now expected to be more efficient in delivering certain services (especially health and education) previously provided by governments. They have also shown greater efficiency in relief activities, since they are in better positions to reach the people than the official aid services. In general, government interventions in international development cooperation and especially direct government-to-government programs have been limited in implementing small-scale projects dealing with local communities and popular participation. (Macrae, 1996; Review of the Effectiveness., 1995: 6-7.) As Philip McMichael (1996: 239) has put it, we are currently in a phase of ‘NGOization’, in that national governments and international institutions have lost much of their legitimacy, and non-governmental organizations are taking the initiative in guiding development activities. Thus the recipient governments have been seen as being a part of the problem. The gaps in donors’ implementation capabilities have also affected the degree of responsibility now held by the NGOs. Some donor governments, in recognition of the role of NGOs in strengthening civil societies in the South, have increased the support for them as NGOs: to support the independent NGO community for its own sake. (Review of the Effectiveness., 1995: 7.)
As a sector, NGOs came on the scene particularly as service-providing development agents among the poor after World War Two. Religious development agencies (mainly church and missionary projects, and less commonly, Islamic agencies, etc.) evolved in small-scale activities, without wider significant socio-economic impact. Pioneer voluntary agencies were largely comprised of altruistic workers within the spatial and parochial context of their own religious family. In Africa, there was an emergency character to the NGO boom in the 1980s. Thus besides the anti-state ideological outlook of the period, famines, drought, civil wars and refugees constituted the great engine propelling NGO expansion. The need for broader and longer-term NGO development objectives began to be seriously acknowledged as a major concern only from the late 1980s. (Cherrett et al, 1995; Ogunseye, 1997: 3-4, 9-10.)

As associational life has a long historical foundation in many Third World cities, what have been the wider societal contexts determining the rise and activities of NGOs? Several common characteristics can be cited in regard to, e.g., political history and socio-economic development (Agbola, 1994; see more Cherrett et al, 1995):

- colonial history
- single-party system
- economic crisis
- weak entitlement to welfare
- patronage
- strong man culture
- group negotiation
- efforts to limit the effects of nature

- weak civil society
- weak tradition of organized labor
- environment as basic need
- extended family to minimize risk
- funds externally negotiated
- personally set priorities
- technology as imported system
- great external influence on national agendas.

In Latin America, NGOs were created in response to authoritarian political environments, widespread poverty and an increased interest from Northern donors in the development of the region (McNulty, 2000). Political turmoil, in turn, has been among the most noticeable obstacles to the proliferation of local NGOs in many Third World regions, especially in North Africa and the Middle East (Princen & Finger, 1994: 1-4). Also urban governance in the Third World has been hindered by the absence of democracy inherent in the authoritarian nature of the dominant political elite, by the weakness of civil society, and by its isolation from any participation in decision-making (e.g. Kharoufi, 1997). Likewise, Ian Cherrett et al. (1995) remind that post-colonial countries, like those of Africa, are for most of their inhabitants, still alien entities which rarely enjoy the legitimacy of the people, as indigenous societies were cast in the role of objects of development or obstacles for progress. This type of ahistoricism has led to an under-utilization of local initiatives and a disregard for the activities of large sections of the population. Since the late 1970s, the building of nation states has been determined by international development agencies, as well as debt payments to Northern banks and governments and multilateral creditors along
principles of neo-liberal and market-oriented policies. Governmental rhetoric has stressed the priority position of education, public health and population policy and state-led development has had reasonable success in some social sectors and in physical capital formation. Nevertheless, in practice structural adjustment has reduced investment in these sectors and successes have largely been undermined by economic ineffectiveness, corruption, inefficient macro policies, i.e., developmental failure. As a result, urban authorities demonstrate a serious absence of popular trust, lack of accountability, weak institutional capacities and an extremely poor delivery record (Halfani, 1997a).

With structural adjustment programs, the state is withdrawing and leaving behind weakened local government institutions and a dilapidated urban infrastructure (Swilling, 1997). In India, too, the troubled national economy is unlikely to leave any room on the agenda for environmental issues because the agenda is full of structural adjustments and economic recovery issues; such as the liberalization of economy and the squeezing of the public sector (Dwivedi & Khator, 1992). Stagnant economies and heavy debt burdens do not provide an appropriate economic base from which to develop ‘good governance’. Governments from the North and international agencies may promote environmental policies but there has been little progress in changing the international economic system, to permit more economic stability and prosperity among the poorer Third World nations. These economies have no alternative but to increase the exploitation of their natural resources to earn foreign exchange to meet debt repayments. Effective governance in ensuring a healthy environment for citizens is almost impossible without a stable and reasonably prosperous economy. (Hardoy et al, 1997: 21, 23.)

Despite the above hindering factors, the civil sector in Africa, for instance, demonstrates an impressive degree of resilience and capacity to flourish in a crisis situation. A number of urban centers in Africa are now largely managed through the civil sector’s institutions and systems. There is a powerful socio-political impetus associated with the renaissance of civil associations. (Halfani, 1997a.) Associations are an essential means of integration and they provide areas of freedom through which civil society affirms its existence and participates in a country’s governance. In North Africa, however, the difficulties of rising civil societies are connected with a whole series of restraints, for example, the existence of only a limited number of NGOs, the persistence of divisions in the roles of the sexes, or the repressing of independent associations, etc. (Kharoufi, 1997.)

NGOs have gradually succeeded in strengthening their influence from charity and emergency aid to national policy-making. NGOs are quite commonly viewed as central actors of civil society and vigorous for democracy and political reform if they preserve and transform their identity by exercising all sorts of pressures or controls upon state institutions. In
addition to NGOs, civil society includes residents’ associations (including those formed by squatters and by tenants), self-help housing associations and cooperatives, among others (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 1995). According to more critical views on civil society and its NGOs, it is argued that uncritical adulation has seemed to accompany most discussions on civil society. Compared to views on NGOs as a positive force in civil society, there can be found opposite arguments claiming that NGOs have also the capability to weaken it (Tvedt, 1998), which refers to opportunist actors in particular within the NGO sector. The failure of the past development approaches and the redefinition and reduction of the state’s role have caused an increasing emphasis on NGOs (see e.g. Aminuzzaman, 1998). This has “laid down a foundation for the euphoric embrace of civil society in general and of non-governmental organizations in particular as the panacea for underdevelopment and authoritarianism” (Dicklitch, 1995).

Hence, NGOs are now identified as the solution to the problem of underfunded welfare systems – whether the NGOs themselves feel they have the capacity or not. As welfare per se is not development, many NGOs find themselves having to make a choice: some do not choose development, but opt, instead, for a quasi-government welfare role. Further, there is no evidence to support the notion that civil society automatically provides an alternative to local government. A large part of NGOs may lack the capacity and influence to represent, advocate for, or effectively engage with civil society. It is observed that African NGOs, for instance, often operate under a problematic and improperly articulated ethic of altruism and voluntarism, and the ‘progressive’ and modernizing character of NGO action can sometimes create irreconcilable differences between them and other elements even within their grassroots constituency. It is also claimed that there is neither NGO engagement with Africa’s huge informal economic sector nor with the formal sector. (Ogunseye, 1997: 12-13.) Therefore, when arguing that strong civil societies and democracies are stated as basic prerequisites for good governance and successful environmental policy in Third World (e.g. Hardoy et al., 1997; Ghai & Vivian, 1995), the above aspects ought to be taken into account.

In the following sections I will bring up the core context for NGOs in this study: the new urban development paradigm of ‘good governance’. My interest is basically focused on the positive input that ENGOs could offer to urban governance processes, while on the other hand, I am looking at the problematic attached to the performances of these actors. Before elaborating the emergence of governance in urban studies’ discourses, it is important to scrutinize the central features of the NGO sector in general, i.e., those internal factors that are often considered NGO strengths and limitations. These features can also be seen as reflections of the positions of numerous urban actors whom NGOs are encountering when tackling environmental
questions. Thus, finally, critical nexuses in NGO relationships with other urban actors will be outlined.

8.2. Characteristics of NGOs

Extensive research and theoretical attention has been paid to NGOs, however, Njuguna Ng’ethe (1989: 7-14), who has studied more than 30 NGOs in the Eastern Africa, observes that in the sociology of knowledge of NGOs and the accompanying epistemology, NGOs – as themselves the principal sources of this knowledge – have tended to generate this ‘knowledge’ in a way that creates some myths about themselves. Hence, beliefs, rather than facts, have become a major part of our ‘knowledge’ of the phenomenon through time.

While some features have evolved much as beliefs, evidence can be found for arguments based on case studies. Systematic empirical investigation through NGO case studies is just a recent field of study; “the overall burden of assessment will be to match philosophical beliefs and self-image against actual achievement” (ibid: 7). Some cases have demonstrated that, for instance, particular NGOs stimulate effective local participation and set objectives that contribute to the political empowerment of marginalized groups. On the other hand, there is considerable evidence that NGOs frequently fail to live up to the expectations imposed by society and donors. (e.g. Riddel & Robinson, 1995).

In discourses on NGOs it is commonly argued that a basically positive phenomenon is followed and exploited by growing opportunistic forces which are hiding behind the so-called ‘good NGO’ façade, thus harming the reputation of ‘genuine’ NGOs. Despite the ‘articles of faith’ or beliefs, attempts to compare strengths and weaknesses within the NGO sector can be, though, a fruitful task. The most common strengths or assets of NGOs are believed to be as follows (see e.g. Brown & Korten, 1991: 65-67; Agbola, 1994; Review of the Effectiveness..., 1995: 6-7, 12-13; Blauert & Guidi, 1992: 194):
- being politically, institutionally, and financially autonomous and thus independent from governments;
- being mobilizers of local resources through community participation, i.e., mobilizing the civil society;
- being committed to shared values with the ethic of voluntarism and non-profit;
- being altruistic organizations responding to the needs of other citizens;
- reaching the marginalized, poor population;
- operating in fields where governments are unable to work;
- being innovative and flexible in problem-solving;
- fostering diversity and pluralism;
- responding quickly to situations, especially in emergency activities;
- being cost-effective (low-cost) in delivery of services;
- being committed to long-term involvement; and
- being promoters of human rights and equality.

One of the strongest assumptions on the prominent role of NGOs is that they can offer alternative solutions by bringing up ‘other’ forms of knowledge, compared to state development policies. Compared to government authorities, NGOs are believed to be more committed, flexible, innovative and cost-effective when delivering environmental services (Hardoy et al., 1997: 26). When compared to foreign actors, for instance, it is believed that NGOs operate effectively in the local political system and are aware of cultural norms that underlie the public policy process (Gamman, 1994: 179). It is also often stated that NGOs can provide an organizing force, a bridge (‘Bridging Organization’), for constituencies and local communities that are underrepresented in national decision-making. A number of suggestions about the internal characteristics of the most effective organizations have been put forward (Reilly, 1995): concentrate on a single principal task; have an enthusiastic, self-selected staff with strong leadership; have a flexible organizational style; blend social thrust with technical competence; are good listeners and responsive to clients40; are accountable to members, i.e., rank-and-file oversee the leadership, and there is direct membership participation in group decision-making; and frequently enjoy influential ‘sponsors’ or advocates in government, finance or business circles.

William Fisher (1997) points out that “perceptions of NGOs are often tied up with contested notions of what it means to ‘do good’: at stake are the very notion of the ‘good’ and the process of deciding what it is and how to pursue it”. Many assets could be interpreted in an opposite way, for instance, ‘politically independent’ can actually mean ‘powerless; ‘low cost’ can mean ‘underfinanced’ or ‘poor quality’; ‘innovative’ can simply mean ‘temporary’, etc. (Annis, 1987, in Riddell & Robinson, 1995: 39). Certain weaknesses of NGOs have been identified (see, e.g., Brown & Korten, 1991: 65-67; Agbola, 1994; Review of the Effectiveness..., 1995: 6-7, 12-13; Blauert & Guidi, 1992): institutional problems: comparatively limited financial, technical and managerial capacity; a tendency to pursue particular issues with apparent insensitivity to the broader context, thereby lacking a strategic perspective; and limited ability to scale-up successful projects to achieve regional or national impacts.

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40 The legitimacy of an NGO means that the role of the NGO is known, understood, accepted and valid. However, views on legitimacy differ between donors and community-based organizations. Their two worlds are far apart both spatially and socially, but the “development ‘practitioner’ has to straddle the two”. (Cherrett et al, 1995.) Legitimacy is not the same as power, and there is a need to ensure that the power conferred by money and other resources does not become a substitute for it. Above all, the question needs always to be asked: who has the right to speak on behalf of the poor? NGOs need to define in very clear terms who are ‘the poor’, especially in view of the feminization of poverty; women have unequal access to power, decision-making, and budgets. (May, 1995.)
In order to develop and rectify their positions and roles in societies, NGOs have to face strong criticism, for example (mainly based on the author’s 1997 fieldwork material in Egypt):

- due to growing international funding, the personnel have taken too much of a leading role, manipulated funding sources, thus becoming corrupt, or otherwise spending lavishly, and are alienated from the community and the original task;
- personnel who crave political power that is meant for the benefit of only certain persons;
- due to the lack of knowledge and interest of the personnel, the project has proved to be alien and unsustainable;
- the actual exploitation of poor people in the local micro-production systems, and treating local communities as ‘laboratories’;
- personnel who take advantage of destitute people’s situation for the spreading their own worldview; and
- elite-based activities where the lopsided power structure of society remains untouched.

Particularly NGOs’ capability to involve people participation has received much criticism and controversial assessments (see Riddel & Robinson, 1995: 39). Furthermore, it is argued that NGOs live on a project-by-project or product basis, without a clearly defined strategy – hence they have difficulties in committing themselves to medium or long-term programs (Cherrett et al, 1995; Ng’ethe, 1989: 41).

It is much agreed upon that NGO capacity building and the available staff are critical to an organization’s success. There are limitations with the staff (and also leaders), firstly, in terms of braindrain along with ‘transit employees’: it is wasteful of NGO time and resources when trained staff leaves the organization or the sector as soon as better-paid employment appears elsewhere. The high staff turnover that particularly NGOs themselves complain about appears to be an in-built limitation of this sector. It seems to be common that employees of state agencies are increasingly reappearing as NGO leaders, as generally in Africa (Ogunseye, 1997: 8) – a phenomenon which easily brings up the question of opportunism. Furthermore, the average NGO practitioner or project leader, being usually educated, middle class, and self-consciously representative of trends “in the global village”, has a self-perception as an agent of new, modern ideas and perceptions, which derive from his/her overseas education. These practitioners, who represent an (unsustainable) modernization paradigm in many instances, also receive pressure to act in a modern way from their communities. As Bolaji Ogunseye remarks (ibid.: 16, 18), for the practitioner, expectations of the community may difficult to change, if one wants to pursue ‘alternative’ ideas and lifestyles. He poses a central question: “can African NGOs demonstrate to Africa’s poor the benefits of
sustainable development through an example of their own sustainable living, work and consumption patterns?"

The issue of the nature and future of voluntarism and its philosophy is an anchor principle of the sector (ibid: 14). Three types of personnel can be found in African NGOs: the founder or chief executive implies that some African NGOs have been established out of a genuine altruistic drive, even when few financial resources have been available. In other cases, the motivation is mixed, for instance, an educated individual, a government official having attended a local or international development conference, concludes that (s)he could contribute to sustainable development through an NGO, by focusing especially on the issue addressed at the event. In addition, NGO leadership may be group-based, comprising two or more persons brought together by, e.g., Church or other religious voluntary groups. The second personnel type could be called the middle-level personnel, program and other technical staff like finance, administration and information officers. Like the founder/chief executive, these usually have a higher level of education, with a middle class orientation. Usually a small number of such staff might be motivated by an interest in the NGO mission, but the majority are straightforward employment seekers. The third level of staff comprises the support staff, secretaries, clerks, and other general service employees. With the minimal acceptable education, these persons have got employment without basic knowledge of, or particular interest in, development issues. (ibid., 1997: 14.)

The staff may be fairly committed to its tasks, however, it often tends to benegated by poor organizational structures. Usually, while the headquarter staff are well paid and have well thought out terms and conditions of service, at the field level, the staff is overworked, underqualified, and poorly equipped; there is a mixture of paid staff and volunteers; internal communication is poor, etc. In such conditions of organizational weaknesses, many NGOs want to demonstrate success by implementing as many projects as possible and as quickly as possible. (Ng’ethe, 1989: 41-42.) It is thus asserted that NGOs are rarely ‘good organizations’. However, they usually do possess one key characteristic of a good organization, namely commitment to their work – a characteristic, which more than compensates for the absence of the other features of sound organizations. (ibid.: 57.) On the other hand, given the complexity of needs, roles, and specific national situations, there is not necessarily a single ideal model of organization (Cherrett et al, 1995).

There are other problems that the NGO sector has to resolve. There is a lack of critical data on NGO performance. In development cooperation particularly, NGO work is often examined in terms of efficiency. But measuring and judging effectiveness or achievement is a far from easy task. Can there be found a correct time when an assessment should be made? Not only is the society constantly changing, but “what could be the right thing to do in one period may well turn out to be wrong in another”. (Riddell &
Moreover, the efficiency of non-profit organizations cannot be compared with efficiency in business (Gupta et al, 1998). How then to measure ‘effectiveness’ both in quantitative and qualitative ways – or is it always even appropriate? What is being measured: the result or the process? Should the effectiveness requirement apply to voluntary organizations as well? Another issue is the transparency of NGO activities. NGOs are often not accustomed to open inquiry, which may entail some limitations in assessing this feature (Cherrett et al, 1995.)

Cherrett et al. (1995) have distinguished professionally-led organizations from community-based organizations, but they emphasize that both types are necessary and complementary elements to development. The authors have noted quite fittingly some of these organizations’ comparative characteristics, which are useful tools in NGO analyses (see Table 5), while keeping in mind that these characteristics vary greatly according to the diversity within the NGO sector.

Table 5. Comparative characteristics of CBOs/GROs and professional NGOs (modified from Cherrett et al, 1995).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CBOs/grassroots organizations</th>
<th>Professional NGOs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community-based organizations</td>
<td>Professional organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process-focused organizations</td>
<td>Product focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building blocks of civil society</td>
<td>Operational structures of civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local culture</td>
<td>International culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Untrained</td>
<td>Highly trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor, marginalized</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>Non-representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requiring long-term institutional support</td>
<td>Short-term project execution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field-based</td>
<td>HQ-based</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core funding</td>
<td>Project funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest-focused</td>
<td>Issue-focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-base policy makers</td>
<td>Board/Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsive to members source</td>
<td>Policy makers responsive to funding source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of internal funding</td>
<td>External funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key personnel are activists</td>
<td>Key personnel are professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devolved decision-making</td>
<td>Centralized decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological in practice</td>
<td>Ideological in theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single constituencies</td>
<td>Multiple constituencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy based on successful struggle</td>
<td>Legitimacy based on negotiating a product with a funder, and generating a result.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on NGOs’ role in societies, I divide them hereafter into three broad categories: reformist, reflective and nominal (Myllylä, 1998a). The first group pursues societal reforms, while the second group merely reacts to problems. The third group’s interest is in benefiting a very limited number of constituency, thus their role is nominal, if not harmful, to society, and thereby it is less interesting in the present study. In the end of Chapter IV I seek to further develop some subgroups for these categories, based on both literature and fieldwork findings from case studies.

Having analyzed the internal characteristics of the NGO sector, in the following NGOs will be located in a wider framework of urban governance: first, how various approaches to new governance structures locate NGOs within it, and second, what kind of positions NGOs face when encountering other actors, particularly when striving to improve or otherwise affect the state of the urban environment. I will also present examples of various attempts to implement new governance modes on the practical level.

8.3. NEW URBAN GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Governance can be understood as an important signal of a new shift in thinking. The concept of urban management has remained vague and it has entailed a state-centered approach to urban development. The notion of governance is an attempt to overcome these limitations by focusing on the interactions among various forces in society: governance incorporates elements that are often considered to be outside the public policy processes. (McCarney, et al., 1995.) The discussion of urban problems is moving away from discussing ‘what should be done’ to considering what kind of governance structure is needed in order to carry out necessary changes in society. There is pressure for greater appreciation particularly of the role of individuals, households, neighborhoods and people’s organizations in building and managing their cities. (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 1996.) While governance may not appear as a new concept to some political scientists and others, for the development community it signifies an important shift in thinking in incorporating civil society into urban governance, and by reconsidering the locus of power between formal and informal actors. Thus recent academic debate and practical experience suggest the emergence of a new paradigm of urban development in the Third World, focusing around the concepts of partnerships and networking. Although the concept of governance is still lacking more fitting conceptualizations, it fosters a new way of thinking about development and encourages integrating the notion of governance itself into urban development. (Harrison, 1995; McCarney et al, 1995.) The governance paradigm has changed the development debate in the
context of the new world order. Whereas in the 1960s the debate rested on the assumption that socio-economic modernization was a precondition for political democracy, in the 1990s it was asserted that political democracy is a precondition for successful development. The dynamic of a ‘civic public realm’ in Africa, the sphere of public and political life that is not reducible to the state/public sector because the state cannot be considered the only actor in the formulation and setting of public policy. (Swilling, 1997; Hyden, 1992.)

The growing literature on governance is attempting to capture the shift in thinking that is taking place across the globe regarding the nature of the state and its relationship with society. The shift from a noun (government) to a verb (governance), from structure to process, from things to relations, from independence to inter-dependence, from linearity to feedback loops, from rational structuration to patterns of chaos, is influenced by the combined universal disillusionement with the nature of the state and the impact of the post-modern imagination that has abandoned the myth of human self-unification and the vision of an utopian end-state. (Swilling, 1997.)

The governance concept could improve the understanding of urban development in two related ways. On the theoretical level, governance adds the dimension of legitimacy to urban policy-making, and on the methodological level, governance is more dynamic, since it is a relational concept. Therefore, governance is capable of incorporating and analyzing dynamics and processes on the informal as well as the formal level. (McCarney et al, 1995.)

Moreover, the governance concept has been transformed into ‘good governance’, around which the discussions in Third World cities have been strengthening particularly from the 1990s, due to pressure from international development agencies. In fact, it was the World Bank’s issue with Sub-Saharan Africa in the end of 1980s that brought up the term governance into the mainstream development debate – although the Bank resisted dealing with problems of governance, the solution it followed, lay in numerous programs aimed at ‘good governance’ (Swilling, 1997).

Currently there is a scarce, though increasing literature focusing on urban governance especially from environmental viewpoint (e.g. Stren, 2000, pers.comm.). Here I base my analysis mainly on the writings of Mark Swilling (1997; et al., 1999), Johan Post (1997), Patricia McCarney et al. (1995), Koffie Attahi (1997), Jeb Brugmann (1994), Mohamed Halfani (1997a; 1997b), Tade Akin Aina, et al. (1994), Leonard Duhl (1993), Goran Hyden (1992), Diana Mitlin and David Satterthwaite (1996), Jorge Hardoy, et al. (1997), and Anders Sjögren (1998). I elaborate new urban governance structure as a three-dimensional approach, as fostering: 1) a new relational character of the state; 2) diversity, complexity and dynamic patterns; 3) collaboration and coordination of stakeholders. Together these could be named (good) governance constituents, which include at least two.
subcomponents, namely discourses concerning actors on the one hand, and principles on the other.

After introducing and analyzing these constituents through their central concepts in urban governance, I will bring the subject matter more closely to a practical level in two ways. I will trace and problematize certain nexuses of both collaboration and confrontation in the case of NGOs and their relations to various urban actors, and then demonstrate these nexuses through empirical case studies when analyzing ENGO practices in Chapter IV.

A new relational character of the state
The new urban governance approach could be considered an improvement on previous conceptualizations of urban development in the Third World, because it acknowledges the vital importance of a multidisciplinary approach, requiring interventions in multiple levels: bridging the gap among various fields, such as physical planning, economic planning and urban administration, and working with a comprehensive view of the future development of a city. (Post, 1997; Attahi, 1997; Halfani 1997b.) However, Post (1997) urges for a realistic stance to the approach: laudable though its main principles may be, there are many pitfalls and dilemmas linked to its ideological underpinnings and several inherent contradictions embedded in the approach. For instance, he argues that its market-led development and economic determinism (e.g., by the World Bank) contest the central concept of the approach, its multidisciplinary characteristics.

Swilling (1997), who analyzes urban governance in regard to local government, notes that international development agencies have equated good governance with the classic liberal democratic model, i.e., concentrating on the nature of state and government. Further, governance is treated as an ideological device “to use to mask the imposition of capitalist market policies (via structural adjustment) on highly unequal societies”, which has lead to increased political conflict and authoritarianism rather than democratic governance.

Rather in the same vein, Post (1997) questions the uncritical embracing of the salutary effects of privatization, which is a major ingredient of structural adjustment programs and also central to urban management. He regards that when considering decentralization or democratization inherently positive, the salutation of privatization has been likewise naïve. First, he doubts that the private sector will rise to the challenge, and also, experiences with the privatization of public services can be seen as ambivalent in many instances; many projects have been ruined due to the failure of private contractors to be equipped to carry out their jobs, or because they were merely opportunistic actors. Second, the private sector is often underdeveloped, much due to the expansionist, authoritarian and interventionist nature of the state that has considerably challenged the development process and has prevented a vibrant private sector from emerging. Third, purely private activity is restricted to small-scale and
mainly informal operations undertaken primarily for survival. Fourth, a complex web of mutually beneficial relations has been established between the state on the one hand and private enterprises on the other. The ‘trickle down’ effects have failed to reach the poorest, and the distributional effects of structural adjustment programs have not been realized as anticipated.

Also, there is tension between market-led development and one of the cornerstones of the approach, decentralization (ibid.) It can be defined as involving shifting patterns of authority, control and operation to the communities at the lower administrative levels, and it implies a re-arrangement of bureaucratic systems of resource control, authority delineation and functional allocation (MacGregor, 1995). In contrast, the implementation of market-led development requires the strengthening of regulation and control. Post criticizes the ‘fashionable belief’ in good governance by quoting Leftwich (1994) “scornfully remarking who could possibly be against good governance, at least in its limited administrative sense? Objections, of course, do not relate to the plea for a public service that is efficient and honest, accountable and open and which is supported by a legal framework that is clear and guarantees impartiality.

The third problematic point could be the uncritical belief in the superiority of democracy. Post claims that in Africa, for instance, democratic relations are fragile, and the dangers of authoritarian reversal are very real, and thereby, democratization does not necessarily lead to more accountable and responsive government, but on the contrary, it can foster political instability and social conflict. In addition, local democracies entail several problems, which relate directly to prospects for improved urban management. Also William M. Lafferty and James Meadowcroft (1996) remark that few analysts have attempted to problematize the general nature of the democracy/environment interaction, that is, it is generally assumed that “something of a ‘natural’ congruence between democratic decision procedures and sound substantive environmental policy outcomes. Nevertheless, Hardoy et al. (1997: 24, 26, 209) and Mitlin and Satterthwaite (1995), among others, evince that democracy is an important prerequisite for a new urban agenda in terms of tackling environmental questions. The

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41 To cite an example, there is often a contrast between actual development spending and priorities of the public, which highlights the government’s lack of responsiveness (Crook, 1994, quoted in Post, 1997). There are many cases showing that whereas the people opted for health facilities, water and sanitation, as well as electricity, the district assemblies spent most of their budgets on centrally determined policy issues, such as education, or on the costs of the decentralization reform through accommodating government staff, etc.: the appointed officials exercised great influence on local decision-making as well as action, and the government-appointed district secretary was very powerful, which meant that the latter’s loyalty did not primarily rest with the local people. Furthermore, the relationship between elected representatives, mainly community leaders or activists, and the general public was under severe strain, and the community had high expectations of the representatives. The local government system has helped to turn the assemblies into “battlegrounds for special pleading, rather than arenas for general policy making”. (Post, 1997.)
effective exercise of democratic structures is perceived as necessary to control state corruption and mismanagement. Hence, the long-term solution to any city’s environmental problems depends on the development within that city of a competent, representative local government. The last few years have brought some signs that actually a new urban environmental agenda is emerging. Nevertheless, the authors assert that it appears weak and it is not supported by significant initiatives to relieve economic stagnation and debt burdens, which hardly promotes stable, competent and democratic governance. Furthermore, both democracy and human rights are acknowledged to be an integral part of the new development paradigm in general. The quality of governance affects the system of urban services and politics, and includes re-definition of the roles of the various groups involved. Also Attahi (1997) points out that the new local citizenship does not merely imply duties, it also confers rights.

There can be found other points of caution. For instance, popular participation promotion may come into conflict with the desire to make the urban administration more decisive and effective, and conflicting interests may obstruct planning and decision-making. Popular participation is defined (Pearse and Stiefel 1979, in Reilly, 1995) as “the organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations on the part of groups and movements hitherto excluded from such control”. During the 1980s, studies of political participation and citizenship had a close relationship with the emergence of social movements, which have been crucial for democratic reforms. Effective governance basically requires an urban population, which is aware of its civic rights and duties, and has the collective capacity to determine the destiny of its local context and the means of influence. Participation does not simply refer to the act of voting. There are many different levels, both formal and informal mechanisms that can be integrated into the decision-making process. So who participates in decision-making and how this participation takes place, are good indicators of the level of democracy in local governments particularly. (McCarney et al, 1995.) Participation can be seen as a double-edged sword, for on the one side, it can bring about increased access to, and control over, vital resources and decision-making processes by local people, cutting away bureaucratic and institutional constraints as it proceeds, while on the other, it can be used by governments and donors to justify and reinforce inequitable social relations of power (Mitlin & Thompson, 1995). Involvement of the public in decision-making or development initiatives happens through NGOs, CBOs and other citizen groups. There are some restrictions, though, when participatory development emphasizes experience and local,
indigenous practice. In countries which were subject to colonialization, indigenous knowledge has been destroyed or devalued. In addition, meaningful participation assumes communication, coordination and mutual trust between the public and private sectors; however, grassroots involvement has been rare in authoritarian structures. Thus, governance entails numerous controversial viewpoints and ideologies; its very basic ideas appear to be somewhat incompatible. The relative weight attached to each of the principles is a matter of political choice. (Cherrett et al, 1995; Post, 1997.)

The question of legitimacy is treated as one of central features of good governance, in which some degree of legitimacy in the relationship between civil society and the state is expected. (McCarney et al, 1995; Hyden, 1992). Governance is simultaneously used as an analytical framework for the study of legitimate politics, the description of the same legitimate politics, and a desirable value. It is hence alternately an explanatory tool and an object to be explained. (Sjögren, 1998: 20-21; 24-26.) Credibility, of both politicians and governing institutions, is closely connected to the idea of legitimacy. Credibility implies increasing legitimacy of the public domain through the inclusion of new stakeholders, particularly groups and individuals in civil society, in which they organize into new associational formations, and all together, constitute a new actor in urban management. Their importance emerges especially in fields in which formal state structures are weak and unable to provide basic services. (McCarney et al, 1995.)

Civil society can be interpreted more widely, to encompass not just the urban poor and NGOs and other local organizations, but also other new actors whose intentions in urban development go beyond merely gaining access to urban services – then also the broader issue of the economic development of the city has to be considered. The focal point is that local associations are going to play an important part. (ibid., 1995.) Hence democratic governance implies the empowerment of civil society formations so that they can participate in decision-making and policy formulation (Swilling, 1997). In other words, it is about a society in which power is (re)claimed by citizens and community organizations from governments and other powerful actors:

[urban communities] are treated neither as subjects nor as objects of management. Their interests, institutions and resources are organic components of governance. Urban residents in Africa, Asia and Latin America have evolved … from being passive subjects of their ruling states into more organized communities who have managed to expand their social and economic space. (McCarney et al., 1995.)

One of the most important aspects of this change is the move from discussing ‘what poor people need’ to ‘what decision-making powers, access to resources and political influence should low-income people have to allow them to ensure that their needs are met, their rights respected and their priorities addressed’. (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 1996.)
There is a need to attune urban policies better to the livelihood strategies of the poor and powerless. The aim should be to genuinely involve people in preparing plans, making decisions and evaluating performances. This is an ethical choice, but at the same time a pragmatic one because in the future people will probably have to rely even more heavily on their own strength. (Post, 1997.)

In order to find paths toward improvement in legitimacy and credibility we have to enter further the ‘good governance rhetoric’, namely the principles of reciprocity, degree of trust; accountability; transparency; responsiveness; popular participation; empowerment of community groups, etc. It is very obvious that we are in need of clear definitions of these building blocks of the new urban governance approach, and in the following they are cursorily introduced.

In public actions and decisions, responsive and transparent public authorities are urged (e.g. McCarney et al, 1995; Attahi, 1997). The degree of accountability refers to the situation whether the governors can be held accountable by the governed via institutionalized procedures and processes. It is about the extent of accountability and the governing capacities of organizations (state and civil society), about the nature, purpose and rules of socio-political interaction and practices. The nature of authority is how political leaders make policies and implement them in a way that resolves the problems of ordinary citizens and promotes the legitimacy of the public realm. (see WRI, et al., 1996: 126.) Hence, accountability means having to explain to a third party what is being done and why: political accountability (political leadership is subject to credible electoral processes); legal accountability (requires an objective and reliable judicial system, trustworthy law enforcement agencies and efficient court administrations); and bureaucratic accountability (requires the effective disclosure of information by public agencies and officials in their relations with the public; transparency in operations, whereby all public accounts and audit reports are available for public scrutiny). (McCarney et al, 1995). Reciprocity or mutuality exists if associations and parties are allowed to form, defend and promote stakeholder interests via political competition, pressure, negotiations and conflict resolution (ibid). In addition, a certain degree of trust or confidence should exist between the authorities and the organizations of civil society (Attahi, 1997).

In new urban governance, authorities are to recognize new actors and their knowledge, to adapt new modes of policy-making, planning, administration and implementation, in which increasing popular ‘interventions’ will take place. One way to carry out a more open approach to urban environmental reforms through policy implementation – which integrates environmental protection with the development process – is to have the stakeholders participating in a collaborative dialogue using

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43 Globalization could be seen as a positive process because it opens up the transparency of the authorities’ actions to people (Stuti Lall, 1998, pers.comm.).
negotiation processes (see Gamman, 1994: 153-163). Figure 5. presents the main principles as well as main actors or stakeholders in urban environmental issues, based on empirical material on Cairo and Delhi.

**Figure 5. The principles and actors in urban governance.**

These urban actors in environment-related issues are very similar to other large cities in the world. For instance in Lagos, major actors in urban management and planning are (Aina et al, 1994): a) the government: federal, state and local; b) the organized private sector (OPS) which builds and manages large estates; c) professionals and professional bodies; d) communities and community groups, and e) non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The government is the most strategic and influential for it has control over the making and implementation of policies and laws, it has the power of resource allocation (finance, basic services, land) and it has a decisive role as an active participant in environmental issues. The OPS is a major producer and investor, builder, contractor and implementer of
government projects. Communities work in some cases with NGOs, however, they face problems, which they try to solve within the community: waste disposal, water supply, flooding, etc.

Urban growth is a product of large-scale projects such as subway lines, sewerage and water systems, urban renewal and road networks. Thus the sophisticated and complex nature of technologies involved in such projects may act as a barrier (or are consciously used as a barrier) to participation in decision-making by local residents, or even local governments. (McCarney et al, 1995.) The present way of transforming environmental questions into formulated problems and goals should, perhaps, be questioned at its very core. The overwhelming primary concentration on pollution and its effects, and alternative technologies reveals a somewhat artefact-oriented attitude among the formulaters. Bodil Jönsson (1998) asks, "what if 'experts' could formulate environmental goals in terms of human knowledge and behavior at the individual level?" Technical considerations such as modes of service delivery, cost financing, technological choice, planning techniques, or organizational designs, etc. are a significant part of urban governance. Thus the governance perspective also investigates the manner in which communities relate with technological processes. (McCarney et al, 1995; cf. Onibokun, 1997: 96-98.) Also Domicelj (1996) argues that there are two requirements significant for cities to become more compatible with the ecological systems on which they rely: the strategic application of scientific knowledge and the cooperation of urban communities, whether formal or informal.

An example of popular participation in the city can be seen in the Philippines: Manila and its air pollution mitigation effort, which was launched by ENGOs. Since jeepney transportation is one of the main causes of smoke in city, the drivers and operators were given a chance to present their views in public meetings, in which it became evident that they could not afford to replace the old engines with new ones due to rising costs, nor change their employment. The gradual phase-out of vehicles with old engines was then a more acceptable and rational course of action rather than a complete ban of jeepneys by the authorities. Further, this type of participation could be replicated in other sectors, for instance, in garbage collection, or, in the use of resources such as rivers. (Jimenez & Velasquez, 1989.)

Diversity, complexity and dynamic integrated patterns

Complexities and relational dynamics inherent in the governance and development of Third World cities have not been the central focus of the dominant approaches in urban development (Swilling et al, 1999). The first necessity here is to recognize the whole array of interconnected urban environmental questions, their relations to society and the deficiencies in governance structures in responding to them. The following features attached to governance are most relevant in regard to megacities (e.g.
Kooiman, 1993: 2; King & Schneider, 1994: 139-141): societal environments with great instabilities, imbalances, interdependence, as well as a diversity and complexity of problems; the rapid speed of changes (economic, technical, demographic etc.); inadequacy of the governments’ responses to the problems; the breaking down of traditional political, administrative and institutional structures; an increase in the number of actors in the systems; and coordination of functions of the social, political and economic actors, which is regarded as necessary in order to guide, govern and direct the different sectors in society. In a megacity context the multifaceted urban environmental questions demand collaboration between different levels and sectors, in order to understand and find solutions to, for instance, the synergetic and unexpected effects between various environmental problems; their emergence within the social and political entailments, i.e., development-environment trade-offs; and the fact that environmental problems often exceed administrative and geographical jurisdictions.

By the same token, Duhl (1993), who introduces the concept of healthy cities, argues that our inability to develop urban governance systems which could respond to the diversity and complexity evident in all cities helps to explain why authorities have proved to be so ineffective at addressing urban problems, and why cities are ungovernable. He poses several appropriate questions: how do we move away from current patterns of governance that are locked into old perceptions of problems? And consequently: How do we move towards an understanding of the systemic and ecological complexity of the current urban world? What needs to be done and by whom? Within local authorities, bureaucrats are preoccupied with their specific area of competence and have not been able to encourage multiple solutions to the multiple problems besetting diverse urban populations. When urban problems are conceived in fragmented ways, it is impossible to see the complex interrelated forces impacting urban reality – therefore, it could be argued that the city ought to be seen as an ecological whole. The new approach stresses the importance of dynamics of urban development and also acknowledges the uncertainty that stems from unexpected, sudden changes in the societal systems or from unexpected side effects of plans (Post, 1997; see also Ross et al., 2000).

Also Miranda and Hordijk (1998) argue that urban environmental governance requires an integrated vision of the city as well as its rural surroundings. They argue that much of the urban work has promoted only the poorest part of the city, however, by doing so, it has obscured the need to manage the city as one entity. It also needs to “avoid competing conceptual foci” (e.g. “Habitat II versus Agenda 21”) but instead, needs to construct new focal points from existing facts and from reality – each city has its own characteristics and capacities. In addition, it is critical how much information is shared between the actors in a city on the one hand, and between the cities on the other.
In addition, more attention should be placed on a multiplicity of perceptions (or knowledges), analyses and answers, to address the plurality of problems facing the cities (ibid.). Thereby it is worthwhile considering the meaning of knowledge for urban governance in terms of its ideological underpinnings. The episteme, i.e., the way in which we order the real and our knowing of it, usually remains unexamined (Inayatullah, 1990). ‘Impersonal’ and instrumental forms (‘expert-based, universal and objective’) of knowledge are considered to spur environmental degradation (e.g. Banuri, 1990a). It is quite widely argued that the importation of Western practices and technology being ambivalently applied in the Third World are not solutions to the challenges of a development crisis. There is a lack of adaptation of indigenous traditions of governance and management. (Brugmann, 1994.) Considering ‘alternative’ modes of knowledge, a combination is urged – a new relationship between the impersonal and personal (“people’s experiences or life-world based, indigenous”) knowledge; one which is non-exclusive, non-hierarchical, and cultural/context-sensitive. Through the combination of various types of knowledge systems, ‘the real can become discursive’ and a range of alternative futures, images, may emerge, instead of one. (Banuri 1990a; Inayatullah, 1990.) Yet, it is very rarely outspokenly suggested, how this goal could be achieved on a practical level. However, local level knowledge is utmost important in particular when there are no established ‘knowledge systems’ in large cities. Women’s knowledge in environmental resource management ought to be emphasized especially.

Duhl (see also Meier, 1993) addresses the notion of systems orientation, which recognizes the interconnectedness of all people and institutions, both public and private within the city, and to recognize the city in a global world: the city can only be viewed as a complex set of ever-changing systems. Even if we focus upon a particular issue such as housing or health, we must look at the interconnections with other areas in society and ecology since in the urban condition, one problem often leads directly to another. Hence there are no separate, neatly definable, easily solved problem areas. He gives an example of a transportation problem: since there is no such thing as transportation that is out of context, it is interesting to see how different cities deal with transportation problems. For instance, like all other cities, urban management in Calcutta has been curative, reactive or ad hoc in nature. However, Samiul Hasan and M. Adil Khan (1998) have found that Calcutta Metropolitan authorities have made an effort to adopt a more holistic and proactive approach since the 1980s. This has included rural land tenancy and local government reforms (in partnership with the West Bengal government), improvements in the capacity of transportation within the megopolitan area, and bustee upgrading programs. Instead of merely concentrating on service delivery to slums, the government has encouraged more rural opportunities in order to abate migration into the city, e.g., by cutting inequalities in access to rural land. In addition, by building new
Collaboration and coordination of stakeholders
Post (1997) says that the first attribute of this new urban management approach is the awareness of the importance of the ‘development support system’: the whole structure of institutions; rules; working methods; and attitudes – all of which must be arranged to the daunting tasks of urban development. Policies to foster community participation, for instance, can only be successfully implemented if various city authorities believe in it and are organizationally and materially equipped to work accordingly. Secondly, the approach is holistic or integral because it strives to break with the existing segregation within urban policy and the uncoordinated efforts of different city authorities. Thirdly, despite it stands for a broad vision, it does not attempt to deliver conventional comprehensive plans; on the contrary, its style is strategic, aiming at providing a city-wide frame of reference that gives guidance to concrete action (ibid.).

Considering urban governance at the city level – still merely implying various theoretical principles with few exceptions in practice – after identification of needs among the relevant stakeholders and interest groups, functional allocation is necessary among urban actors as well as coordination of the growing multiplicity of jurisdictions. For instance, service problems are increasingly arising, not from a lack of institutional capacity, but very often from the lack of an accepted institution to play a strategic or coordinating role (Brugmann, 1994). It is proposed that the new urban management approach ought to create conditions, in which the private sector takes initiative, while the government primarily coordinates and facilitates – a mission which would require rather profound policy reforms (Post, 1997). The state has a clear role to play, particularly by providing a proper framework for sustainable development, by reducing externalities and by fostering the fair distribution of wealth. Top priority could also be given – not to the entire administrative system – but rather, to the empowering of key departments, such as the planning office or the solid waste department. (ibid.)

Like Duhl, Brugmann (1994) favors a systemic approach, added to institutional reform:

The challenges of comprehensive, system-sensitive planning; of partnership-based service strategies; of inter-institutional negotiation and facilitation; of fractured institutional mandates; of conflicting or competing jurisdictions; and of comprehensive assessment and evaluation – they all demand institutional reform. Without such reform, comprehensive planning efforts will be academic exercises and existing institutions will continue to apply increasingly dysfunctional, incremental strategies to systemic problems. Water will continue to be supplied to newly settled areas, even if these areas do not have infrastructure for drainage and waste water removal. Sewerage will be extended, even if treatment facilities or
rivers are beyond absorptive capacity, and such infrastructure in effect destroys local water supplies.

In this kind of an operating environment, old sectoral role distinctions are likely to lose relevance: new **inter-institutional collaboration** will require changes both in internal procedures as well as in the interfaces between institutions of different sectors. Aina et al. (1994) argue that there is a need for a review and reform of institutional operations, their structure, functions and responsibility. Policies and legislation also require quick, effective and self-sustaining review mechanisms, which they think is perhaps the most difficult part considering the role of vested interests in politics, government, business and communities. As the above examples demonstrate, strategies based on a *sustainable system* of development and maintenance are usually interdependent, for instance, implementation of a housing strategy will require careful coordination with transportation, sanitation, water resource and energy supply strategies. Thus sustainable service strategies will need to be integrated into comprehensive development schemes, which in turn, have their own complexities of institutional collaboration. Services which rely upon interdependent systems are currently managed by multiple and sometimes duplicative parastatal, metropolitan and local agencies. A particular service will increasingly be the product of a dynamic partnership, rather than being delivered by distinct institutions. It is a necessity that new elements will emerge – such as grassroots campaigns, multisector negotiations, incentive systems, etc. – in order to fill the gaps left in the institutional fabric of formal actors. A wide variety of non-governmental or community-based actors take on increasing importance in the delivery and distribution of services (Brugmann, 1994) However, it could also be criticized that this ‘gap-filling’ task should not, perhaps, remain the main task of the civil society.

Few examples can be found of practical attempts to foster new urban governance structures in the city or at the national level, in which a great variety of actors were involved in plans targeting a holistic and integrated approach to urban environmental development, including large cities. To illustrate, the **Healthy Cities Project** (HCP) of the World Health Organization (WHO) aims at improving the state of people’s health both in European and Third World cities. In Bangkok, for example, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) identified three districts to start a HCP with the objectives of mobilizing participation and networks between government and private sectors and improving health through upgrading living conditions. In the project chart, the project committee comprising the BMA governor together with the Department of Community Development was located in the core, while the various departments of BMA (e.g. departments of education; policy and planning; traffic and transportation; drainage and sewerage, etc.) were located in the next ring. The outer circle consisted of other organizations and actors interested in the project, such as
NGOs, hospitals, commercial banks, UNICEF and even the Healthy Cities Movement in other countries. One of the intersectoral activities was established around the theme of a ‘healthy and safe workplace’ program, in which, e.g., NGOs were supported and trained to undertake worker education in small-scale industries. Among the constraints the project faced was limited funding. (Harpham & Werna, 1996.)

Another HCP was initiated in the second largest city of Bangladesh, Chittagong. Though not (yet) a megacity, but rather a metropolis of three to four million people, its rapid urban growth has also been accompanied by a multitude of environment-related health problems. The project was formed by seven sectoral task forces, encompassing the selected major fields in urban development in the city, namely: slum improvement; literacy and unemployment; water and sanitation; environmental protection; drainage and sewerage; and primary health care. The project involved a wide range of actors: a coordination council (or steering committee) was formed by the main organizations from all sectors (the public, voluntary, and private sectors, and international agencies) and had the final say in any policy or action; each sectoral task force comprised all the actors (including NGOs as well as CBOs with their local informal leaders) involved in the specific field; and each zonal task force was responsible for the plans and actions in a specific geographical area of the city. The project, hence, was constituted by all relevant social actors. Furthermore, despite some overlapping between sectoral and zonal task forces, integrating the plans of both groups the overall plan of HCP could be formulated. (ibid.)

In the face of a multitude of urban problems and limited resources, prioritization of environment-related concerns is a difficult but necessary task. Obviously, priorities cannot be the same for the different social actors in an urban context. It is argued that priorities ought to be seen in relation to social costs and the extent to which the greatest number of people is significantly affected. The sustainable development principles of equity, human needs and ecological integrity can provide some guidance; thereby the major priority has to do with the provision of the most basic services, which is in the core of the brown agenda. There is a need to study the processes and actors responsible for urban environmental degradation and their different levels of responsibility, as well as the need to institute effective penalties and public education campaigns (noting that the poor are often most affected due to various law enforcements). In this regard the different organizations of the major actors in an urban setting and the media must become involved. (Aina et al, 1994.) In addition, the studies on environmental perceptions at the neighborhood level, as introduced in the previous chapter, should also give direction on setting priorities.

The realism in urban planning and development entails an incrementalist approach. Dealing with conflict situations by fragmenting power and decision-making into smaller local spaces (McCarney et al, 1995). Decentralization could mean an increase in the powers and functions of local
governments such as subdivisions of large cities. Douglass (1992) argues that two central obstacles arise from these characteristics: a) citizen-state ‘partnerships’ are virtually impossible to establish because of the spatial, social and economic distance between the holders of power and communities, and b) political power has a spatial dimension, and the continued centralization of power in a single city has been one of many sources for provocation for popular protests, e.g., in Asia that represent the long-denied desire to make governments accountable to the citizenry. From an environmental point of view resource management could require administration by a small group of people familiar with the area and with each other, who are united by historical and social bonds (Brokensha & Riley 1989 in Douglass, 1992.). Since such an approach may not be pursued under highly centralized political regimes, Douglass suggests the local level as the favored locus for state-citizen partnerships. Duhl (1993) argues that what is required for a healthy city is a ‘constitution’, or set of rules by which diverse people can govern themselves. However, he notices that the need for such people participation must become part of the ‘constitutional law’, which governs urban life. He ends with the statement that such control can no longer be a central value in governance, but rather, in decentralized communities, there is a need to use communal resources to sponsor, encourage and support people in the local community to develop their own solutions adapted to their economic needs (see also Miranda & Hordijk, 1998; Meier, 1993). Governance can be regarded as a system which will give space for the growth of civil society:

\[\text{[t]hrough legal instruments, social and economic infrastructure, resource assistance and the devolution of power and authority … (ensuring that) the civil society is able to complement the state as well as to act as a countervailing force when the interests of the civil society are not catered for. Willingness to pay taxes, respect for laws and regulations, willingness to participate in civic bodies, as well as the formation of pressure groups are all part of this relationship. (McCarney et al, 1995.)}\]

So it is not only question of what the government should do, but that also city residents are committed to change and have the responsibility to care for their livelihoods.

The private sector institutions and NGOs are among the most prominent candidates for partnership arrangements with local authorities (e.g. Post, 1997). Although these actors are usually not fully representative nor internally democratic, their involvement in urban policies could be seen as a first step in the direction of more meaningful popular participation. Hardoy et al. (1997: 209-210) also notice that the share of local NGOs is becoming ever more important in the search for better urban governance. It has been suggested that “if local organizations and community-based approaches are strengthened, by channelling funds to them and by increasing their control over development initiatives, so too will be civil society as a whole …
participatory development is directly linked to state accountability, empowerment of local groups, and transparency in decision-making”. (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 1995.)

The appropriate role considered particularly for the NGO sector in urban development depends on the critical stance one takes toward dominant development paradigms in the Third World. There can basically be found two main views: the first regards contemporary development processes as flawed but basically positive and NGOs provide a means to mitigate some of the weaknesses in the development process. The second finds both the dominant development paradigm and the implementation of it fundamentally flawed. A rather common argument is that NGOs are valuable in so far as they are a potential source of alternative development discourses and practices. Critics from each viewpoint may promote NGOs for their ability to facilitate, for example, participation and empowerment, but the meanings attached to these terms differ. The representatives of the first view see NGOs as vehicles for challenges to and transformations of power, and value NGOs for their ability to politicize issues that were not formerly politicized. The latter are afraid that NGOs are at risk of becoming the new ‘technical’ solutions to development ‘problems’. (Fisher, 1997.)

Ogunseye (1997: 13) asserts reasonably that in order to fulfill expectations of an active NGO role in strengthening civil societies, NGOs need to articulate and implement strategies for their own self-development as a sector, and to define more clearly the nature of their actual and potential collaboration with all important actors. Key questions include, for instance, what aspects of development is the state positioned to undertake alone? What aspects of sustainable development are best undertaken in collaboration between the state and other actors? What development roles can best be left to the private business sector? Thus it can be argued that NGOs should better understand and take advantage of the possibilities on different levels and in different roles in development (ibid.)

Considering harsh realities in many Third World countries, it is evident that ventures to pursue more sound urban governance structures face insurmountable obstacles; reformers have to cope with prevailing ‘governance failure’ issues and authoritarian and highly centralized political regimes; patronage, clientelism, and corruption. Official urban planning has been a technical rather than a political process. In spite of waves of democratization, the general public has remained rather sceptical and therefore, the prospects for successful urban management do not appear quite promising at the moment – after all, new urban governance is based on the idea that urban development can come about only through collective efforts between public and private agents. (Post, 1997; Kharoufi, 1997.) Thus, concerning the North African situation, for instance, Kharoufi (1997) skeptically declares that “the balance-sheet of governance of urban areas in North Africa is one of the great disillusionments”.
Yet, despite this most difficult societal point of departure, which currently exposes the new governance approach merely as a theoretical construction, there are transpiring manifold efforts to initiate and implement new modes of urban governance, whether on a smaller or larger scale. This implies that each of various urban actors or stakeholders have to (re)invent their own role and position in the complex web of actors and tasks. In this process, variegated interests, expectations and goals, have to go through crucial relational nexuses – including those of both enabling and hampering situations – with other interest groups. The abundance of these more or less problematic situations can be well elaborated when looking at possible partnerships just between two groups of stakeholders; NGOs and other urban actors – naturally, real life situations are much more complex. Again, issues brought up of these relations in the next section not only apply to urban ENGOs but the NGO sector in general, however, I have emphasized the urban aspect by giving brief examples of case studies from different cities.

### 8.4. UNEASY PARTNERSHIPS

Since NGOs do not work in a vacuum, but always in relation to a multitude of actors with political, economic and social vested interests that largely determine the success or impact of NGOs, what are those critical nexuses among actors working in urban environmental setting?

**NGOs and central governments**

Actions taken by home governments towards NGOs have been simultaneously both encouraging and limiting. The political opportunity structures determine the position of the NGO sector as a whole in each country. The public space ‘provided’ by governments may be offered more or less willingly, often pressured by external actors, such as international development agencies or international NGOs, INGOs (Fisher, 1997). Four patterns can be identified in the role of NGOs as intermediary actors between state agencies and local communities (Virtanen, 1991): collaboration (which denotes active participation in and support for state-run or state authorized institutions); compliance (which represents the most elementary level of social control; in extreme cases compliance with state rules is based only on the use or threat of use of force); passive resistance (which is manifested in non-cooperation with the intentions and actions of state institutions); and active resistance, which can be defined as any active measures taken against state authorized institutions.

Third World NGOs are often regarded not as spontaneous grassroots organizations, but as ‘elite brokers and innovators’, because they have links to the power centers as well as to the grassroots (Lindberg & Sverrisson, 1995: 12). Whilst a large part of urban NGOs have a lobbyist in the political system, likewise the political world sometimes seeks expression through
A CALL FOR CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS INTO CITY GOVERNANCE

A few dilemmas arise in NGOs’ relations to home governments. The ‘shrinking state’ dilemma is formed around the nexus when increasing responsibility is given to NGOs in public sector issues, for instance, in urban service provision. If the multiple tasks of the government are laid on the shoulders of NGOs, it may have some detrimental social effects, due to the internal weaknesses of the sector. For instance, the question of responsibility for the effectiveness of interventions will come up instantly. This is sometimes referred to as ‘NGOism’: due to a lack of real expertise, the organizations are not able to carry out these tasks well, thus causing a trap in which they operate against the initial goal (Gligo, 1995: 71; also Reilly, 1995). Who is then responsible for ensuring the effectiveness and appropriateness of the NGO interventions (Macrae, 1996)? From the governments’ viewpoint, finding the right NGO for a program is a first problem; assessing its capabilities is another; thirdly, there is usually no follow-up to NGO activities, leading to poor accountability; the actual need for a project is not evaluated (Gupta et al., 1998). From another viewpoint, this change in the state-society relationship has surely many positive effects because NGOs can alleviate the burden of the state in various urban sectors, for instance, in environmental policy issues (Gomaa, 1994, pers.comm.).

In the case of Indian national housing policies and poorer human settlements, NGOs and the private sector have become critical actors, while the government sector is expected to play the role of a facilitator. An important implication of the government’s facilitator’s role is that it has now a special responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the programs of all actors. This has required building up in-house capacity and entering into partnership with non-government actors to monitor and evaluate their activities. (Government of India, 1996: 51.) The ‘absorption dilemma’ rises in the nexus where NGOs are dependent on government funding, featuring a government-owned NGO, GONGOs. The central question is, to what extent can NGOs collaborate with governments and yet maintain their autonomy? (Ogunseye, 1997: 11).

While close collaboration between NGOs and governments may exist, today it is perhaps more common that governments strive to tighten control over NGOs. In many instances, they actually suffer from harassment by home governments throughout the Third World (Hardoy, et al., 1997; Abbott, 1996). It is observed that when Third World NGOs face government repression, they tend to turn to donors for protection rather than a local constituency (Cherrett, et al., 1995). NGOs are subject to regular government scrutiny in the name of national security. In this situation, an authoritarian government may NGOs to operate, but they are under constant

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44 Political Islam manifests also in the form of associations. Some Egyptian mosques have set up centers for health care, vocational training and sites for distribution of material aid, whilst certain mosques have become centers for guiding and managing movements of contestation. The increased density of mosques has often been the result of construction by religious and charitable associations. (Kharoufi, 1997.)
control (e.g. Dicklitch, 1995). For instance, despite Egypt’s long-standing experience in parliamentary procedures, Mustapha Al-Sayyid (1995: 264-294) points out that only one of several criteria for a vibrant, autonomous civil society is adequately met, namely the presence of a large number of active formal associations, while freedom of expression (e.g., media) is still very restricted. Organizations experience difficulties in uniting autonomously and managing their own money. The inflow of funds from foreign donors must be approved by the Ministry of Social Affairs, the government body regulating the affairs of non-profit organizations. Law 32 of 1964 requires associations to register with the Ministry and to submit reports regularly. If the Ministry disapproves of the association’s activities, it can assign a government employee to its board of directors, or even shut down the organization, as has occurred in the case of some feminist associations (Egypt Today, 1994; Shukrallah, 1998). As a means of control, the government before 1960 absorbed many completely private voluntary organizations (Singerman, 1997: 312, n17). This law has maintained tension between the NGO sector and the government. The government tried to pass a new draft law for NGOs in the parliament, but without success. NGOs, which were pleased with the result, argued that this law would have brought about destructive consequences to the sector, because it would have legitimised more interference and domination by the government, thereby undermining the democratic process. Some NGOs claimed that the government does not tolerate associations outside its control. (Cairo Times, 2000.)

In India, the NGO sector undergoes rather similar debates to Egypt. It is argued that the Indian government does not know how to deal with NGOs: on the one hand, it encourages them, on the other it hampers their work (Gupta, et al., 1998). The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MEF) and the Ministry of Health, among others, have sought NGO participation in various funded development projects. But NGOs see that recent government moves indicate that bureaucratic control over NGOs may increase and hurt the NGO movement. NGOs are still governed by the Societies Registration Act of 1860. They believe that state governments often irrationally modify various provisions of the act to control NGOs. The government can supersede the governing body of any organization without notice and seize its property. Another measure of control can be seen in the new taxation proposals (i.e. to propose that many benefits ought to be withdrawn, e.g. income tax exemptions). The Department of Economic Affairs of the Finance Ministry is tightening control over foreign funding for NGOs and it is believed to use bureaucracy as an obstacle or tool of control, which NGOs assume only hampers the work of ‘genuine’ and sound NGOs. Politicians and bureaucrats want to oppose the large-scale foreign funding of NGOs in India because NGOs are expected to misuse the funds in order to “subvert Indian democracy” and “to push the Western agenda”, particularly in human rights and environmental issues, or they are expected to misuse tax benefits
for private interests. Hence governments may suspect that one way a country could intervene in another country’s affairs is through NGOs. But NGOs ask, why are human rights and environmental issues not on the agenda of mainstream political parties in India. NGO activists state that the move to channel foreign funds through the government budget would be detrimental to the sector because it would not only encourage bureaucratic controls but also increases the overall burden on the environment. As an NGO activist puts it:

Insecure politicians have joined hands with influential business interests to indulge in NGO-bashing … those who cry themselves hoarse about NGO corruption often fail to notice the avenues of corruption kept wide open by the government itself … A corrupt system breeds corrupted NGOs (Gupta et al., 1998).

This controversial nexus reminds us about Third World urban reality as a political context in which NGOs operate. Agarval (1998) asserts that officials and politicians must realize that it is public money, which the government merely controls and the government must learn to deal with as the funding aspects of civil society. He reminds us that India’s NGOs do not take foreign funds because they love foreign funds but simply because the government has provided no incentives to taxpayers to donate money to India’s civil society: the government should also seriously evaluate the effectiveness of the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act, which is to protect the country from foreign funds being used against national interests. Thus a clear policy would help NGOs raise funds from India itself. Agarval (1998) urges for a new resource distribution in the country:

Is it not sad that the money given by a British middle class woman to Oxfam has to come to India to help Indian NGOs work with India’s poor? Why can’t our own middle class support such activities?

Recently, some of the major donors have changed the mode of funding in India. NGOs have demanded that governments think beyond NGO ‘blacklists’ and blanket controls, which as punitive actions would mean little if they are not supported by positive moves. Furthermore, if the government actually wants to check corruption, it is suggested that it should ensure the proper implementation of the existing laws and identification of NGOs with a clean record as well as differentiation between NGOs that perform a social service without seeking profit and those that function in areas that are profit making. (Gupta et al, 1998.) The local NGOs in India have been now rated according to their financial performance and the qualitative impact of their work, still mainly for the purposes of donor funding, however. This procedure is expected to help separate unaccountable organizations, and consequently, to promote the image of the NGO sector, particularly its credibility. The Charities Aid Foundation (New Delhi), which carries out the
task, has developed certain indicators for assessing the sector. The central government has funded the project. (Cherian, 1998, pers.comm.)

In the most extreme cases of government-NGO collisions, governmental and private agencies have attempted to label voluntary organization or social movement leaders as “anti-national”, “corrupt”, or otherwise “dangerous forces” to society. These controversies have caused numerous arrests and violent attacks against environmental or social activists in India (e.g., Anna Hazare), Brazilia (Chico Mendes and rubbertappers), and Nigeria (Ken Saro-wiwa and Ogoni people), among others (see, e.g., Lewis, 1992; Tewari, 1998). In the 1990s in India, persecutions of voluntary agencies by powerful political and economic groups were frequent (see Gupta et al., 1998).

As the above issues have demonstrated, it is a far from easy task to make generalizations on NGO-government relationships. As Fisher (1997) has put it, “there is no simple or consistent story of good NGOs confronting evil governments – as the NGO world is most heterogeneous, so are the governments”. The government and the political system must, therefore, develop a new relationship with civil society – one that is tolerant of criticism and yet generating mutual trust. (Agarval, 1998.) Overall, there is a need to come out with open, comprehensive national policies for NGOs in general.

**NGOs and national environmental agencies**

In Egypt, environmental policy-making has been initiated by the government, but within a very short time social actors, such as urban ENGOs, have become directly involved in the process along with the democratization process (Gomaa, 1997: 60). The Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) has acknowledged the importance of ENGOs by conceding that ENGOs may be instrumental in promoting citizen participation, which is vital in tackling environmental problems. The EEAA has also stated that it sees its relationship to ENGOs as quite different from that of other government agencies, which have mainly political objectives and are generally shunning pressure groups or using them for their own benefit. (EnviroNet, 1994: 1-2.) Domestic public activity has materialized in the participation of some ENGOs in the formulation of the National Environmental Action Plan, in the redrafting of the Law on Environmental Protection (1994), and in lobbying for the law in the People’s Assembly. In addition, the environmental law states that the Board of the EEAA should include among its members three representatives from ENGOs. The law not only enhances the presence of ENGOs, but also puts them on an equal footing with the business sector (ENGOs having the same number of seats with public enterprises). (Gomaa, 1997: 11-12) In addition, the law empowers the relevant NGOs to report environmental crimes. Not surprisingly, Egyptian ENGOs have taken a less aggressive stance towards the government than the environmental groups that so profoundly influenced environmental policies in Europe and North America. However, in the
EEAA meetings the local ENGOs are sometimes perceived as ‘pushy’ partners: a Finnish EEAA representative stated (1997, pers.comm.) that these meetings are “very noisy and quarrelsome” due to overactive ENGO personnel.

While some ENGOs have very close relations and successful cooperation with the EEAA, others have little contact with them, as found by Gomaa (1997: 27). There is some criticism that the Environmental Agency only deals with very few ENGOs while the rest are somewhat marginalized. However, this does not tell the whole picture. Many ENGOs maintain personal contacts with individuals at the EEAA, or they have certain members who work as consultants for the Environmental Agency and act as channels of communication between their NGO and the EEAA. Despite the lack of collaboration within the ENGO sector, the Egyptian Environmental NGO Steering Committee was established as an elected committee, with an added EEAA representative. This committee acts as an advisory committee for the EEAA. It is also a channel of communication between donors, ENGOs and the EEAA. The EEAA welcomed the cooperation with the ENGOs since this would enable it to influence and direct the flow of foreign funds allocated to them by making this steering committee the coordinator between foreign donors and ENGOs. (ibid., 27-28.)

Gomaa (1997: 60-61) suggests that the ability of ENGOs to mobilize themselves, the creation of their elected steering committee and their coordination with EEAA, may present a model for other ENGOs to follow. Nevertheless, she also argues that one should not exaggerate the role of ENGOs in environmental policy-making in Egypt, because their “friendly coexistence” with the state will only continue as long as the state feels it is neither threatened nor challenged by their activities. Therefore the government’s interest in the ENGOs can be explained by its aim to guarantee the fulfillment of its own priorities only after the foreign donors have indicated their intention to provide financial assistance directly to ENGOs, and not through the government. As a result, ENGOs are indirectly influenced by the government and the EEAA, as reflected in the consensual and consultative role of ENGOs towards the government. ENGOs’ ability to enhance their role in policy making will depend on their success in transforming themselves from elite groups to ones with grassroots support. (ibid.) Even though ENGO relations with EEAA are becoming closer, the general political atmosphere – in which ENGOs are under strict state control – may hinder the environmental policy issues in the country.

Also in India the spurt in environmental awareness was partly induced by donor agencies from foreign countries. However, in contrast to Egypt, and due to influential green movements, environmental awareness has mainly emerged through local ENGOs and CBOs. In India, ENGOs are involved at the policy-making and execution level, albeit to a limited extent. Like in Egypt, close cooperation between the governments and ENGOs are exceptions rather than a rule. In most of the states, government departments
are regarded as somewhat hostile to ENGO participation. (Vyas & Reddy, 1998.) However, the Central Pollution Control Board of Delhi has an NGO cell within its organization structure, although it has a minor, technical role: to carry out small-scale air quality observation with the monitoring kits they have been supplied with by the government. (Central Pollution Control Board, 1996: 88-90; Chakravatri, 1998, pers.comm.) To some extent, this resembles the situation in Egypt.

**NGOs and local governments**

Environmental agency jurisdiction usually covers various levels from local to central governments. In most parts of the Third World, formal environmental agencies are lacking or they are just emerging, thus their position is still weak – as is the state of the local government per se. One of the most prominent partnerships could take place between NGOs and local governments, which, on the other hand, entails certain nexuses that may unveil the weaknesses of the local government. To illustrate, in Egypt building up the institutional capacity of the EEAA has some paradoxes at the local governmental level. The relationship between the ENGOs and local government has proved to be a sensitive one, because ENGOs with their highly educated professionals are felt as a threat by weak local governments with their low-level trained staff, etc. (Salminen, 2000, pers.comm.). In India, NGOs have played a role in opinion-making in state and local government elections. Though candidates supported by NGOs seldom win, these organizations are able to influence voting patterns and contest elections. Naturally, neither politicians nor funding agencies are pleased with this kind of NGO activity. On the other hand, the role of voluntary organizations is also seen to support independent activists and train the electorates, as well as facilitate free elections and people empowerment. (Gupta et al., 1998.)

It can be argued that in ideal cases local governments and NGOs complement each other’s work. Municipalities, for instance, can operate as a **pragmatic forum** in which this partnership materializes. Brugmann (1994) suggests municipal reform which implies cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary collaboration with other actors, that is, developing intermediary institutions, including NGOs, in order to have more powerful and effective forms of local government:

- internal administrative integration: local governments creating, e.g., special program coordination units, interdepartmental committees or task forces;
- dissolution of sector role distinctions: while local governments are passing traditional public functions to private companies and NGOs, they are also adopting private-sector and grassroots organizing strategies to fulfill their public mandates;
- creation of support networks: regional networks are established to coordinate regional, cross-jurisdictional responses to shared management
problems, such as polluted watershed, a regional solid waste crisis, or a regional air pollution problem; national and international networks are useful for exchanging successful experiences (e.g. in the Agenda 21 issues); and

- creation of intermediary institutions: e.g., ad hoc stakeholder planning groups (a multisectoral mix of participants, established with the specific mandate to develop environmental action plans for the urban areas involved); citizen-based planning councils (planning bodies that are given a more permanent and formal status, comprising the similar mix of representatives as in the former); special advisory committees (to advise and oversee foreign assistance projects, e.g., in the city level programs); local research institute planning projects.

Nonetheless, it is worth pointing out the possibility here that intermediary institutions may, as they succeed, expand their independence and further diminish the competency of local government, that is, to cause the same competence problem between NGOs and local government as mentioned above. In building governance capacities, Swilling et al. (1999) suggest establishing structured learning networks of local governments. The learning process flows from innovations that originate from within each local government, which then get replicated through the rest of the network via facilitated workshops and other forums. These are already existing in Southern parts of Africa, but could be established in other Third World countries. The authors also urge for comparative studies on cities that have succeeded in strengthening their local government capacities and urban management.

The city of Bangkok offers an example of a partnership activated by external actors, in which a foreign development agency and its program mobilized local authorities and communities to undertake action planning in environmental issues (see Atkinson and Vorratnchaiphan, 1994). It started with the selection of a local coordinator (in this case, a donor expert) and holding a national workshop to bring together representatives of relevant parties, including NGOs and CBOs. The workshop was designed to acquaint key actors with the objectives of the program. One of the results was the publication of both national and municipal level urban management guidelines, as well as guidelines for NGOs and CBOs. Under the program, a number of public events were organized to raise environmental issues in the communities and also to alert them to the activities of the municipalities. The program was also supported by the changing the legislative process and the establishment of an Environmental Fund offering both grant and loan facilities.

**NGOs and international development agencies**

Donor-NGO collaboration is the most common partnership in cities. NGOs actively seek and enjoy funding from international development agencies and Northern governments. The larger part of NGOs receive funds from
them, thus the very base of these organizations cannot be considered sustainable, and financially independent associations are exceptional. Based on the nature of financial support and control in NGOs, such organizations can be divided into three different types (Hasan et al., 1992):

- voluntary organizations organized locally, and exclusively dependent on local support for human and financial resources (indigenous NGOs);
- voluntary organizations founded and organized locally but receiving money from foreign governments and/or organizations (mixed NGOs); and
- voluntary organizations totally controlled and financed by foreign governments and/or organizations (foreign NGOs).

The international trend towards commercialization due to fact that NGOs take service contracts from foreign governments and international organizations, as well as in cooperation with consultancy companies, has not only questioned the NGOs’ ‘political loyalty’ as discussed earlier, but above all, the direction of accountability, i.e., to give accounts of the projects and programs (Gupta et al., 1998). Hence, while it may be a pragmatic choice that NGOs turn to donors, it raises the question of downward accountability (May, 1995). It is feared that “NGOs become contractors, constituencies become customers, and members become clients” (Fisher, 1997). Local NGOs may be in a situation of permanent conflict, because there is bias either towards the community or towards the donor – the ‘ideal’ situation, perhaps, is to be the intermediary or the negotiator. Besides, it is asserted that NGOs, which search for foreign funding, shift towards the provision of services and then away of social mobilization. The question thus arises, according to whose agenda are NGOs representing constituencies and whom are they working for? A large number of NGOs have sprung up in response to the availability of resources from the North and the decreasing availability of local resources for development. In such cases, NGOs respond to an agenda, such as nature conservation, that may be internationally and not locally driven. (Cherrett et al, 1995; Fisher, 1997.)

There are several risks involved if NGOs are shifting ever more towards the role of contractors in the international system, thereby becoming separated from the local communities and their needs. For organizations which heavily rely on official donations, there is the danger of becoming merely an instrument of the donor (Macrae 1996) or that the organization is totally absorbed by the donor (see Fisher, 1997). Thus the ‘neutral buffer dilemma’ occurs in the nexus where NGOs function as politically neutral channels of development aid between the donor and the recipient countries, without their own agenda. The literature on NGOs relies upon several key terms such as participation, empowerment, local, and community; each of which has been given a variety of meanings. Fisher (1997) has noticed that paradoxically, with reference to these terms, NGOs have been embraced by the international development agencies like the World Bank as well as radical critics of top-down development, having a a general sense of the
NGOs as ‘doing good’. He is skeptical towards the whole NGO phenomenon, which is now so widely praised, that they can eventually anticipate becoming victims of the current unrealistic expectations and being abandoned as rapidly and as widely as they have been embraced – causing disillusionment with the promise of NGOs as deliverers of development and democracy. Thereby “NGOs need to find ways to demonstrate performance in their own terms, to stop the inevitable bias towards the interests of donors … accountability is constrained by the fact that NGOs are generally sensitive to internal or external criticism” (May, 1995; emphasis original).

There is also much debate as to how to ‘scale up’ NGOs activities without losing some of those characteristics for which they were supported in the first place. Hence, the question of ‘institutional weaknesses’ is rather a problematic issue. When it is about helping NGOs to ‘professionalize’, what is actually meant is bureaucratizing their operations to conform to administrative preferences. International agencies want to work with NGOs on the basis of their expected strengths, but the weaknesses of NGOs are often a function of the same characteristics that endow them with their strengths. It is afraid that in the future, the “voluntary spirit of the Third World NGOs is driven out, their flexibility is lost”, and they increasingly respond to the prerequisites of donors than with meeting the needs of the people they should serve. The project-focused approach, in general, in cooperation with donors, is also seen an obstacle in the early stages of institutional development in local NGOs. The donors’ unwillingness to provide core funding can be interpreted as a lack of interest in institution building within NGOs. (Review of the Effectiveness,, 1995: 7-8; Cherrett et al, 1995.) Concerning negative sides of consultation by NGOs, a number of donors have become increasingly concerned that this constitutes little more than welfare payments to these development professionals, who literally milk the Northern aid agencies for their own ends (Cherrett et al, 1995).

It is stressed that it would not be sufficient to classify NGOs only by what they do, as this does not give a clear analysis of what they are. One solution could be a classification based on organizational accountability and organizations’ resource-base control. It is also stated that until NGOs control their own resources, they will remain a part of the foreign-dominated delivery system. Traditional charitable NGOs in Africa, for example, operate in an economic system which tends to be exploitative and can be manipulated by market operations. Charities, which have proved to be particularly useful in emergency situations, can also be regarded as a way of identifying with the poor, sustaining them and maintaining the whole system. Aid can then be used as a way of diverting attention from social injustices. (Fowler, 1987, and Kobia, 1987, in Agbola, 1994.)

45 Mulwanda (1993) argues that relief by its very nature creates a relationship of dependence between the donor and the recipient. A relief program has to identify the groups and the
to commit resources to a long-term NGO capacity building process (Ogunseye, 1997: 11).

One-issue topicality is often only able to come up with support in one area of an idea, whether it be, for instance, environmental education or micro-credit. Once initiated, the sustainability of NGO support for local groups on such big topical issues is often dependent on continued donor interest. Many NGO managers recognize the importance of local norms, perceptions and language in defining issues and in managing the development programs that seek to respond them. Nevertheless, Ogunseye (1997: 16) notices the influence on them of the overpowering process of Northern agenda-setting, using ‘global’ (i.e., Northern) language. He also observes that many new African environmental NGOs were formed shortly before and particularly after the Rio Earth Summit: “a clearly over-excited … tendency emerged at the time which treated Agenda 21 as a new talisman, with which to define and solve all sustainable development problems”.

The reliance on donors may neutralize a non-governmental agenda, meaning that the much highlighted issue of civil society may actually pose a twisted model of social harmony – rather than bringing up the conflicts that inevitably arise from inequalities of power (May, 1995). The threat to Egyptian civil society is that, regardless of these apparently positive effects within the NGO sector, it is possible that in the long run, the availability of funds for environmental protection and the donors’ desire to strengthen the civil society and avoid governmental bureaucracy will create unintended negative effects. In reality they may corrupt civil society and allow some people to create NGOs for the sake of the money alone, without any real cause or popular base. To avoid this, donor agencies need to strengthen the capacity of NGOs not only through financial assistance but more importantly through technical and training programs that help capacity building and allow NGOs to be a real asset to any policy. (Gomaa, 1997: 60-61.)

Having increased to a level at which the most NGOs have become dependent on foreign donors during the 1970s and 1980s, more recent developments show that funding sources are now decreasing. For instance, Northern funding flows to African NGOs have declined in the 1990s, placing organizations into difficult situations. Indian NGOs are experiencing twofold constraints: aid flow to the country declined six per cent between mid 1980s and mid 1990s, and in addition, the government’s action to channel foreign funds, amend taxation rules and control registration worsens the overall situation from the NGOs’ viewpoint (Gupta et al, 1998). Perhaps this could have some positive aspects in terms of NGOs creating a new sustainable resource basis.

individuals in most urgent need, but a mitigation program must raise the issue of why the poor are vulnerable – whether, for instance, they live in hazard-prone localities because they cannot afford houses or land in safer areas.
NGOs and enterprises

The role of NGOs is often expected to complement ventures in implementing privatization policy; that is, to help in filling the gaps caused by the withdrawal of state. It is observed that NGO collaboration with the private sector, local enterprises has several positive effects because, for instance, business experience may have increased their management capabilities and the companies may have improved their skills in participatory development. (Review of the Effectiveness..., 1995: 7-8.) But a far more complicated question is the NGOs’ capacity to influence the business sector’s enormous market power towards redistributive and equity-enhancing goals, encouraging the self-transforming efforts of the poor and marginalized, and promoting sound environmental practices (Ogunseye, 1997: 13). NGOs can have an important role in promoting the informal sector, especially its micro enterprises and cooperative enterprises (Cheaka & Nangbe, 1998: 20-23), and overall, formalizing some parts of the informal sector, such as waste collection and recycling, in which environmental improvement is linked to enterprise development (Leitmann, 1999: 340-341; Miranda & Hordijk, 1998; Holmen, 1994). Furthermore, these ‘green’ enterprises have the potential to grow, if they cooperate with other, larger-scale recycling industries.

In order to diminish their external funding, especially from international donors, NGOs have to diversify their revenue sources. This may take place through experimenting with self-financed projects and engaging the local business to complement their activities. (Desco, 1996, in McNulty, 2000.) In general, commercialization efforts relieve the financial pressure facing NGOs. However, the rules of the business are naturally very different to that of voluntary work. Therefore NGOs must guarantee that the interests of their target groups, especially of the poor, are not overshadowed by business interests. (McNulty, 2000; see also Nyamugasira, 1998.) Thus, to what extent can NGOs undertake local income-generation, without succumbing to the imperatives of mainstream profit-making? Also, what should be the balance of relationship between altruism and profit making? How can today’s NGOs, almost totally dependent on external handouts for even recurrent budgets, meet the financial challenges of a more comprehensive, sustainable development agenda? (Ogunseye, 1997: 8-9.)

When considering the potential and actual power of business, it is important to note the contrast with most environmental organizations: if the ‘clash’ is between a large firm and a local environmental group – even if it has links with national or international NGOs – then the business will nearly always have more power resources to deploy than the environmental groups (Doyle & McEachern, 1998: 132-133). When it comes to financial support for NGOs from wealthy Transnational Corporations (TNCs), it is quite a problematic issue. While in some places, for instance, Shell is in conflict
with local environmental activists (e.g. the Nigerian Ogoni people case) and therefore may be considered an unwelcome partner among the international NGO community, in other cases its support is accepted by some groups (e.g., some ENGO programs in Cairo). Not being only outsiders, TNCs are empires with money, power, affiliates, subsidiaries and the support of the international system, and therefore, it is extremely difficult to bring them under national rules and regulations (HDR, 1999: 95-96). In order to make them partners in the development process, they require support, but also, they need to respect national rules and be accountable, transparent and sensitive to social responsibilities (ibid.). Kothari (1999) claims that the pressure from TNCs, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and others who directly and indirectly support their agenda, is to ‘roll back the state’ and permit free access to markets, resources and labor. Even in relatively strong democratic societies like India with strong internal legislation to protect the interests of national production and patents, those propagating privatization and the ‘free market’ call for a stepping back of the state. At this point NGOs function as ‘buffers’ against the anticipated, negative effects of globalization, or, on the contrary, as a bridge which makes the way open for TNC influence.

**NGOs, media and environmental lawyers**

The exclusion of the public from policy-making has included the absence of an open press and media, with the government controlling the flow of information that reaches its citizens (Gamman, 1994: 184). The basic function of the media is to sustain debates on societal issues. Media coverage is increasingly vital to successful work among NGOs. It is ubiquitously presumed that NGOs have a huge scope within which to work with media in promoting environmental issues and shaping popular rhetoric. The Director of Panos Institute in Asia, Kunda Dixit (1998) believes that NGOs can give pluralism to the media, to give voices to those ‘unheard’ (the poor, women, etc.), to be watchdogs, or to direct the media away from consumerism. NGOs can also train journalists to report on development-environmental issues. In return, the media could be, not a spokesman (as in the Narmada movement, in which some journalists lost their credibility), but rather, an advocacy tool in highlighting environmental concerns and promoting their goals. Some newspapers have even provided space for activists to write their own columns. The media can also train NGOs in publicity, for instance, how to advocate their goals; how to make newsletters, etc. Like NGOs, the media is a rather variegated set of actors. In addition, it often treats NGOs more critically than other social actors. Looking for sensational, negative news on NGOs, such as corruption cases, may harm the whole development process of the sector. Thus it is argued that NGOs have to understand how the media

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46 As Charles Ukeje (1992) has described it, “… in Nigeria, Shell is the state, and the real State is indeed, a Shell”. 
acts in order to create collaboration. In regard to urban neighborhoods, having the right information on one’s immediate living environment is an asset – some information may even save one’s life, for instance, knowing that contaminated water is a serious health risk in a certain area. Hence community radios are useful tools for NGOs in disseminating environmental awareness in areas where the population is poor and illiterate. (ibid.)

In India, no other pressure group has used the media, and especially the press, as devastatingly as environmentalists have done. By the 1980s, environmental coverage broke off from development, and also from science. The spin-off of a specialized environmental journalism from the 1980s seems to have been the opening for rhetorical overflows which characterize some strands of environmentalism today. (Krishna 1996: 259-261; Singh, 1998, pers.comm.) In Egypt, it can be observed that news covering environmental issues has increasingly emerged in daily newspapers.

Besides the news media, most powerful and promising partnerships can be found between NGOs and environmental lawyers, who can either be members of the organization or independent actors. For instance, an Egyptian NGO, The Society for Preservation of Nature, has successfully sued the local government on environmental violation in Cairo (El-Ghayati, 1997, pers.comm.) and new litigation cases are initiated by other NGOs. In India, with its M.C. Mehta case, and other Third World countries, it could be assumed that local NGOs would be much more influential, if there were environmentally oriented lawyers who also were interested in cooperation with NGOs. The reason why this nexus is usually an effective mechanism for NGOs, is simply because knowing and operating ‘inside’ the administrative and juridical systems offer better tools to tackle environmental issues. Thus it can be argued that for many NGO cases, their efforts remain quite ‘toothless’ until this partnership has been generated.

**NGO ‘community’**

In spite of discussing an ‘NGO community’, locally, nationally or internationally, there is no doubt that all is not well within this rather mixed sector. It cannot be avoided that as the civil society grows, it will not only take up various activities but also will attract corrupt and other immoral elements. As the issue of the Indian green movement demonstrated, there may exist a geographically based division between NGOs to rural and urban camps. While urban NGOs may be blamed for being elitist, rural organizations may be called corrupt; some argue that there should be greater control over ‘rich’ urban NGOs and rural based grassroots groups should be favored. As a matter of fact, this dualistic characteristic of the NGO sector enables the governments to label NGOs as negative forces. It is also observed that even the self-criticism within NGOs is not sensible; “there has been a move from within the voluntary sector for a code of conduct and tighter controls and some groups are building colossal empires, and the spirit of voluntarism is slowly getting destroyed”. (Gupta et al, 1998.)
In addition, the overall picture within the national NGO sectors is confused by the interventions of Northern NGOs (NNGOs) and international NGOs (INGOs). For instance, Hoque et al. (1994) give a detailed account on Bangladesh, Dhaka, where one project led by an INGO aimed at resettling 2,600 squatter families to a new site in the city. These families and local NGOs were not involved in the process of infrastructure and service development. As a result, the project faced numerous problems with the use of sanitation and solid waste facilities by the local people, who lacked knowledge on the causes of environmental health hazards as well as on proper maintenance of these facilities. The operations of the NNGOs may also be detrimental to local environmental groups, such as the case of the foreign activist demonstrations in Malaysia concerning conservation of the Sarawak rainforest (Bichsel, 1996).

It is remarked that NNGOs tend to have uniform and tight standards (e.g., organization structure) which are applied worldwide, regardless of the place. The Director of the Panos Institute, Nigel Cross (1998), points out that in the South, NNGOs have to find a new role, which addresses local ownership and participation. However, he is concerned about ‘limitless’ local networking because it may embed a seed of neocolonialism. NNGO’s new role, therefore, ought to be more as an educator and informant, and less as a financing and aid source (see also Marcussen, 1996).

Despite disharmony, NGOs have often succeeded in forming coalitions when needed in critical situations. ENGOs can have the greatest impact on environmental policy processes and also become political agents (that can also help make the state more accountable) if they are able form coalitions to promote reforms in both donor agencies and national governments. By combining their efforts, organizations can use each other’s strengths to compensate for their weaknesses (Gamman, 1994: 178). Hence, networks are crucial for NGOs’ sectoral or institutional problem-solving because many operational and policy problems, such as multidisciplinary environmental questions, faced by individual NGOs are only manageable through collective, inter-organizational solutions. Ideally, the network could be a resource-pooling and sharing process. Quite typically, an NGO network is issue -based, focusing on one or a few sectoral concerns. In addition to direct socio-economic and ecological questions, networks can be mobilized around policy, protest, negotiation and other advocacy activities. Nevertheless, there are many constraints, such as structural dilemmas, to achieving this networking ideal. One of the central questions is, what type of networking arrangement is suitable for a given objective: a physically institutionalized network, or one built on a general agreement to mobilize members whenever the need arises? Either approach throws up different types of administrative, logistical, human-resource, cost and time implications. As an example, an international aid program requires quantitative valuation of success, all within a fixed evaluation and reporting time frame. This may easily lead to networking upwards, towards skills,
infrastructural, logistical and output requirements, rather than towards the local needs of the communities in whose interests NGO networking is basically undertaken. (Ogunseye, 1997: 18-19.)

Thus, coalition-building is ubiquitously one of the NGOs’ most important tasks within the sector. The UN conferences have been forums for coalitions, which have then continued at the national level. The Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (1994) and Habitat II were examples of strong NGO participation and networking. Unlike Egypt, India has numerous NGO coalitions in cities too, for instance: the National Federation of Slum Dwellers; the National Alliance of People’s Movements; and the Voluntary Action Network of India. In Africa, NGO cooperation is also sprouting within the same sector, the slum dwellers. In the Helsinki meeting of Mediterranean Environmental NGOs in 1997, a North African NGO representative urged for more contentious tactics towards the governments: “we should become more aggressive, from beggars to partners, and show our own agenda; we should also become stronger, under one larger umbrella organization so that governments would take us more seriously”. Even at the international level, the concerns of local NGOs can be heard when participating in coalitions. In addition, there are now a few big NGO ‘think-tanks’ in the South, such as the Centre for Environment and Science in Delhi, to whom even NNGOs look for getting new ideas (Dixit, 1998).

There can be found quite a few national level coalitions, which not only include numerous NGOs, but also comprise other concerned actors in the city. The Peruvian case gives some interesting experiences on collaboration efforts. Totally 41 institutions, including various cities (such as the capital Lima) and their authorities; NGOs; GROs; university researchers; and municipalities established a national forum to promote the development and implementation of Agenda 21 in 18 Peruvian cities. This ‘national urban movement’ was sparked off by the Earth Summit and its Agenda 21, and subsequently, Habitat II. Several possibilities and hindrances for collaboration came up in this encounter. First of all, it appeared that there was a great need for exchange of experience between different actors and areas. Further, attempts to link urban planning with environmental planning raised some conceptual and practical disagreements, caused by conflicts of interest: the representatives of public institutions felt threatened by the new environmental institutions working closely with foreign donors. Representatives from both institutions saw themselves as those who knew the subject best and claimed leadership in the process: experts in urban issues had high level technological knowledge but little experience in environmental issues, whilst environmentalists, on the other hand, insisted on working on the subject exclusively from a high scientific level, thus excluding the non-scientific majority of participants (several community leaders had difficulties in understanding certain scientific issues). As a result, it was observed that the whole process of collaboration may actually be intentionally very slow in order to avoid or resolve tensions between
participants.\textsuperscript{47} Overall, environmental concerns in the management of cities appeared to be a relatively new issue for most urban institutions. There was a lack of environmental information and a limited response from institutions, for they did not consider their own activities ‘environmental’, despite the fact that they were working in the field of water supply, solid waste management, etc. In addition, the Forum had great difficulties in encouraging the involvement of business people and community leaders. Nevertheless, the Forum had consensus on several good practices, e.g., in Lima, such as micro-enterprises for the collection of solid waste, and rotating credit funds for sanitation and water. In the first common session, working groups were established as participatory planning and these groups developed the action plans for different six cities. The relations between the participants were not formal, which may keep the network weak and its future uncertain, but on the other hand, it enables considerable flexibility in different operations. External funding (e.g., UN and the Dutch Embassy), which appeared to be unstable, posed a serious problem along with the weakness of the Forum’s internal organization team, and thus limiting the capacity to guarantee the coordination and support to all participants. Among the objectives of the Forum’s action plan for years 1997-2000 was the implementation of concrete actions, including the strengthening of institutional capacities; fostering concerted leadership; and, promoting participatory processes and education between the participants. (see more Miranda & Hordijk, 1998.)

\textbf{NGOs and local communities}

Above all, the acceptance of NGOs as legitimate actors depends on their connections to or usefulness for local constituencies. The intended recipients of NGO-led development projects are often not participants but clients. NGOs may have no obligation to adhere to the principles of neutrality and impartiality since they are self-mandated and are not necessarily committed to such principles. The relationships between organizations and their constituents often replicate older patron-client patterns. (Fisher, 1997; cf. Volpi & Do’aa, 1997.) Slum areas may be a real locality for a clash between actors with their own interests, all attempting to intervene in the settlement in various ways. For instance, in a Delhi slum area local and international NGOs, government authorities, slum lords and politicians may all compete over the influence on the neighborhood. (e.g. Sharma, 1998, pers.comm.)

It is asserted that in some instances, local leaders in Africa, for instance, no longer encourage a self-help spirit in development activities: to invite people to attend meetings related to carrying out improvements in their environment. Besides, neither governments invite self-help activity, but

\textsuperscript{47} The ‘knowledge deficit’ raises the issue of how to reconcile specialist and lay inputs in environmental decisionmaking; for instance, if the understandings of environmental risks differ decisively, whose perspective is to prevail? (Lafferty & Meadowcroft, 1996).
rather, open discrimination according to ethnic background and stereotypes may flourish: for instance, rural migrants may be accused of being unable to adapt urban life, living in “a mess with garbage around their settlements”, etc. (Andreasen, 1998.) When looking for new solutions, some features from the traditional local social structure can also be considered as activating people. Traditional structures for community action usually exist, be they within the religious places or (remnants of) community groups in urban quarters (such as harahs in Cairo). It is suggested that religious places – mosques, churches, or temples – with their local communal organizations or neighborhoods, could be used more extensively to strengthen weak civil societies in Third World cities (e.g. Sabet, 1998, pers.comm.).

When elaborating urban neighborhoods or communities through the governance framework, how should the NGOs and other urban actors encounter these places? Urban planner David Brown (1998, pers.comm.) stresses the dynamic approach to urban communities in development work. It is common that they are seen by city planners and researchers staying in a some kind of homeostatic relationship; it is assumed that there exists some stability – a prerequisite which hardly applies to human or ecological systems. Brown gives an example of squatter settlements:

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48 These are believed by some scholars to have the potential to take on a greater role as integrative welfare structures for the people at the grassroots level. The imam (man in charge of the religious and administrative activities of a mosque) or the priest could act as a community leader (if not before). As a fundamental prerequisite he would have to be well educated in both religious and administrative matters, and not closely affiliated to the government in order to enjoy the trust of the people. The communities formed around mosques and other religious structures are difficult for outsiders, e.g. government officials and NGO staff, to approach without causing great suspicion on the part the local people. Hence, the imam, priest, or shaykh (a learned man who is a traditional person in a community or community leader) could act as links or mediators between the people and the government or NGOs. (also Kharoufi, 1997; Singerman, 1997; Deboulet, 1996.) Amr Sabet and Ari Salminen (1994) refer to these welfare units in the Islamic world as neighborhood mosques. The authors define them as non-formal, decentralized, non-bureaucratic and self-sufficient communal welfare structures based on religion, and requiring minimal intervention from the state. These entities could be responsible for providing health, educational, and social security in their immediate environments, through communal contributions, zakat income (Islamic religious tax, which can also be used for non-Muslims; ‘tithe’ in Christianity) and awqaf (religious endowments) to a greater extent than today. Such services would be heavily dependent on personalized interaction among neighbors, friends and relatives living close to each other. The authors believe that this kind of structure would probably function more effectively as a redistributive mechanism in a society characterized by very unequal income distribution.
What is very important in these settlements is not to focus on very physical things but instead to *processes of change*; where do you stand; what’s going on in the settlement in process terms; what are the *patterns of behavior*; and what are the *ways in which this settlement is changing and maintained*. It is those processes that are the energy behind the settlement where we can look as government or as donors. So it is matter of both *inhibiting and enabling* along with the community, to push it into right direction. In fact, things that I am learning from the experiences of Third World squatter settlements are very much applicable to the context of Montreal from where I come from: during again one ice storm in Montreal we were freezing and did not have electricity, no lights, no heat, and we had terrible colds and felt very weak. Then, what I realized was how badly prepared we were in this Western country: how dependent we were on just one source of energy, and the squatters have even many different sources of supply, and they can deal with these situations because they are more resilient.

In India, one of Mumbai’s well-known local NGO, the Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), deserves closer look. Sheela Patel and Kalpana Sharma (1998) have observed how urban policy on resettlement and rehabilitation policy concerning the poor has evolved. In the city even 88 percent of all travel is by bus and rail, which illustrates the popularity and the necessity of the public transportation system. But because there is severe congestion on the public transport facilities, the number of individually owned vehicles on the roads have grown exponentially, leading to high levels of vehicular pollution. In addition, there is the problem of railway settlements, meaning that the poorest neighborhoods have grown alongside the railway lines on land that was meant for expansion of the railway system. Along with the government and private landowners, the railways also ignore them while, at the same time, allowing informal rent collection. This keeps the slum settlement illegal, ready for eviction when there would be a need for land. However, slum areas are crucial sources of votes during the city, state and central elections, and thus they become constituencies that politicians had to defend from demolition. Thus the railway slum settlements also receive some basic amenities. Some of the buildings are located just a within a meter of the railway lines, and therefore the fast trains have to slow down when they pass these areas. The location of slums are not only hazardous, because people are injured or killed every day, but also slows down the speed of trains and causes delays. In the late 1980s, the Department of Housing planned to undertake a census of slums alongside the railway tracks in Mumbai. SPARC offered to do the survey jointly with the authorities. In the process of enumerating settlements along railways, some slum communities created their own organization, the Railway Slum Dwellers’ Federation (RSDF, which was affiliated with the National Slum Dwellers’ Federation, NSDF).

Since the railways wanted to increase the speed of the trains, it was necessary that the people had to be relocated. The majority were willing to move, on the condition that they were guaranteed secure tenure in the new
place. The people were offered government-built houses, and while 800-900 households accepted the price, 150 could not afford it. Thus the government agreed to provide some land which they could develop and build their own houses with the help of SPARC. The community identified vacant land adjacent to the government housing and with the help from SPARC, NSDF and other local NGOs, they planned the area and its houses. Rather than building high-rises, they chose low-rise, high-density, and semi-detached structures, with one-room houses and common toilets. The houses became much cheaper, being less than half of the price the state offered. Each household made a downpayment from savings and SPARC arranged a low-interest loan for a people’s cooperative. Despite the noteworthy community initiative facilitated by NGOs, it took three years to obtain a water connection, and they faced numerous impediments from various state and municipal departments who were unfamiliar with self-constructed houses. These actors suspended discussions on rehabilitation, so contrary to SPARC’s expectations, the achievement of the community initiative was not taken as more general proof of the capacities of local communities. (ibid.)

Nevertheless, there came a second chance in the beginning of 1990s, when an individual bureaucrat who headed the Urban Development Department became concerned about the process and revived the negotiations between various stakeholders. This actually occurred at a time when Mumbai experienced some public protests when furious travelers burned stations and otherwise destroyed property because of the constant delays and cancellations of trains. The relocation of people was further continued with the help of SPARC. People moved a safer distance from railways, and a wall was built (with collective funding) to stop the encroachment of the dwellings. The state government appointed a task force (including representatives of the departments of revenue, finance, public works and housing, as well as of three NGOs) to identify the populations affected by the forthcoming enlargement of a railway corridor project, which was initiated by the state, the railways and the World Bank. Thus for the first time, a resettlement and rehabilitation policy in an urban context could be formulated. In addition, despite the World Bank insistence on NGO participation, there emerged several points of conflicts among the local level actors, for instance, the World Bank required that all procedures should be centralized and standardized to meet international requirements, which sometimes were not appropriate to local conditions. SPARC was accused of being unprofessional when making surveys, however, it chose to continue the task with the community it had worked with for a long time. The organization’s volunteers were trained to improve their skills, and therefore SPARC could improve its capacities in the process. In the end, the railway corridor project negotiations broke down, but with the help of the NGO, 1,500 slum dweller households were divided into cooperative societies and continued the rehabilitation to settle on land that government had offered them. Patel and Sharma (ibid.) conclude that NGOs need to remain involved
with the communities despite of the project, since their task is to commit themselves to the process and not projects, and that in order to work autonomously, NGOs should not rely on a single funding source, but multiple sources, as SPARC did; as the World Bank pulled out of the project, the NGO’s work was not affected. In addition, the authors conclude that NGOs need to have a good proven record working with communities before they start participate to projects with influential actors. For instance, if the NGOs in this case had not earlier worked and mobilized with urban poorer settlements, they would not have been able to counter the suggestions of the “three Goliaths” (the state government, the Indian railways, and the World Bank) which excluded or hindered real consultation with the affected communities.

In addition to SPARC, The Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) in the megacity Karachi in Pakistan, is another example, in which the close relation between the ENGO and the community had proved to be a fruitful endeavor. Orangi is the largest of the city’s low-income settlements, with an average of 100,000 houses. Like SPARC, one of the OPP’s central tactics is to rely on people’s mobilization and organization in small groups. By initiating and reinforcing social and economic organizations in the neighborhoods, it will result in an improved state of employment, schools, clinics, sanitation, etc. They organized groups of a maximum of 40 families living along the same lane. Introducing of appropriate technology, OPP started to work on a long term basis with Orangi from the 1980s with a low-cost sanitation program. Along with the program, other community efforts or programs evolved around basic health and family planning; a credit scheme for small family enterprises; a low-cost housing upgrade program; and a women’s work center program, among others. Each program was introduced after a careful analysis of community needs and identification of the most important actors in the community. The low-cost sanitation program was based on the idea that people are able to use self-help and install their own sanitation systems at an affordable price. But the greatest obstacle emerged to be the local people’s expectations that the government, at one point, would supply a sewer system for them without charge. Only after appeals to the government failed, the ENGO was able to initiate alternative and flexible solutions in the area. OPP is considered an example of a model in which communities can have responsibility for services formerly considered the responsibility of the state. Further, OPP did not see its role as a provider of services, but rather, the community provided the service to itself with facilitating assistance from OPP. (see Hasan, 1990; WRI et al., 132-133; Ekins, 1992: 188-191.)
It is good to ask here, what is the ENGOs’ role in the development of urban communities or neighborhoods, and can sustainable development be achieved *without* ENGO intervention (Ogunseye, 1997: 5, 23)? Cherrett et al. (1995) evince that research and experience indicate that often a key role in community development is played by positive ‘*change agents*’ – those educated or otherwise knowledgeable *outsiders* who have volunteered to come and work in the neighborhoods. How does this actually occur in megacities? Charles Tilly (1996), one of the leading social movement theorists, has underscored that in the search for theories on social movements or NGOs, one has to study what they actually *do*. Following this argument, I have chosen five ‘reformist’ ENGOs in Delhi and Cairo for a closer look.
IV
ASSOCIATIONAL ENDEAVORS IN MAKING
LIVABLE URBAN QUARTERS

In which ways do urban ENGOs attempt to curb various environmental problems in the neighborhoods of Third World megacities? There is a growing amount of documentation focusing on organizations that work in environment-related issues and governance in urban areas in general. Nevertheless, when it comes to large cities, it seems that just very few, and usually the same cases or examples, are cited, such as the Orangi Pilot Project and its introduction of low-cost sanitation in Karachi, or SPARC and its resettlement schemes for slum dwellers in Mumbai. Hence, the number of case studies that have more in-depth and multi-faceted analyses on intermediary level social actor groups, ENGOs, in urban governance are still scarce in the megacity context.

In general, an international conference can serve as a forum for learning from urban experiences. The purpose in Habitat II was to initiate networking of civic groups and particularly, to find replicable urban practices, called best practices. If the Earth Summit in Rio became known for the environment, the City Summit, Habitat II, may become known for governance. The several cross-sectoral issues on the Habitat II agenda included, e.g.: governance; environment management; shelter provision; land and house tenure; transport; and, poverty alleviation. In these,

Governance provides the common denominator inasmuch it has the potential to underwrite the success of the best of the initiatives related to all others. Good governance and people-centered environmentalism are two essential preconditions to shape the human face of the urban environment. (Ten Best Practices…., 1996:1.)

49 One of the main forums to discuss the ENGOs role in urban development has been the journal Environment and Urbanization, published by the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED).
Thus we need knowledge drawing upon the local groups working ‘in the streets’, in order to develop sound concepts when discussing, studying and theorizing urban associational life in Third World. In this chapter I introduce five empirical cases from two cities, Delhi and Cairo. I have chosen these cases due to several reasons: firstly, they highlight the central environmental issues in brown agenda; secondly, they demonstrate positive responses to diverse urban environmental problems with their innovative practices at the local (street) level; and thirdly, each of them offers a good example of the urban governance problematic, both in terms of successful partnerships as well as constraints in closer collaboration with other urban actors. In short, since I am focusing on reformist solutions, my viewpoint is to trace those factors that have enabled these organizations to create innovative responses to various environmental problems and also, to function as ‘change agents’ in society. At the end of the chapter the issue of scaling up these positive responses will be discussed.

In Delhi, the Action for Securing Health for All (ASHA) carries out integrated development work in slum areas, while Sulabh focuses on sanitation issues and improvement of the positions of the lowest strata of Indian society, the ‘Untouchables’ who traditionally have been scavengers. In Cairo, the Arab Office for Youth and Environment (AOYE) educates people in water conservation and lobbies government to adopt water-conserving policies; it also has some other environment-related projects. Like ASHA, the Association for Health and Environmental Development (AHED) addresses linkages between health and environment, and, in particular, its key role in a campaign against industrial pollution in a Cairene neighborhood is an interesting case. The Association for the Protection of the Environment (APE) works with Cairo’s garbage recyclers and it could be seen as the main case study in this work because it has been studied during a longer period compared to other cases. The work of each organization is based on the local level, but in addition, a few of them have succeeded in scaling up their impact, to disseminate their practices to national and even international levels.

9. STREET LEVEL PRACTICES FROM DELHI AND CAIRO

9.1. ASHA FACILITATING SLUM UPGRADING

Action for Securing Health for All (ASHA) has helped people living in slums to improve their living conditions in Delhi’s numerous slum areas. Its particular interest is to create a better health care situation among the poor inhabitants; however, slum upgrading implies a large number of improvements connected to environmental issues in the settlements. In broad terms, slum or squatter settlement upgrading includes at least three major
components, namely: the security of tenure; provision of basic services; and rationalization of the layout and alignment of structures. These contain the following issues: (in many instances) relocation of existing structures and people; supply of clean water in adequate quantities; improved sanitary facilities and conditions; proper surface drainage and garbage collection; provision of community facilities, e.g., schools, hospitals, recreation centers, etc; proper streets and footpaths; improved electricity supply and street lighting; and an improved transport system both for vehicles and pedestrians. (e.g. Potter & Lloyd-Evans, 1998: 155.)

Social and physical living conditions in a slum
Out of Delhi’s total population, as much as almost 40 to 50 percent, four to six million people, live in slums and squatter settlements. The shanty colonies, *jhuggis* (or *jhuggi-jhonparis*) in Delhi are located along the main roads, waterways, beside five-star hotels, power plants, factories, drainages, abandoned plots, and garbage dumps. These sites expose residents to serious health risks from chemical residues, toxic wastes, and exhaust fumes from traffic. Houses are built from waste material, varying from plastic, cardboard, mud and thatch. The average house size is small, 30-40 m$^2$, and just five feet high; there is also no ventilation nor natural light; many are susceptible to fire, dust, smoke and noise pollution. People own very few basic items in their homes. In Delhi there are 1018 jhuggis besides 44 resettlement colonies, and there are also 480 unauthorized colonies whose population is unknown. The average population density in slum areas is as high as 60,000 per square kilometer.

Especially the rainy monsoon season is a problem, causing houses to be covered by flooding water. Because there are not usually built enough drainages, water stands still and as result, these conditions pose a serious health hazard to inhabitants. The city authorities have not provided the necessary infrastructure, thus tapping illegally into neighboring electricity or water networks is common. If public water taps exist, people have to obtain their share in long daily queues. The narrow alleys of *jhuggi* settlements are heaped with garbage, attracting dogs, pigs, flies and mosquitos. In general, half of the people may use the garbage collection point at the site, and those who have their own garbage bin face a bad situation, since municipal trucks do not come very often to empty them. Sanitation conditions are also very poor: only 10-15 per cent of the residents have toilets and some tens of people use one pit latrine and as result, toilets become clogged. A hole dug in the ground serves as a sewage system, and it is emptied occasionally. Continuous power cuts in electricity supply and dropping water levels often make the hand-pumps useless, affecting both households and clinics.

Not surprisingly, the infant mortality rate exceeds 100 per 1,000 live births, which is among the highest in the world. At the same time, the birth rates are very high. The most common health problems are malnutrition, TB, HIV/AIDS, typhoid, skin infections, cholera and malaria. People cannot
afford health services and public hospitals are very crowded. In schools there is a 30 per cent dropout rate because of bad quality of teaching, or, children have to go to work for long hours. It is roughly estimated that in Delhi, at least 30,000 children assist in different jobs, 20,000 work in shops and 20,000 work in streets. The position of women and children is the most difficult and the most typical social problems are the harassment of women in public places, domestic violence and child abuse, as well as drug abuse, especially by young boys.

The inner social dynamics of a slum are quite complicated. As migrants arrive in Delhi from various parts of the large country, with culturally and socially heterogeneous backgrounds, a strong sense of community is not a prevalent feature in the city’s neighborhoods. Hence there is an absence of informal, community-based social safety networks, which would be important in urban quarters in which women and children represent two-thirds of the poor (Government of India, 1996: 48). Poor in-migrants have to cope with a group of middlemen, slumlords who maintain their position by first collecting payments when huts are built and then keep people dependent on them in various ways, and make decisions together with the local police: justice is given to those who can afford to pay for various facilities. The poor face continuous injustice and unequal access to resources.

In cities slum areas do not usually have elected leaders due to a non-existing sense of community. People are scattered and as illiterate and poor, they are easily exploited by NGOs, research institutions, politicians, government, and others. People do not trust anybody and feel helpless in many cases. Political parties are very much interested in slums, which may have a politician ‘protecting’ them. However, people do not like politicians but feel forced to turn to them in various every-day life matters. What has to do with NGOs: they should tell to people in clear words what they actually want and mean with their projects. Otherwise people instantly ask: “what do we gain from this; what are you doing to us?” (Martin, 1998.)

Besides lacking a sense of community, suspicion toward outsiders and bad experiences of outsider interventions in a settlement, some development practitioners have interpreted the rejection of development initiatives by slum residents from another viewpoint: it has sometimes appeared that a slum resident may be “addicted” to his/her lifestyle, which is based on selling home-made liquor and drugs (Varia, 1998, pers.comm.).

**The approach and organization**

ASHA (literally meaning ‘hope’) is a voluntary organization which has initiated a service delivery program to improve health conditions in numerous Delhi’s slums. ASHA began in 1988 as an emergency health clinic with volunteer doctors in a slum in south Delhi to deal with a serious cholera epidemic. During this period, the clinic staff observed that although treatments were effective and cured the patients, the origins of diseases
remained unaffected. Realizing that the settlement’s health problems were intertwined with poverty, pollution, and environmental degradation, ASHA began to focus on a broader approach to dealing with health, directing its efforts toward: improving the environment; empowering women; increasing the literacy rate; and educating residents about the links between the environment and health.

ASHA started the first partnership with the local public agency responsible for delivering services to squatter settlements. Acting as a mediator between the public agency and community members, the organization managed to get the government to implement site and service improvement projects. ASHA helped in: acquiring land rights and establishing long-term leases; providing home improvement loans; maintaining and repairing common spaces; and extending coverage of basic services such as water and sanitation facilities and roads. However, these efforts faced several obstacles, for instance, the site and service upgrading schemes had mixed results, as news of slum improvement attracted additional settlers and increased land market values, eventually displacing the original residents. Furthermore, local power struggles arose over access to the improved facilities, and the cooperatives ultimately dissolved. (Mehta, 1994 in WRI, et al., 1996: 38-39; Martin, 1998.)

The organization defines itself as a ‘grassroots NGO’ due to the active participation of people. Its annual budget is 2.5-10 million Rupees and the number of full-time staff varies between 11 and 20 persons.

**Women’s role**

ASHA learned that women play a far greater role than men in managing households and neighborhoods. Women’s health is a decisive factor in the well-being of their families; thus, they have a much larger stake in improving the environmental conditions. A clear disadvantage of the first cooperative structure was that it excluded women from an active role in community decision-making. It appeared that women lacked dignity and self-confidence. The organization began to expand through its collaboration with two new types of action groups, the *Mahila Mandals* and the *Basti Sevikas* within some of the Delhi *jhuggis*. *Mahila Mandals* are community-based women’s groups that meet once a week to discuss community issues and they also serve as a forum for income-earning activities and loans, as well as health education sessions and sanitation systems improvement. The organization also encourages women to be the owners of new housing within the cooperatives.

Recognizing that women play a key role as health care providers, ASHA set up a training program for female community health workers called *basti sevikas*. Selected through a process of community consultation and aptitude testing, they are trained to provide basic health care treatment for colds, fevers, coughs, and dysentery, and for more serious diseases such as malaria and worms. With their basic medical kits, *basti sevikas* can do vaccinations
and check the condition of pregnant women. Each woman is responsible for 200 families and charges a small fee for visits. Basti sevikas also provide health education about environment-related issues and maintain health records for households in the settlements, and in that way, they reduce the load on the formal health care system by taking care of illness not requiring the attention of a doctor or hospital. Although these women charge a small fee for their services, they are much more affordable than formal medical care for the urban poor. On the other hand, heavy work-loads, resistance from husbands and families, and personal inhibitions prevent women from participating in Mahila Mandals. Residents may oppose paying fees to basti sevikas because they are not formally trained. (Martin, 1998; Mehta, 1994, in WRI et al., 1996: 38-39; Hopkins, 1996.) According to some organization staff, however, these women, basti sevikas, really improved themselves after the training.

Content owners and their new houses in Madrasi Basti.
Homes are well-maintained, some even middle-class style.

A Hindu temple.
A clinic in Kanak Durga Camp. One of ASHA’s programs provides low-cost clinics in the slums. The doctor, medicines and operations are free for residents. The unhygienic living conditions cause eye diseases, particularly among the children.

Madrasi Basti people and partnerships
One of ASHA’s target locations was the urban neighborhoods of Madrasi Basti, comprised of people who migrated from another megacity, Chennai (Madras). The founder and leader of ASHA, Dr. Kiran Martin, says that the first step in slum upgrading is that people understand and feel that they are part of the process of change, that is, she argues that the organization has offered an alternative, more sound option in slum upgrading practices:

Community participation in planning, building or monitoring activities was previously unknown to the people of Madrasi Basti. On the other hand, the official planning system did not take account the opinions nor the internal activities of the community. Therefore it is not surprising that earlier attempts to change their living conditions were not very successful. For example, a project concerning the location of garbage collection points never functioned properly and they were not used by the local people, because they were not listened to in the initial planning process. Also some resettlement programs located people far from their jobs. It is not surprising that people did not feel the whole development venture was their issue.

The site where people first settled comprised just tents and huts, lacking sanitation, drainage, and garbage disposal – there was basically nothing; neither did people have any money nor much motivation. Thus for ASHA, it appeared that a certain push was needed in order to make changes in these poor people’s living conditions. ASHA’s philosophy is based on, as the leader says, understanding the community’s needs and working with them, by starting from the grassroots. They try to find out what people can do
themselves and then ‘empower’ them, and later on, monitor the results. In the *Madrasi Basti* colony the first thing people wanted was basic infrastructure (especially water), and then housing and security, all of which were discussed in their meetings, and particularly with women. ASHA has sought to act as a facilitator, and helped to inform people about relevant government policies, and also served as a communication link to the formal system.

There were some rules and modes of action for partnerships between the community, ASHA and other NGOs, the government, the slumlords, and other actors when the resettlement project with *Madrasi Basti* started. For instance, the project had to be accepted by the community; and the government required that all activities were legal, etc. – in all, numerous stakeholders had to accept the project. Government offered plots of land, and detailed plans were prepared together with the people who then started to build their own homes. The brick houses were constructed with the supervision and guidance of engineers and architects. Before this, ASHA carried out negotiations with the neighbors of the middle class and government officials were also invited to visit the area. In the usual case of a deep communications gap between the residents and the city authorities, ASHA asserts that on the contrary, the situation with *Madrasi Basti* was novel for all parties, serving as a good example of decentralized planning. In addition, the NGO staff argues that in general in slum upgrading projects, local and national governments must be committed; make the land tenure question clear; and understand bottom-up decentralization. The leader’s personal contacts with various actors (government, community, local leaders, slumlords) can be seen as beneficial in creating partnership:

Attitudes and lifestyles started to change drastically and people worked harder to maintain improved conditions. It took quite a long time to acquire the land and a lot of pressure had to be put on the government by the organization. The government also provided some basic infrastructure in the area. Besides, for the professionals it was the first time to participate in this type of project, which was not a typical top-down exertion – they said that they also learned from the process. The central question among the different actors was about the division of work: who does what? We wanted to adopt a holistic approach including health care, water supply, sanitation, solid waste disposal, women empowerment, people participation, etc. Overall it was a tough and long process and it was important to use the dynamics of the slum, to understand the ‘slum mentality’.

Today, it is quite difficult to image that the inhabitants of *Madrasi Basti* were former slum dwellers living in street tents. Despite its modest outlook, now the area comprises good quality houses, painted with bright colors of white, pink, blue and light green; proper, clean streets; small gardens; a school and a temple; clean water, sanitation and electricity, among others. They have one toilet unit for five families and also some individual bathrooms. Since people now own their houses, they also have high
motivation to take good care of their property and its surroundings and to maintain the achieved level of quality of life. One important difference to the previous slum life was that finally they could have their own address.

The impact
The impact of the upgrading project could be described as a positive chain reaction. Severe problems seemed to disappear altogether; such as infant mortality, which decreased drastically; also birth rates went down, as the number of children decreased to 1-3 children per family. The positive impact affected issues from health and infrastructure to employment and gender: women created small enterprises and cooperatives, which empowered them economically. Women also collected funds from families to run maintenance of the services and infrastructure. Finally, government, NGOs and other actors left the area when it became obvious that the community could manage by itself.

The organization has partnerships also with the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), which has acknowledged the positive impact of the organization; ASHA has worked with the Slum Wing in DDA to organize housing loans at a low interest rate with local banks. The organization has also received some support from an INGO, the Tear Fund in 1990s. The clinic sites, with the provision of electricity and water, have been donated by the government.

By approaching health care at the community level and encouraging residents to take charge of their environments, ASHA has helped to improve the health of many jhuggi areas. Between 1988 and 1993, ASHA increased its reach from 1 slum and 4,000 people to 21 slums including over 115,000 people. Empirical data are lacking, but a community survey shows that through ASHA’s programs in general, child morbidity and malnutrition have decreased, residents are more likely to seek treatment for minor sicknesses from their clinics, and overall environmental conditions in the slums have improved. (Mehta, 1994, in WRI et al., 1996: 38-39.)

However, in regard to the magnitude of slums in Indian cities, one can ask why this ‘model’ has not become a wider movement? Martin (1998, pers.comm.) believes that in the future slums will gain more attention and pressure will grow on the government to scale up experiences. Although the NGO sector is important in slum upgrading, the leader of the organization considers the government a final ‘backbone’: “NGOs might be an option or not, but the government is always there”.

9.2. Sulabh Leading a Sanitation Movement Among the ‘Untouchables’

The Sulabh International Social Service Organization (hereafter Sulabh as it is locally referred to) operates at local, national and international levels. It was established to improve the state of the urban environment and health of the Indian population through the adoption of new sanitation systems, and more particularly, to replace the tradition of sewage scavenging with a new socio-technological practice. The organization intends to work with people who are cut off from formal municipal sanitation services and sewerage systems, concerning especially slum areas. The organization has a twin program: liberation of scavengers and introduction of healthier, low-cost sanitation options, which also alleviates the overburdened sanitation (and sewerage) system in the city, and hence contributes to the urban management at large.

The Socio-cultural background of the scavengers

India is one of the world’s most socially stratified societies, and still sustaining the practice of ‘untouchability’, which means avoiding all contacts with people of the lowest castes, though it was nominally outlawed after India became independent.\(^{50}\) Hereditary caste distinctions are slowly fading in big cities; however, the custom is still particularly strong in rural India, where about 70 percent of people live. The higher-level jobs are the zone of the upper castes, and even the lowest castes would not deign to carry out those jobs which are perceived as dirty and degrading, such as issues sanitation. These unwanted tasks fall on the shoulders of the people born outside the caste system. Thus scavengers represent the lowest social group and are basically out of the ancient caste hierarchy – they have been treated as the ‘polluted outcastes’.

Sanitation and scavenging have been interconnected for a very long time in India, as the special group of sewage scavengers, the Bhangis, have worked in this hereditary occupation since B.C. 2000. A person born in the

\(^{50}\) Nearly 22 per cent of the Indian people are ‘Scheduled’ by the government, recognizing their traditional socio-cultural and economic disabilities, oppression and exploitation. Backward classes are those who are above the so-called pollution line, and the Scheduled Castes are below this line. The social movements of the Scheduled Castes have targeted their emancipation. (Oommen, 1990: 177.) In everyday street life special routines are meant to differentiate Untouchables from the rest of the people, i.e., special arrangements are created to practice untouchability, for instance, certain doors and passageways are provided for them, carefully shielded from the living quarters. (Waldman, 1996.) In that way, the public and private sphere this group can act in is very strictly bordered and segregated and thus their living space is also limited (Sulabh Movement, 1997: 3.) Indian government has passed an Article in the Constitution, according to which, no worker will be given the menial job of collecting human excreta as Bhangis do. Some argue that in the history, they were warriors made captive slaves after they fell to the enemy during the Mughal Emperor Akbar (Pathak, 1998: 38).
sub-caste of scavenger is destined to take up this ‘sub-human’ profession by manually removing excrement of higher caste homes. Bhangis, ‘Untouchables’, are bound by customary rules to practice scavenging; it has been a religious duty of the scavengers to do their job. According to the traditional way, they collect excreta by hand, put it into pails which their carry on their heads or in trollies. Mythological sanctions oblige them to carry night soil from households physically for disposal. ‘Night-soil’ refers to bodily functions that have to be done in darkness, so that others need not notice them. According to the traditional social order, they are required to carry the buckets containing night-soil on their heads through the alleys and streets. The Bhangis, not surprisingly, are shunned and marginalized for this primitive and dirty job. In the past they had to wear a ring around their necks, making a sound which indicated their presence in the vicinity and allowed people to avoid them. Others carried sticks, which they would beat on the ground to warn people that they were around. Added to all these indignities was also the fact that they were collectively referred to by the despised term of ‘scavenger’. As compared to the sub-caste of the Bhangis, the other Harijan sub-castes are more advanced. Mahatma Gandhi, who strongly opposed this fatalism, called them Harijans, the ‘Children of Gods’. (Pathak, 1998a:165; Menon, 1996.)

The Bhangis are earning minimum incomes, with about several tens of Rupees a month, by moving the flow of human waste in a country in which 650 million people still lack access to basic sanitation. Some of the scavengers live in a more modern way, cleaning sewers and streets for the municipality, while others continue the traditional way, by handling higher-caste excrement for hire. Government work is preferred, if only for the equipment in the work; the gloves and pushcarts it provides. (Waldman, 1996.)

The Bhangis are so ostracized that not even the tanners and animal cremators, the Untouchables themselves, will go near them. Therefore, the country’s 700,000 scavengers are ghettoized in Bhangi slum colonies in big cities. The society has created numerous restrictions to determine their lives, for instance, they are barred from temples. (Sulabh India, 1998: 8.) The casteless have constraints in using environmental services; for instance, in Calcutta, the waste pickers have difficulties in obtaining access to water sources, because higher caste groups disapprove their access the local pumps and wells (see Furedy, 1992).51

51 Scavenging was a common phenomenon also in European and American cities until the mid 19th century, when the sewerage system was introduced. Before the introduction of the water closet, the sewage in cities was disposed of by a special group of men collecting the contents of privy vaults and carting them to nearby farming areas. Also the farmers who brought their products to the city returned home with a load of this fertilizer. (Pathak, 1998: 42.)
The importance of proper sanitation for urban environmental health

Still today one million Bhangis collect bucket privies and dump the waste in rivers, fields and canals, jeopardizing not only their own health but that of other neighbors. Sanitation has many linkages; most important among them is the water supply and the safe and hygienic disposal of human waste. The lack of proper sanitation leads to biodegradation of people’s immediate livelihoods. Human excreta are the cause of many diseases such as cholera, dysentery, typhoid, infectious hepatitis, hookworm, etc. Over 50 different infections can be transferred from a diseased person to a healthy one by various direct and indirect routes from excreta, therefore, safe disposal of human excreta is particularly significant in reducing morbidity and mortality. When sanitation is properly taken care of, it can also bring about improvement in the environment and health of the urban neighborhoods, thus raising the productivity of people and the quality of life. Conventional sewerage is an ideal solution for disposal of human excreta and wastewater, but its construction requires high capital cost and an enormous supply of water, thus being a solution difficult to implement in Indian cities. (Pathak, 1998b.) As living in the poorest areas, the target communities of Sulabh cannot afford sewer line construction on their own. Nor do the Delhi authorities have funding designated for this purpose. Since there are no other choices, the only solution seems to be low-cost sanitation systems and people’s readiness to accept and use them. (National Institute of Urban Affairs, 1990: 9.)

In India, out of a total 5,000 urban areas, only 300 offer public sewers to residents. Even in the capital Delhi, six out of 10 people have no access to sewerage systems, and around three million people still defecate out in the open, partly because of lacking amenities and partly because of rural habits; therefore, the sanitation problem is also a cultural issue. Thus in a city where the main sewer lines empty their pollutants directly into the river Yamuna, reform is urgently needed. Even the 1988 cholera epidemic did not much shake or improve the financial provision for sanitation systems by the Delhi administration (ibid.: 12-15). It is important to prevent environmental pollution and the improvement of health, hygiene and ecology by educating the public not to defecate in the open: parks, streets, by the side of roads or railway tracks52.

The organization of the ‘Crusader’

The founder and leader of the organization is a sociologist, Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, around whose charisma and actions the whole organization seems to have sprouted. He belongs to the highest caste, Brahmin, a background

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52 The scope of the problem could be illuminated by using an example from another megacity, Calcutta, which has data on this type of ‘environmental violation’. The Public Commissioner of Calcutta prosecuted 140,000 persons in one single year for ‘committing nuisance’ in public places. (Sulabh International.)
which crosses socio-cultural boundaries when committing oneself to work with low caste or outcaste people. Thus in the news media, his work is described as a “crusade”, and his position as “a latter-day Mahatma” (see, e.g., Waldman, 1996; Menon, 1991), referring to Gandhi’s ethics that Pathak aims at implementing in his own mission. Praising terms are also used in Sulabh’s own publications, which indicate that his position resembles that of a ‘guru’ among the staff and volunteers.

A few incidents prompted Pathak to establish the organization. In addition to the fact that his grandfather also worked for the liberation of the casteless, Pathak was annoyed by the attitudes of upper caste people in the divided society. Incidentally, Pathak got involved in the movement for the liberation of scavengers at the Bihar State Gandhi Centenary Celebration Committee, which had been set up to commemorate the birth of Mahatma Gandhi. Its initial goal was to profoundly improve the scavengers’ living conditions with modern sanitation technology; however, it faced several obstacles. In Pathak’s opinion, the Committee was not large enough to disseminate knowledge on the issue and also, it should have participated in the actual implementation of the program, instead of being a mere propagator. As he did not receive enough support, he left the Committee and set up a society in 1970 together with several people working with him: a voluntary organization called Sulabh Shaucalaya Sansthan. From the beginning, the organization faced uncooperative authorities, as it took five years to start collaboration with them.

The organization practically implements the law, which abolishes the caste system and thus untouchability. The goals of the organization are the following (National Institute of Urban Affairs, 1990: 8):
- elimination of the ‘inhuman’ practice of manual handling and carrying of human excreta by converting dry or bucket latrines into hand-flush water seal toilets;
- operation and maintenance of community toilet complexes, including bathing and laundry facilities on pay-and-use basis particularly in slums and for pavement dwellers as well as for those communities in whose houses latrine cannot be constructed due to space constraints (some public complexes are free of charge for women and children);
- production of bio-gas from human excreta at community toilets and generation of electricity as an alternative source of energy;
- research on practical solutions for solid and liquid waste disposal, including recycling and resource recovery; and
- rehabilitation of former scavengers and their wards through vocational training, and establishing schools to provide education.

Pathak has comprehended the risks for the organization in one-man leadership, for he feels it is time he should begin to distance himself from the organization which he has directed for more than three decades. He would prefer to act as an advisor and guide in the running of Sulabh so that it would finally function without him. (Pathak, 1998, pers.comm.; Menon, 1996.)
still works at Sulabh on a daily basis, and runs the connections to the outer world and participates in the activities in the center, but more responsibility is said to be given to the staff. It is obvious that there will be a great difficulty in filling his place because of his guru position. Some international media representatives call the organization “the man and the movement”, which refers to his 55,000 volunteers on the national level (Sulabh India, 1998: 47). These “agents of change” (Rai, 1992) are not working for free, but they may earn Rs. 1,200 a month by providing various services to the villagers for a very low fee of Rs. 5 to 15, which most people are usually willing to pay. This is based on the belief that “even idealists need to support themselves – otherwise the task will lose its enthusiasm”. The organization constantly recruits new managers, promotes “innovative leadership” and when it trains the engineering graduates (representing a new experience to involve them in social work) to work with it, their salary is slightly higher than the government level. Furthermore, a large part of the staff (200-500) and volunteers in the center are women, many of whom are obviously originating from higher castes with well-to-do backgrounds. The Institute of Technical Research and Training is somewhat gender-biased, having only one woman scientist among its 19 experts.

**The Socio-technological approach**

As many other unconventional innovations in their initial stages are often received by resistance, Pathak’s idea of a new sanitation system, *sulabh shauchalaya* (the words means easy or convenient in Hindi, i.e., “easy access to sanitation”) was not an exception. Though applying the idea partly from a German innovation, he adapted it to the Indian cultural context. This new practice is based on “socio-culturally and economically acceptable” sanitation technology, for Pathak stresses that their practice is more of a social innovation than a technological one (Pathak, 1998, pers.comm.). For instance, there is a large variety of designs of *sulabh shauchalaya* to suit different income levels and they can be built with indigenously available materials, and they are also easy to maintain and keep clean by local people. The systems function independently of the sewerage network, because they are based on an on-site waste disposal system.

Cleanliness and maintenance have been the key issues that seem to have favored the innovation among the population up to now. In addition, *Sulabh* builds public toilet complexes, which also provide medical and educational services, as well as telephone, laundry and bath facilities, all with only a nominal sum of Rs. 1-3 per visit. Many of these complexes, imitating local cultural features, have fancy-style architectural forms with bright colors, so at first glance one does not notice much difference between the public toilet complex itself and a neighboring ancient temple or an upper class villa – a conscious manifestation of social equity in urban space, perhaps.
Pathak developed a pour flush type of toilet that is safe and hygienic, and based on the anaerobic digestion of human excreta, unlike conventional aerobic-based systems. The advantage of the innovation is that it can be constructed in different physical and geological conditions, without polluting the surface or ground water if properly managed. It is estimated that the twin-pit combination can last even for 100 years.

_Sulabh shauchalaya_ consists of a squatting pan with a steep slope and a trap with a water seal set on the floor. The pan is connected to two leach pits by a covered drain or pipe for discharging the excreta to the pits. It requires only a maximum 2 liters of water for flushing, while the conventional system requires at least 7 times more water. One of the two pits is used at a time and when the pit in use is full, the excreta are diverted to the second pit. In one and a half years the contents of the filled-up pit get purified by bacteria, and become dry, innocuous and free of foul smell. The pit can then be emptied and is ready to be put back in use after the second pit is full. Hence the two pits can be used alternately and continuously. The excreta could be used for agricultural purposes.

This technology allows the waste to gradually degenerate into manure after the pit is filled, which is an environmentally sustainable system compared to conventional septic tanks, from which waste must be removed and transported to a sewerage treatment plant.
Manure processing machines.

A kitchen with a stove, which runs on bio-gas from decomposed excreta. The Sulabh ‘campus’ receives all its energy from the sanitation technology and its applications. The system is useful in areas with power shortages in urban, peri-urban and rural areas. Besides offering sanitation facilities, the whole system can provide street lighting for more than one kilometer with the human waste contribution of 1000 people. Constraints in distribution may arise due to religious and other cultural reasons, for instance, the methane origin bio-gas is not acceptable to some people as a cooking gas.
The *Sulabh* center in Delhi ...

...and its active staff member, Mrs. Abha Bahadur in front of a painting illustrating the deity of education.
The technological approach is supplemented with a social approach, which comprises public awareness education and community participation: the organization works with isolated populations who have been less likely to feel responsible for city-wide environmental conditions. In addition, the organization provides an opportunity for self-help, low-cost and quick development options in societal circumstances in which the megacity authorities are unable to provide these critical services. The approach is an integrated one, involving social reform, environmental protection and education, sanitation, health care, literacy, education, vocational training, bio-gas production, women, family planning, employment and rehabilitation linked to each other. In addition to exhibition of the above technological innovations, the Sulabh Center at Mahavir Enclave in Palam Dabri Marg, Eastern Delhi runs numerous classes for children and train youth in various vocations. For instance, it trains youth in several market-relevant trades, such as audio-equipment and television repair, or tailoring. For instance, in 1997, some 300 children from scavenger families were receiving education with free classes. The organization has also a slum children welfare program for free, in order to “prevent their physical, social and moral drift” (Sulabh Sanitation Movement, 1997: 11). After the students have finished their courses, the organization helps to find suitable jobs for them. In addition, there is a small medical unit, a health care center, run by a doctor and his assistants. They also have an integrated health care approach, including check-ups, immunization, family planning, environmental education, safe sanitation etc, and in addition, they practice the old tradition of Ayurved beside modern medical practices.

In Delhi there are around 400 corporations that deal with sanitation (constructing and maintaining infrastructure and services etc.). In general, the organization regards highly the partnerships between other NGOs. Sulabh arranges training courses for administrators, planners, financial experts, engineers, NGOs, sanitary experts and other staff of local authorities, social workers, health educators, women workers, etc. Thus the organization’s approach also highlights that work cannot be done by social workers alone, but requires input from other fields. The local communities and municipal authorities may request the organization to construct new sanitation systems, or the organization approaches the community. (National Institute of Urban Affairs, 1990: 9.) In addition, Sulabh has to collaborate with police and the judiciary in some instances.

### A modern version of Gandhian philosophy and tactics

The organization follows Gandhi’s teachings, which is the basis for all action; it implies moral and ethical statements, as well as implementing these in practice by the leaders’ personal example. Already Gandhi urged for a scientific method of human waste disposal. He demanded that those who were engaged in sanitation and other menial work should get equal civil rights in the society, especially to a proper standard of living. Pathak, on the
other hand, wants to modernize Gandhian philosophy and also bring it to an urban context. He believes that the liberation of scavengers comes through rehabilitation, education, training and social promotion, and the latter can come about with constant exposure to other castes: “if Mahatma Gandhi gave them a name, Pathak brought them an identity” (Versey, 1994). According to the organization’s philosophy, disadvantaged sections of the population cannot be left to fend for themselves, but they need to be helped to help themselves to become a part of the national mainstream, and also, directed personal and group interaction is believed to have a positive educational value and accelerate change and development. Despite the fact that the caste system is 4,000 years old, and efforts to eradicate it have encountered mixed success, Pathak considers it to be already breaking up as a silent revolution, but it needs a long time. In addition, in terms of environmental philosophy, Sulabh’s ideology resembles ‘Gaia’-thinking: waste material has to be recycled to conserve the life support system of our planet. Pathak has also observed that sanitation does not show up at all in international environmental agendas; even at the Rio conference it was almost totally absent. (ibid.; Sulabh India, 1998.)

Sulabh’s staff highlights the essence of involving local neighborhoods, to “start revolution in people’s minds”. The tactics include door-to-door campaigns by volunteers and workers who persuade people to convert their bucket latrines into *sulabh shauchalayas*. This starts with a process in which the people first fill in forms for applying for a loan and subsidy and authorize Sulabh to receive money and convert their dry latrines into *sulabh shauchalayas*. Sulabh’s staff takes over the building of latrines, from the beginning to completion, and finally trains people how to maintain them, which is the basis of all efforts. Land sites and funds for setting up sanitation systems are often provided by local authorities or other sponsoring bodies. An authority which wants to provide their complex to public contacts the organization and provides the site where the complex is to be constructed. The Government and the State Government provide financial assistance to people to get the system constructed in their houses.

The organization includes women as both students and instructors and they are regarded as key actors in environmental management, and therefore in every stage when implementing sanitation programs. The trained youth are also expected to play a key role when taking the experience to other urban and rural areas. The organization aims at ensuring sustainability by involving slum dwellers in forming and participating in various subcommittees and neighborhood societies that are set up for running the programs (Bahadur, 1998, pers.comm.).

Furthermore, Pathak has sometimes used more radical or revolutionary tactics. For instance, he has arranged several dramatic actions, by which he has tried to break the delusive old social barriers and sanctions, as one staff member describes:
Dr. Pathak took the Untouchables to the holy place, a hindu temple, where the priests first denied their entering. He told these religious leaders that someone has to do the dirty work anyway and the Untouchables should be able to enjoy human dignity as other people. He persuaded priests to help the Untouchables in learning prayers and entering temples, and finally, to dine with them. The latter is a tough issue to carry out, since sharing food with an Untouchable is one of the severest tabus for a Brahmin. The philosophy is implemented in practice as working together, having a common puja, a common meal of high caste Brahmins and scavengers. (Bahadur, 1998, pers.comm.)

Dynamics and impact of the organization
Merely the quantitative results which the organization displays are quite staggering. The organization has not restricted itself to being merely a local actor, but keeps on expanding, both on national and international levels. The organization works in 1176 towns or cities in India, while its headquarters are located in Delhi and Patna, with 23 local offices in the country. In Delhi, the organization has constructed over 400 Sulabh (public) units, and it has constructed or converted over 700,000 sulabh shauchalayas in houses and 3,000 public toilets providing sanitary facilities to about 10 million people. According to the organization’s estimations, over 35,000 scavengers have been liberated from the task of manual scavenging; about 3,500 wards and family members of these former scavengers have been given vocational training.

Pathak argues that voluntary organizations should maintain these sanitation systems on a pay-and-use basis, which would cut public expenditures on civic facilities and make cities cleaner places to live. One element of success is the organization’s high degree of self-sufficiency, and Sulabh wants to remain autonomous from government grants or public donations. According to Pathak, the organization does not receive any grant or subsidy, etc. from any agency, national or international. (Menon, 1996.) The organization raises its funding resources by taking a 20 percent implementation charge on projects, and the collected money is spent on running the organization. The annual budget is 50 million Rupees.

There are several enabling factors that have helped the organization to fulfill its goals (National Institute of Urban Affairs, 1990: 13-14):
- positive publicity and general awareness about the value of proper sanitation;
- readiness of the slum residents to receive, utilize and maintain the service;
- prioritizing construction of facilities in the communities from which the local administration has approached them; and
- personal skills and character of the leader.

On the other hand, behind the successful ventures of the organization, also several hindering factors have emerged (Menon, 1996):

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53 On caste pollution and taboos, see Douglas, 1992: 124.
ASSOCIATIONAL ENDEAVORS IN MAKING LIVABLE URBAN QUARTERS

- public protest against the organization occurred as residents from several slum areas feared that the Sulabh complex would further deteriorate local environmental conditions (however, after the organization offered more information on the project, residents agreed to the installation);
- politicians felt threatened by the unconventional solution and the media publicized the criticism;
- the inability of the poorest residents to pay for the latrines in their settlements – an issue that the organization could not have yet completely resolved, though their public latrines are generally well affordable or totally free;
- sanitation carries lower priority compared to water supply or shelter, which affects public funds targeted to this sector; and
- the reasons and the scope for possible resistance to the system is yet unknown.

**High national and international replication potential of the innovation**

Due to the fact that a large part of the Third World cities and rural areas are lacking sanitation facilities, Pathak (1998, pers.comm.) is very excited and convinced of the worldwide replicability potential of the innovation:

I believe this model is basically applicable to 4 billion people on Earth.

The organization cooperates with various levels of organizations and institutions in the country, like the Indian government’s Housing and Urban Development Corporation, and various sector ministries, such as the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The Central Pollution Control Board of Delhi funds the organization’s Institute of Technical Research and Training project, in which low-cost technology is studied in order to receive economic benefit in the form of aquatic plant production (from these ponds the plants can be sold as nutrition for poultry and animals). The Institute is also associated with the National River Conservation Project run by the government, particularly for the river Yamuna and Ganga. (Sulabh Sanitation Movement, 1997: 7-10.)

The national and international media’s (e.g. *New York Times*) active role in dissemination and creation of awareness on sanitation issues has also benefited the organization, bringing forth national and international publicity and, consequently, new funding opportunities for their various projects. The organization publishes its own national journal, *Sulabh India*, and the international journal *Gandhians in Action*, as well as produces teachers’ manuals for schools.

The model, with some minor modifications, is considered to be easily replicated by non-governmental and governmental organizations in other Third World countries. The number of international partnerships and networks the organization participates in is also very high. The organization has collaboration with several bilateral agencies (many of which have also
sponsored their programs particularly outside Delhi) such as the Danish International Development Agency and the Government of the Netherlands. For instance, with UNICEF the organization trained 2,000 women volunteers in Delhi’s 80 urban slums.

After a seven year evaluation, the World Bank and UNDP have recommended the Sulabh practice to more than 19 Third World countries. They advocate and provide financial assistance for the construction of these shauchalayas in India and other Third World countries of South-East Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Numerous governments and NGOs in Asia and Africa have requested the assistance of the organization to improve the sanitary and environmental conditions in their urban areas. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (UNCHS) recognized Sulabh’s practice as a global ‘Urban Best Practice’ in the Habitat II conference in 1996. Also the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) has granted Special Consultative Status to it in recognition of its “outstanding service to humankind”. (Sulabh brochures.) In all, the organization has an outstanding large number of cooperation partners on local, municipal, national and international levels. Over time, it would be interesting to explore how these close relations to influential (and some of them quite controversial) international development agencies and others possibly change the nature of the organization and what implications it might have at the local level.

The scaling up of the Sulabh innovation has succeeded through a broad and rapid replication nationally and internationally: it is ranked one of the 10 biggest NGOs in the world. However, there are several conditions that must be considered when transferring Sulabh technology to a new urban context (see National Institute of Urban Affairs, 1990: 19.). First, the potential replicators must consider the general preparedness of society to accept lower physical and technological standards. Second, the society would need to be receptive to the idea of an ‘unofficial provider’ (or GRO/NGO) delivering the service. Third, there should be willingness among the urban dwellers to use shared facilities. The availability of suitable sites in the city is the fourth prerequisite. Fifth, it is important to recognize the vital intermediary role played by international aid agencies in popularizing the concept among local policy-makers (governments and metropolitan agencies have usually not approached Sulabh of their own will). Sixth, it is necessary to set up a suitable institution for strategic planning and effective implementation, operating at reasonable cost and carrying out transactions with the residents, as well as ensuring cooperation with the governmental and financial institutions.
9. 3. AOYE EDUCATING AND LOBBYING WATER CONSERVATION

The Arab Office for Youth and Environment (AOYE) is a multiple-issue organization in Cairo, its main area being water conservation.

The question of potable water
As rains are rather non-existent in Egypt, the country is almost totally (96 percent) dependent of the Nile River as its main source of water. The major causes of water waste are improper use, network leakages, poor quality of plumbing devices and inadequate maintenance. Water loss due to leakages, comprising even 50 per cent on a daily basis, is caused by the poor condition of the city network (12-15 per cent), and is also due to the “bad behavior” of people (35 per cent). (Mahmoud, 1997, pers.comm.). The majority of Cairenes receive treated drinking water in individual connections in their homes, but it is not known with certainty exactly how many per cent have this service; the Cairo Water Authority has cited a high estimate of over 90 per cent, while another study estimates that at least 23 per cent of the Cairenes lack access to safe and adequate water supplies, stressing that the numbers of people adequately served are often overestimated. Many buildings that are served do not necessarily have indoor plumbing that further distributes the water to apartments. Since water service is often erratic in terms of pressure, hours of service and volume, cuts during peak hours cause common complaints. As a solution, many residents must store water in the evening in bathtubs for use in the morning. It is also often assumed that all those with water taps in their settlements are quite adequately served, but there are in many cases so few communal water taps that people have to wait for a long time in queues, or, where there are not even communal taps, the (poorer) people have to buy the water from unsafe containers at very high prices. Thus individuals relying on a neighborhood standpipe for water will individually use much less water than will people with connections in their home. (El-Gohary, 1993.)

The Organization
AOYE, the oldest ENGO in the country, was founded by Cairo university medical students, professors and journalists just a few years after the Stockholm conference, in 1978. However, AOYE was not registered as an NGO until 1990. Although the founders’ background varies, the common concern was the state of the environment in the country. The aim was to address environmental problems that impaired health and development and particularly, to activate youth who were concerned with environmental issues. Particularly support from Al Ahram journalists helped the organization in its initial phase. The group’s first target was to promote environmental awareness. The organization is said to have been independent from government funding for more than 20 years. (Mahmoud, 1997,
However, many of its programs are funded by international
development agencies. In appearance, the organization seems to be a rather
wealthy NGO, with its modern facilities and large office located in an
affluent district in Cairo.

Today, AOYE is not only a local organization, but also a national and
international level actor, and the biggest NGO in the country. Its
membership exceeds 3,000 persons, of which one third are women. The
Board of Directors consists of nine members, including two women: four
physicians, two engineers and one journalist; and the members come from
middle-class families (Gomaa, 1997: 24). The projects the organization has
implemented include various fields (afforestation, street cleaning and use of
renewable energy, solid waste, etc.); however, water conservation is the
main field. They have also organized training programs for youth on
environmental protection as well as education programs in schools and
courses to train university students, among others. Focusing on the youth
particularly, the organization considers them as potential leaders in
conducting environmental activities in their communities. As a result, they
have trained more than 10,000 youth and adults up to date.

As one of the staff members says (Al Shamy, 1997, pers.comm) they try
to find those areas in Cairo, the environment of which is under severest
pressure, often in the poorest areas. One special problem she names concerns
the toxic fumes from incinerators that are being used to get rid of garbage in
urban neighborhoods. The ‘Ideal Quarters’ projects introduced recycling
activities and environmental awareness in environmentally stressed areas. In
one case in a poor district of Cairo, the staff members moved there to
establish good connections between the organization and the people. In the
staff’s work with very poor people she considers the following:

Being illiterate does not imply that we do not need to discuss with them when
looking for information concerning various environmental issues in the area.
Usually people are knowledgeable about their surroundings, and they can offer us
better understanding. Since we outsiders represent well-educated people, it also
needs some sensitivity from us when we approach them.

One of the founders of the organization, Dr. Emad Adly, asserts that if one
talks about pollution to people who cannot meet even the basic needs in life,
they will not necessarily listen; one has to link the issue to their problems, so
it is easier to comprehend how pollution affects their lives and future (Civil
Society, 1993). In the face-to-face communication the organization also uses
community workers or specialists as consultants to help design ‘street level’
campaigns.

54 According to Law 32 in Egypt, NGOs’ board members should be volunteers who direct the
organization’s policies.
**Water conservation program**

AOYE concentrates on the quantity of water resources by promoting reduction of water consumption in households, public buildings and industry. Its goals and tactics are manifold: to integrate the public and private sectors in water management; to integrate local and national levels; to involve local communities in the planning, implementation, and monitoring; to carry out demonstration projects to show how water conservation concepts and practices can be applied in the community; to introduce low-cost techniques; and to encourage industries to use water-conserving devices.

The organization has a very close relationship with government bodies, especially the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency. The National Community Water Conservation Program (NCWCP) was implemented in the 1990s to address the problem of potable water loss. Its targets were to raise the level of public awareness through media campaigns and personal communication in the neighborhoods, and to promote cooperation between water-related parties in planning and implementation. The Program had a multidisciplinary approach, including social, technological, and economic aspects. It was the first partnership project among an ENGO (AOYE did the fieldwork, i.e., *tahriir iqtima'i*, and supported local communities), the private sector (SPAAC, a consultancy firm carried out social research), a foreign organization (The Southwest Florida Water Management District carried out technology transfer and staff training) and the government (EEAA worked as a supervisor). Tactics of the program included involving local communities in all stages of water conservation activities, from planning to maintenance, and introducing low-cost techniques for reduction of water loss. In the mid-1990s there was a TV campaign demonstrating how water consumption could be decreased in households, for instance, by closing running water taps and avoiding the lavish use of water. It has been, in fact, a common scene around the city that people stop road dust floating on air by spreading water on the streets, or that some poorly maintained taps are constantly running water.

The program started within three governorates (Cairo, Ismailia and Suez), in each of which AOYE has established an office. In Cairo, they focused on the affluent district of Zamalek and the middle or low-income district of Manial. Their aim was also to support the rise of local NGOs as well as help in financing them in water conservation issues. A large part of the funding came from USAID through the government. The program had two interconnected components. The ‘technical component’ included the replacement of old technology with new devices. The staff went to the site where high levels of water leakages took place: in schools, government offices, hospitals, and households, where the staff introduced different models and price levels of water devices. The ‘social component’ focused on teaching people to use the new device. In some cases the maintenance proved to be difficult, because each water supply system had its own type of
technology requiring special knowledge in usage. Therefore the staff also placed education material, such as posters, at these sites to advice on the proper use of new technology.

They sought to use the local social networks as ‘channels’ when approaching the neighborhood. It was noticed that in order to reach people, one has to go public places, such as schools, mosques and churches. On the other hand, they also discovered that convincing people is a rather difficult task without the help of opinion leaders at the local level, as the AOYE’s Team Leader Mohamed Mahmoud (1997, pers.comm.) explains:

Mosques and Churches are important places for the organization. We Egyptian people are very religious. So when you listen to something from the sheikh or the imam, you believe it directly. For that reason we keep good connections with the relevant Ministry, and run campaigns in the Friday mosques, where water conservation is discussed by imam. For the organization, it is easy to approach the local level because also Islam promotes cleanliness and according to Qur’an we must take care of our environment. But on the other hand, it is very difficult to convince people to change their behavior without offering alternatives. There are numerous means to save water, and the organization offers some ways to conserve it. The solutions must be simple and cheap so that affordability does not prohibit people from participating in water conservation.

This also shows how the organization benefits religious structures and practices in promoting their goal. The organization’s Team Leader argues that people do not have knowledge on how to change their behavior, even if they want to improve the situation and try to control their water consumption. However, he thinks that the question is not basically about the lack of awareness. According to his experience, 20 years ago “nobody listened about environment, and nobody cared about pollution, but now people have quite good awareness in environmental issues”.

Although Al Ahram is no longer the main supporter of the association due to its own growth, local and national media are still considered important partners for the organization’s work. On the national level the organization works through the media (TV, newspaper, radio) and cooperates with all the sector ministries that are related to water conservation. The organization has cooperation with industrial enterprises, which are recommended to purchase new types of conservation devices on the grounds of that it becomes economically more profitable in the long term. AOYE aims at having sustainability in their programs, so that after their withdrawal it is important that the systems are still maintained. They want to guarantee that the new technology, which at first may be more expensive compared to existing old systems, will keep on functioning. An example of sustainability in technical terms is to require licenses from persons who are responsible for maintaining the system. The Ministry of Education has established a small group to focus on water conservation in almost every school in Cairo, totalling more than 4,000 ‘Friends for Water’.
A hotline for environmental violations

A new, and quite promising service concept has been created by the organization to improve the state of the city environment and to work more closely to people’s concerns. In 1998, they established a ‘hotline’-telephone service, through which people could express their complaints and demands on various environmental violations in their neighborhoods. Within the first five months, they received 900 complaints concerning not only water pollution, but also garbage disposal, sewage, smoke emissions, food pollution and flooding. The complaints came from diverse areas of Cairo, ranging from high-income Maadi and Nasr City to low-income areas such as Imbaba and Agouza. After a AOYE field specialist had visited the problem area and notified the relevant authorities, some resolutions came up. Depending on how big the problem was, it took between two weeks and a month to solve a problem once a complaint was filed. Up to now, an average 25 percent of the complaints have been considered appropriate enough to forward to the ministries, but they have sought to forward every complaint to the relevant authority for action. Serious complaints with potential solutions are prioritized above those which only affect a small number of people or which cannot be addressed properly. Thus AOYE does not have judicial or policing powers, but instead, it serves as a coordinating body to report complaints to respective authorities, mainly ministries. (Talib, 1999.)

The organization has received funds for the service from a German NGO, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and the Embassy of the Netherlands. With these funds, the organization has purchased computer equipment and paid salaries for the 18 full-time staff members at the main office, as well as trained the staff in various environmental problems and communication skills. The organization wants to staff the hotline service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but this has encountered limitations because the organization’s working partners have not had the budgets to cope with a higher volume of complaints. These partners also include the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Irrigation and Public Works, the Cairo and Giza Cleaning Authorities and the governorates of Cairo, Giza and Qaliubiah. Resolving local problems were often noted to be complicated endeavors; for instance, getting rid of the polluting small-scale workshops simultaneously cut off employment in the area; or, how to follow-up on the case after its resolution. For example, when the organization cleared garbage from one empty building lot after a complaint, people began to use the place again as a disposal site as the organization did not follow up on the case. As discussed earlier in this study, garbage dumping, which is perceived to be the most annoying environmental problem by the public in Cairo, also constitutes 70 percent of the complaints AOYE receives. Dumping is not caused only by individuals but also public authorities have broken the rules, to which the organization has responded by contacting another authority and a special unit of the police. (ibid.)
Connections to other NGOs and international development agencies

AOYE was among the few ENGOs affecting national environmental policy-making, particularly in the formulation of the environmental law of 1994 (Gomaa, 1997, pers.comm.). The organization has a reputation for being the leading environmental organization in the Arab region, by coordinating the work of the Egyptian ENGOs with other groups in the region. It is also a liaison office for the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED), and also the Chair of EcoPeace, which includes ENGO members from four Middle Eastern countries. AOYE coordinates with several international ENGOs, such as the Environment Liaison Center International.

In addition to carrying out a national assessment on the implementation of Agenda 21 among the Egyptian ENGOs, AOYE has also made a regional assessment with the Earth Council. The organization has participated in the main international environment-related conferences during the 1980s and 1990s and networked with other ENGOs. Like Sulabh, AOYE has been acknowledged in these international forums, for instance, it received the Global 500 award from UNEP in 1986. The organization works in cooperation with numerous UN organizations and programs, like UNEP, UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF, and participates in various LIFE and GEF programs.

9.4. AHED MITIGATING SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIAL AIR POLLUTION

The Association for Health and Environmental Development (AHED) aims at improving the health of people and addresses the importance of cleaner living areas especially for the poor. In particular, its role in a campaign against industrial air pollution also serves as an interesting case.

Societal and environmental background

Since the 1970s in Egypt, the decreasing role of the state in service provision has caused a great need for ‘gap-filling’ by NGOs and the private sector (Shukrallah, 1998). This trend, in which the government is withdrawing from service production and the quality of services is diminishing, accelerated by structural adjustment programs and privatization, have impacted adversely on poor and other low-income groups, who suffer the most from the cuts in the health care sector. As a result of deteriorating socio-economic conditions, some groups of Muslims and Christians have united to work closely together in Islamic movements and NGOs (Abdel Wahab, 1997), a phenomenon which actually dates back to the 19th century.

In the beginning of the 1980s, some collective action was sparked off by a group of university graduates and doctors, responding to President Anouar Sadat’s ‘open door’ policy which further aggravated the poor’s conditions as well as diminished job opportunities of the doctors themselves. Funding cuts strained many health clinics, which lacked both supplies and trained staff.
Besides to fact that salaries in health care were very low, the group shared another concern: medicalization of the profession as well as the monopoly of doctors in judgements of health were considered not correct by the young doctors, who wanted to stress a broader approach to health. They argued that the prevailing patient-doctor relationship was too narrow, only the symptoms being dealt with and not the underlying causes within the population. It was seen as a great deficiency that health was not perceived to be connected to socio-economic factors and eventually, to democracy and human rights. Therefore the group wanted to introduce a more socially-oriented health care concept into the mainstream health policy.

Thus, the movement development was pushed forward as a response to the ‘open door’ policy of the government. Doctors and graduates, particularly from the universities of Cairo and Assiut, arranged meetings at the end of 1970s and the beginning of 1980s. They found that the initial movement within the Medical Syndicate Union (which focused on purely medical issues) was not the most appropriate setting in the long term and that entering government politics would be a better forum in which to advocate their issues. Therefore in the mid-1980s the group participated in elections by merging with another doctors’ group, and together they formulated a program as a basis for action. Nevertheless, representing a secular group of professionals with a relatively large number of supporters, they were defeated in elections by the Muslim fundamentalists. The reason for this was that the fundamentalists had the support of a number of doctors, originating from other areas than the Syndicate. After having lost the elections, a more organized formation came up as a next necessary step within the movement during the next three years. A few of their members published articles in newspapers, in which they urged attention to the need for societal change and the greater importance of health care. Finally in 1987 the Association for Health and Environment (AHED) was registered at the Ministry of Social Affairs. The aim of the association, which then comprised a multidisciplinary group of professionals, was to examine the impact of social, economic and behavioral factors on health care in Egypt, as well as to promote awareness on the relationship between environment and health.

**Laborious victory in El Waily**

In 1988, several doctors within AHED decided to open a clinic in El Waily, a low-income district located to the northeast of Cairo. El Waily was chosen as a target area because one member had worked there before, and “he enjoyed the trust of the community, which helped the organization to enter and establish itself there”, according to one of the founders and the current Chair in the Board of Directors, Dr. Alaa Shukrallah. The clinic, for which they gave their own financial contribution, had in its initial phase some constraints in terms of cost-recovery, however, soon they had some help from international NGOs such as Oxfam. After this, however, the doctors noticed that a clinic was not sufficient enough to tackle environmentally...
connected health issues, so they established a private company, a primary health care center (PHC) in the same area. The tasks of the center were to tackle environmental hazards and focus on preventative health care, such as health education classes and a patient screening system.

The association and the health care center became suddenly involved in an unexpected endeavor, a neighborhood campaign against those forces who had contributed to the bad environmental conditions in the area. Khaled Kamel (1995), who also worked in AHED, documented the campaign or movement anatomy, which he called a “successful grassroots campaign”. The conditions in densely populated urban quarters of El Waily were quite common to other low-income areas in the city. There were a few volunteer and private clinics and a relatively expensive private hospital. The average family size in the neighborhood was six persons. Buildings, which were typically divided by narrow streets, were supplied with basic services: clean water, electricity and sewage disposal. Just inside the living area, 26 functioning (small/middle scale) factories included metal smelting, textile, rubber and chemical production, among others. In addition to a high level of growing unemployment and deteriorating social services, residents suffered from various health problems caused by this industrial activity. Soon after its establishment, the PHC started the identification of factories, which were the highest risk to residents. The result was that two lead smelters posed the greatest threat to public health. Both plants used a simple technique to transform lead plates of old car batteries into sewage collecting equipment, and in the process toxic lead and sulfur oxides were emitted into the air as smoke. The dangers of exposure to lead pollution are well known: in children, low level lead poisoning can cause slow physical and mental development, while at a high level, the nervous system and kidneys can be severely damaged. What makes this pollutant ‘invisible’ and therefore more dangerous, is that its symptoms are not obvious and are often mistaken for signs of influenza. In addition, vehicles emit lead too, all of which accumulate in the dust of the streets, the children’s playground. In addition, local food sellers working in unsanitary conditions added to the health risk in the area. Most of all, the chimneys from lead smelters were only three stories high, posing an imminent health risk for every resident as the surrounding buildings were five stories or more high. (Kamel, 1995.)

The center was basically concerned with risks in all 26 factories, however, financial limitations and a lack of manpower forced them to focus efforts on these two lead factories. The volunteers of the center had discussions with the neighborhood, in which people’s personal experiences of the effects of pollution revealed the existing health problems and risk perceptions, most probably connected to the smoke from the factories. In addition, the volunteers had discussions with local community activists, who had sought to raise the lead factories’ case to wider public attention without success for several years. They had sent complaints to many places, such as local authorities; each successive governor of Cairo; and to the Ministry of
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Health. From all these authorities, only one of the Cairo governors reacted and asked another authority, the head of the district, to shut down the smelters, but nothing happened. (ibid.) The factory owner, who was a powerful person in the area, was said to have frightened the residents and activists, saying that he was able to bribe, if necessary, the local officials with a high amount of LE 5000 (or more) on a daily basis in order to keep his factory functioning. As a matter of fact, the continued inaction by these officials on the subject easily raises suspicions of corruption.

In the beginning of the 1990s, the PHC and the board of AHED began to tackle the lead smelter case. They knew that introducing a new type of action, that is, confronting economic forces and probably their ‘allied’ public authorities, would be a far from easy task and would bring forth problems. Keeping in mind the previous closures of a few NGOs by the government, they decided to take the risk that some authority, including the police, may act against them. Also, there was some fear that the residents would initiate some violent actions against factories, which the center and the organization did not want to become involved in.

The campaign started when a group of PHC and AHED volunteers went door to door distributing newsletters, which informed about the origins, risks and symptoms of lead pollution, as well as methods of protecting against it. Discussions took place among the residents and the volunteers, and the campaign recruited more volunteers, in order to create a more solid group when lobbying the government. Many residents were eager to join the campaign, but felt powerless and afraid and therefore urged for radical, violent action, which they sought to justify by the severity of the health risks of the factories. The volunteers had health education sessions in public places, such as popular coffee houses and in the local community development associations. In particularly some young university graduates were eager to join the ‘fight’. (Kamel, 1995.)

As a next step, the group began researching the laws which ruled the operation of these factories. While district officials were reluctant to help in this, AHED was approached by one of the El Wayli community leaders and activists. He provided the needed official documents, and furthermore, he wanted to raise the issue in the People’s Assembly (or the Parliament), where he was El Waily representative in the opposition party. His aim was to collect solid scientific evidence concerning the possible health effects of lead pollution – a task which proved to be most problematic. The documents, which stated that filters had already been installed in the smelters that reduced lead pollution by 80 per cent, were found to be highly suspicious by the group. In tracking other evidence proving that these factories posed a real threat to the area’s residents, it became a great help that several from outside decided to join the group. They, for instance, suggested that there are possibilities for residents to sue the factories for financial compensation. The group regarded scientific research as critical for the advancement of the campaign; however, cooperation with the researchers in the universities and
national research institutes was found to be a difficult task, as Kamel critically asks: “…are community needs considered when study plans are made, and do the results of studies of environmental health risks benefit anyone but the researchers themselves?”

Further, the group collected blood samples from the cooperative. In addition, finally one university researcher volunteered to make an evaluation on the role of lead smelters in polluting air and the effects of high concentrations of atmospheric lead on health. The study found that air pollution levels in El Waily were 35 times higher than other areas of Cairo, and nearly 50 times greater than the air quality standard for lead in the United States. The results were disseminated quite extensively both in El Waily and among NGOs; media (newspapers, magazines and radio); the People’s Assembly; the Cairo governor and the Environmental Agency (EEAA). While only the last body, the EEAA, did not respond to the results, the governor issued a decree, which was implemented in 1993 so that both lead factories were closed for the first time since they had opened in 1972.

Nevertheless, the following events demonstrate how intricate the issue actually was throughout the campaign. The factory owners responded by deciding to sue the governor, which did not initiate any action, for the date of the public hearing was changed “mysteriously” and neither the group nor the government representative was notified. Furthermore, one of the factories was suddenly reopened and caused a number of counteractions by the residents and local council representatives who marched to the site and tried to close the factory. But closing was rather difficult because the owner had removed the doors, the exits, of the factory on purpose. Residents sustained pressure on the governor, who was finally able to shut down the factory. To quote Kamel, the group “[w]as not just a catalyst for community mobilization. It was a peaceful outlet for the frustrations of El Waily’s community and bridged the gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ … it becomes clear that the potential for community mobilization is present as well as the potential for great achievements. But there are hindrances to the realization of widespread activism.”

But the El Waily case, as can be anticipated due to these incidences, does not remain the last conflict of this kind. The groups were afraid that the factories would just shift to another place in the city, or to another city; there were many other polluting factories elsewhere in the city, which ought to be tackled.

The Organization, philosophy and tactics
The number of the organization’s members exceeds 100, with several types of membership (Board of Directors, General Assembly; and expert and honorable members). The Center for Health and Environmental Development Services (CHEDS), which works under AHED, has also a board, a co-ordinating committee, which collects funds and plans projects, which have to be accepted by the main Board. Under CHEDS there are two
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types of bodies, which take care of the activities and projects: programs on the one hand (health policies and systems programs; disability programs; environmental and development programs) and technical support units on the other (including resource unit i.e. library and communications facilities for researchers, including internet, email, videos, periodicals in Arabic and English, etc.; also a publications unit, which publishes the organization’s newsletter). Two more recent units, of research and training, are more functionally oriented.

AHED aims at introducing alternative policy development in health issues in Cairo. It regards environmental problems as a crucial cause for health problems, such as respiratory diseases or lead poisoning. Being ‘disabled’ does not only mean being handicapped, but for instance, malfunctioning sewerage systems can make a person disabled and sick due to pollution, as one staff member describes:

The main factor, which first affects people’s health, is their immediate living environment. In our organization, we look at health – not as mere the cases of illness but also as conditions and causes, such as the lack of clean air to breathe. We want to include broader aspects of environmental problems into the center of the disability concept: disability is not only that somebody is injured but further, measuring the burden of illness or disability in lost years of a person’s life. (Serag, 1997, pers.comm.)

The poor and other low-income neighborhoods are the association’s target groups, for whom they establish community level projects. In addition, their goal is to affect policymakers and make them more responsive, so that disadvantaged groups would be able to fulfill their needs. The organization has identified some roles for itself: identifying needs and environment-related health problems perceived by local people; training community members and leaders; and arranging campaigns. The leader of the organization names three factors that have contributed to their achievements:

Success in AHED’s work has been a result of three functions: taking legal actions against industries; putting pressure on the Parliament members; and receiving help from the governor of Cairo (Shukrallah, 1997, pers.comm.).

Funding sources and relationships to other NGOs
Some tension between ‘green’ and ‘brown’ problems comes up in the leader’s opinion concerning funding priorities:

Environment has become a fashion, so many groups in Egypt want to support environmental issues. I think that funding the protection of foxes in Sinai should be a secondary concern, because the country’s primary environmental issues, definitely, are severe pollution of air and water resources and overcrowded housing with unhealthy living conditions. (Shukrallah, 1997, pers.comm.)
Although the donor funding is seen as the locus where the competition within the ENGO sector emerges, Shukrallah’s view is quite similar to that of other ENGOs in this study; cooperation and co-ordination ought to be intensified and resources combined within the sector in regarding broad, national level issues, in particular:

The first task is to develop ‘community agendas’ in order to tackle local urban environmental problems. On the national level, there is a need for more unambiguous environmental policy strategies – that’s why ENGOs have to continue influencing together those procedures. (Shukrallah, 1997, pers.comm.)

In the El Waily case they received financial aid from Oxfam and some other foreign NGOs. In addition, the organization networks and cooperates with numerous foreign civic groups. Their relations to the government are rather minimal and they materialize through the channeling the foreign funding through the Ministry of Social Affairs to the association, and as a routine, through the association giving annual reports to the Ministry. In addition, the organization is concerned about the health problems caused by water pollution in situations in which sewage has been incidentally mixed with drinking water.

9.5. APE PROMOTING GARBAGE RECYCLERS’ WORK

The Association for the Protection of the Environment (APE) works with Cairo’s garbage collectors and recyclers, and is thus a single issue organization. This group, the *zabbaleen*, are not only selling products made from garbage they have collected and recycled, but they have also been successful in persuading the Government to legally recognize their community.

**Background**

For any city to function, the informal sector is critical in solid waste management. In the past, the waste collectors, the *zabbaleen*, were sometimes banned from entering the city due to suspected health hazards and risk of epidemic. It later transpired that non-collection of solid waste constituted an even greater health risk. In the mid-1990s, Cairo produced at least 6,500 tons of solid waste daily, half of which was collected by the city and private companies, and one-third, i.e., approximately 2000 tons by the *zabbaleen* (Assaad & Moharram, 1994). The rest, 1,500 tons, was left on vacant sites in the poorest areas, which had no waste collection system at all. However, according to more recent estimations, the *zabbaleen* handle over 3,000 tons of garbage daily (Khalil, 1998). Part of the unrecyclable waste usually remains in the living habitat of the *zabbaleen*, who are thus exposed

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55 This case study is based on my earlier works, see Myllylä, 1998b; 2001.
to the serious health risks. The Cairo municipality has been reluctant to recognize the important role of this informal environmental service, regarding it as merely a primitive, temporary phenomenon, later to be wiped out and replaced by a modern system of waste disposal (Volpi, 1997).

This section focuses on the development process among the Cairene waste recyclers resulting from the intervention of APE. The *zabbaleen* are a poor urban group whose informal settlement is located on an environmentally hazardous site. Almost all are Copts (only four per cent are Muslims) and as such they represent a minority in the city as a whole. The APE was originally established from above by the city government with professionals in charge, in order to create better living conditions in the settlement, particularly for the poorest women and girls. Another purpose was to co-ordinate the waste recyclers’ work with the citywide solid waste management system. The whole upgrading project gradually evolved into a development intervention, in which environmental issues were closely connected with income generation, women’s empowerment, education and health care.

**The Zabbaleen settlement and early associational activities**

The zabbaleen live in seven areas outside the city proper, of which the largest is the Muqattam settlement with a population of about 18,000. In less than ten years, the Muqattam settlement has been transformed from a mere manual waste sorting point to a recycling industry. The zabbaleen have been waste collectors in Cairo for a long time, but the term recyclers is preferable because it describes better the change that has taken place in the settlement as a result of the development intervention by the APE and the other actors. Internationally, the zabbaleen experience has served as a model to be emulated elsewhere in big cities of the developing world. Within Cairo, the zabbaleen are slowly becoming known through environmental awareness-raising projects proliferating among the urban population. However, in the case of such a marginalized group and activity, this process is slow and contains numerous obstacles.

The zabbaleen settlement is located to the east of Cairo, on the outskirts of the city. It is hidden at the lower part of the Muqattam limestone mountain, but above the low-income district of Manshiet Nasser. Therefore, the settlement has also been called Upper Manshiet Nasser. It is not visible from the city below, but the black smoke from its burning waste is easily recognizable amidst the huge yellowish rocks when passing by the area at a distance. To visit the site one must enter through a labyrinth of houses and small roads in Manshiet Nasser below. When arriving in the closed area of the zabbaleen, rushing donkey carts and pick-ups filled with different types of solid waste pass by in-between the multi-storeyed concrete houses. Behind these houses are the pigsties. All around people are sorting, moving, and reprocessing various types of household waste.
Waste villages in Egypt are an urban phenomenon dating back to the late 1940s. The zabbaleen (singular: zabbal), however, have a century-long history as the cleaners of the city (see Raymond, 1993: 243). Today’s waste collectors and their families have migrated from rural areas of southern Egypt, especially from Assiut, to the capital. As landless, illiterate peasants, unprotected by the patronage of a large landowner, they were driven by crop failure to the big city in search of a livelihood (Kamel, 1994: 1). As pig breeders, they saw the city as a vital source of pig feed.

The zabbaleen used to set out on donkey-drawn carts to individual residences in the city, collect the waste and take it back to their settlements and sort it into separate recyclable components. The food waste was fed to the pigs and the other items sold to recycling centers. Thus, pig production, not recyclables, made up the bulk of their income. Keeping animals was one of the many ways in which they could hang on to their rural origins and saidi lifestyle (of southern Egypt). The households paid a monthly fee to a middleman, a waahi (originating from an oasis of the desert) who allocated concessions on collection routes to waste collectors, and also earned some profit from the sale of recyclable paper; the zabbaleen never received any money from the people they served (Kamel 1994: 1-3). The inflow of migrants also meant prosperity to another group of middlemen, the mu‘allim (‘master’, land proprietor), who settled the newcomers (ibid.: 101).

Gradually entire zabbaleen families, clans and villages moved to Cairo and took over the task of paper collection from the waahi. These two groups have created a USD 22 million business employing totally 75,000 people and sustaining many more (Financial Times, 1999). However, the poorest areas often lack this solid waste collection service, because the zabbaleen prefer to avoid areas where the garbage is less valuable for recycling (Nedoroscik, 1997: 68).

The size and number of these squatter settlements, located on the periphery of the city, have increased steadily. Numerous evictions, however, compelled many zabbaleen to move to other parts of Cairo until a large number of them finally settled on the Muqattam Hills, where they built homes of tin, cardboard and fallen rock in anticipation of further eviction by the government. Although they felt the place to be secure, it appeared inhospitable: a deserted, rocky and sandy hill with no access to roads, water, or electricity. Fires burned constantly around the village since all useless waste was set on fire. In the 1990s, several gigantic rocks have fallen from the cliff, killing some ten people (Kamel 1994: 3-5, 104-105; Middle East Times, 1994: 6). Kinship ties have been very strong in the settlement. Kamel (1994: 8) points out that the people form a complex web of community and family networks, all of which share a common ethnic identity and a destiny of oppression, which serve to produce a sense of solidarity. She stresses that “... [i]t is vitally important to understand that our classification of the various groups of people organised in this productive activity as men, women and children is not how the people [the zabbaleen] themselves perceive their
organization. Rather, they saw themselves as fathers going out on the route with sons, daughters, nieces, and nephews ...” She refers to the special comprehension of life among people whose world is formed around “an entire labyrinth of kinship ties through which they perceive themselves and their work”. Coming from a zabbaleen family (and belonging to the first generation of waste collectors who have received formal education i.e. one of the ‘new generation leaders’) Ezzat Naim Guindy (1997) also confirmed this by saying that the whole Muqattam settlement actually originates from one big family, and there are strong relationships among the people (see also Rugh, 1985: 206-207). In this respect, I could use the term community here. I adhere, however, to the terms settlement, or neighborhood, since I have not studied the issue more closely, and also, the studies of Volpi and Abdel Motaal (1997) indicate that the CBO, El Gam‘iyya, has sparked off several tensions in the settlement. John Abbott (1996: 118-120) points out that “the problem which needs to be faced by urban upgrading, and similar programmes being dealt with through negotiated development, is that they cannot escape the issue of community heterogeneity” (see also Vaa, 1993). There exist many potential conflicts, for instance, between men and women, between landowners and tenants, between different organizations claiming to represent the community, etc.

For a long time, the only outsiders who ventured into the Muqattam waste village were merchants of recyclables. But due to strong religious convictions, some foreigners and Egyptians gradually became involved with this marginalized group. The area has been the object of numerous charity and development activities. In the mid-1970s, a bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church was the first to initiate mobilization efforts at the community level, leading to the formation of the Waste Collectors’ Association, El Gam‘iyya, as a private voluntary organization and a community-based organization (CBO). Thus, the bishop was instrumental in legally forming a non-profit association to assist the people in times of crisis and need. The new organization, APE, has criticized El Gam‘iyya, because the most powerful families in the area had allegedly taken over the leadership and distributed the benefits unequally. In her study, Elena Volpi (1997) has also found that El Gam‘iyya is a non-participatory organization, with authoritarian (or patron-client) leadership, accountable to only a minority of zabbaleen. This CBO has been unable to improve the situation of the poorest in the settlement. Laila Kamel (1994: 12-15) argues that El Gam‘iyya was, though, a kind of milestone in the transformation of a private voluntary association from a charity-orientated organization to a community-based development organizations adopting self-help (el maghoud iz-zati, Deboulet, 1996: 154) as its approach.

An active priest of the Catholic Church, Father Simon is the current president of the CBO, and “the most powerful leader in the settlement”, whose personal relations have helped in receiving donor funding (Volpi, 1997: 25-26). The services in the settlement have extended beyond liturgy,
worship and Christian education, to the establishment of schools, adult literacy classes, services for disabled children, etc. Another important person has been Soeur Emmanuelle, a Catholic nun, who has devoted her life to serving the zabbaleen. The Sisters of Charity (Mother Teresa of India) and El Gabarty Services (headed by Suzanne Mubarak, the wife of Egypt’s President) have also offered health and education services to the settlement (Assaad & Garas, 1994: 8-10).

**Emergence of the APE**

The first private voluntary organization in the area, El Gam’iyya, became the recipient of funds for a credit program designed to enable waste collectors to become recyclers. In the 1980s the Governorate of Cairo, i.e., the local government, sought to improve its solid waste management. The Governorate selected the Muqattam settlement for participation in a squatter settlement upgrading program financed by the World Bank. Thus the local government, which earlier did not recognize the settlement, now favored the new upgrading program, due to financial benefits it received from the World Bank (Volpi, 1997: 40). In addition to improving the living conditions of the zabbaleen, it was hoped that the waste collection operations could be incorporated into the wider solid waste management system of the city (Assaad & Garas, 1994: 1). The World Bank entered into a contract with a Cairene consulting firm, Environmental Quality International (EQI), specializing in solid waste management and urban upgrading programs, in order to carry out studies on the infrastructure in the area. The EQI was to run an integrated program to address the main question: how to upgrade the settlement in terms of environmental protection?

Before 1984, the zabbaleen used to sell plastic and metal waste to outsiders who recycled them. The EQI came up with the idea of establishing small workshops equipped with machines that could crush and modify different recyclable materials. It was desirable that people be employed in the enterprises and participate in the manufacturing process, to ensure that more of the overall economic benefits would accrue to the settlement. In addition to enhanced income generation, the other critical question was how to get rid of the waste which could not be recycled, the zeriba waste, i.e., manure from the organic waste fed to pigs, goats and donkeys. It was common practice to get rid of zeriba waste by dumping it into the streets, vacant areas, or by storing it in houses or in pits, to be sold later. These practices produced foul odors, were unhealthy and hazardous, causing skin and eye infections. To deal with the problem of the zeriba waste (a raw material for fertilizers) the EQI studied the feasibility of establishing a composting plant to receive the organic material, ferment and separate it, and eventually sell it as powder compost for agricultural purposes in the desert areas in the country. This new project was meant to offer solutions to both environmental concerns, and to generate income for the settlement from processing residues into high quality soil nutrients.
ASSOCIATIONAL ENDEAVORS IN MAKING LIVABLE URBAN QUARTERS

The household waste collection work of the *zabbaleen* precedes the recycling process. In the early hours of the morning, a *zabbal* has to move with his donkey cart for tens of kilometers when circulating the daily route. Each waste collector has his own area in Cairo to collect from. In high-rise buildings, he climbs up the stairs quickly and collects the waste which people have put in the plastic bags in the front of their doors. Meanwhile, the child takes care of the cart. After having finished the tour, they return to Muqattam, transporting the collected material up the hill with two exhausted donkeys pulling the small wooden cart. Then the whole family starts sorting the material; the plastics, metals and papers are stored. When they have a good quantity for sale, the raw material is sold to recyclers. Then there is the leftovers from the kitchen, which they give to animals. After that he collects the manure and mixes it with the leftovers from the kitchen, and brings this *zeriba* waste to the Association, to its composting site. The continuous traffic of donkey carts loaded with manure are not pulled, but rather slowed by donkeys on sliding hooves, down the steep road leading to the composting plant:

So here [to the Association] becomes the ‘waste of the waste’, after the animals are fed. It is then dropped into two loaders [composting machines] which separate it ... and which have pit drums with many holes to allow the powder of the compost to fall down between the concrete walls, and the other waste comes from the other side, and we take that to be fermented again ... the waste will be kept heated under the sun for six weeks ... the loader turns it over once a week. After that we measure the temperature inside it and when we are sure that it is 70 degrees, it [the compost] is good. (Guindy, 1997.)

The critical question concerning the prospects for project success was whether or not the people had the skills to run this type of venture. The EQI found that El Gam‘iyya faced several problems related to the sophisticated demands of composting plant management. Therefore, the EQI decided to develop an organization that could run the plant in order to generate profit, which, in turn, could fund and support all the other development activities in the settlement. A development-orientated solution was desired, rather than just a commercial enterprise; a producers’ co-operative was ruled out in favor of a private voluntary organization. The EQI concluded that an association under the Ministry of Social Affairs would be the only viable option for the envisaged purpose. Furthermore, the EQI approached community leaders as well as outsiders, a few professionals, to form a new organization. As a result, the Association for the Protection of the Environment (APE), a non-governmental development organization, was established in 1984 and registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs. The EQI prepared a feasibility study for the composting plant and was instrumental in the formation of the APE. It also provided technical and management assistance to the organization in the initial stage of its operation, and was represented on the Board of directors of the APE (Assaad
& Garas, 1994: 35). In accordance with the law, the APE, as an NGO, is
governed by a General Assembly holding annual meetings and selecting
Board members who direct all the activities of the Association. There are
nine Board members, seven of whom are women. They organize all the main
activities, adopt policies and are responsible for strategic planning. Both the
General Assembly members and the Board members are volunteers, as
required by the law. The paid professional staff of some 50 persons
implement the policies and carry out practical activities.

The APE was expected to manage the Muqattam composting plant and
initiate other development activities and services in the settlement. The main
objective was “to improve the lives of the indigenous groups of waste
recyclers as individuals and as a community (...) the principles of
participation of the people in decision-making, and of financial and
environmental sustainability were highlighted from the beginning.” (Assaad
& Garas, 1994: 40-41). The first priority was to set up its administrative
structure and to build the composting plant. In 1987 the APE Board
established the first development unit: the Health and Development
Committee. However, it was soon realized that applying development
principles when working with poor people living under harsh conditions was
no easy task. The APE had chosen to work with the most vulnerable group,
the poorest young women and girls. Doaa Abdel Motaal (1997) has studied
the circumstances in which the zabaleen women live in Muqattam. She
observed (p. 76-79) that the people in the settlement live in extremely
overcrowded conditions. Furthermore, each household raises 40-50 pigs,
which live in the backyards of the residences. Since women sort the waste
(between 10-12 hours daily), they are more frequently the victims of the
rapid spread of diseases at the settlement. Most of the dwelling units do not
receive running water, electricity and do not have latrines. The purchase of
water from the local church is also the responsibility of women. Thus they
play an integral role in the waste management process, which requires
special skills.

Since the emergency needs of the people and adequate responses to them
were regarded as important, a Crisis Management Committee was also
established within APE. According to the APE volunteers, the attempt to
organize at the grassroots proved a most difficult exercise for the zabaleen,
receiving a subjective – if not paternal – interpretation:

Due to harsh conditions under which the people live and the tendency to believe in
the survival of the fittest, they do not easily trust each other or outsiders. And if
they trust, they rely on individuals with whom they have had long contact.
Workers must first prove worthy of their trust. Moreover, because of the complex
family and working relations and the various charity endeavors in the settlement,
people enjoy receiving but do not know the meaning of giving. If they are not sure
of deserving immediate benefit from the activity, they exercise passive resistance.
(Assaad & Garas, 1994: 42.)
The organization faced several challenges in the beginning. First, in this field there were very few experts readily available in Egypt. Second, the rent for the plot of land, leased from the municipality, was too high. This conflicted with the objective of the project, and placed an extra financial burden on the Association. Third, in plant management the APE had to adapt job descriptions according to the level of skills and qualifications of the local people to ensure sustainability of the project after EQI’s withdrawal. Fourth, technical difficulties emerged in the operation of the plant (e.g., the breakdown of equipment and lack of spare parts), which indicated that the selected technology was perhaps not appropriate. Fifth, environmental hazards from the combustion process of the plant emerged in the form of smoke entering the living quarters. Finally, the established infrastructure – drinking water, sanitation and electricity – was overburdened due to the continuous influx of new families into the area, as well as the electricity-consuming workshops. As a result, the local infrastructure functioned poorly. (Assaad & Garas, 1994: 36-40.)

The composting plant and rug-weaving center
The Muqattam composting plant became the focus of the settlement and the organization. It is the basis for all activities, since its revenue covers staff salaries and maintenance as well as overhead costs. Other activities, such as the rug-weaving center, cover their own staff salaries, materials, machines and other direct costs.

The EQI helped in securing funding, in which Les Amis de Soeur Emmanuelle in Muqattam played a very important role. They turned to the European Union, which decided to provide support. The Ford Foundation also gave a grant. The plant was expected to upgrade the environment of the settlement as a whole by clearing streets of animal zeribas and other organic waste and thus informing and encouraging the improvement of the level of cleanliness and sanitation in the settlement; generating surplus funds that could be channeled into other activities aimed at further improving the settlement, and at providing self-support after the withdrawal of donors; and increasing the effectiveness of the services provided by the zabaleen. (Assaad & Garas, 1994: 35-36, quoting EQI, 1984.) Currently, there are two composting plants in operation, because it became necessary to double the capacity. The composting plant site is located almost in the middle of the settlement.
The composting plant (below) and children bringing manure by donkey carts.
In its new form, the soil does not contain the harmful bacteria of unrefined manure, but another severe problem has arisen in the process: a high level of heavy metals in the composted soil. In order to tackle the heavy metal problem of soil contamination, a pilot project was started to separate the waste at the source, i.e., in the households of Cairo. It took a few years for the APE to monitor and follow up on the pilot project. For this purpose, a team of young men was trained to visit the households and to remind the Cairenes to continue sorting their waste. Two different types of experimental sites were chosen: households from both high-income (Manial) and middle/low-income (Dar El Malak) areas. It appeared that the latter were more interested in the sorting process than the former. The households were given two different boxes, one for organic and the other for inorganic waste. After this experiment, the heavy metal level in the composted soil dropped considerably. The experiment reduced contamination in animals fed with the organic waste. Moreover, it had a significant effect on the life of the women because their work – separation of the waste – became less time-consuming and thus released time for other tasks. The organization has been planning to extend the project by including new high-income areas, in which some 50,000 units (households and restaurants) will participate. Apart from its environmental objectives the project aims at continuously enhancing the pride and reputation of the despised zabaleen.

Thus, the upgrading project began with recycling of organic pig manure from zeribas into high-grade compost, which was sold in agricultural areas, including reclaimers of desert land. This activity generated income which was directed to a) a community-based health project; b) an income-generating project for girls and women in rag and paper recycling; c) literacy classes and d) a children’s club.

In 1988, a second initiative was launched by the Association, which again took charge of a settlement-wide project. The project focused on the poorest women and girls, who were taught to recycle clean rags into rugs by weaving on handlooms. Simple technology was used in teaching basic skills to the girls and women who might be regarded as dispossessed in the communities. Skilled craftsmen were brought in to teach them. The Association established small private sector-type enterprises to create employment opportunities. In fundraising, it ‘freed itself’ from Western sources and introduced the traditional system of zakat, allegedly forgotten in modern development work. The APE took advantage of personal networks in this fundraising campaign: owners of textile factories and shops were asked to give zakat in the form of rags to the project. Other types of donations (materials, machines and services) from the private sector, embassies and women’s groups also contributed. The trained participants, women and girls, are now observed to be able to support their families (Kamel, 1994: 23-32; Assaad, 1994, pers.comm.).
Recycling workshops
In the settlement, each family has specialized in a certain material, which is indicated by the type of waste piled up in front, or on the roofs, of their houses: cardboard, paper, plastic, glass, tin and clothes. Women and girls sort food waste, at which they spend four to six hours daily. The simple machines in the small workshops reprocess the material collected. The plastic items are first separated by color and stored in containers, then crushed and modified into pipes and clothes hangers, for example. Other products include shoes, textiles, pots and pans. Glass is also sorted into big containers, and sold to factories in Cairo. Plastic recycling has enabled the machine owners to increase their income significantly, however, still only about 100 people in the settlement own recycling machines (Volpi, 1997: 21).

In the middle of the colorful plastic heaps, men cut plastic bottles into two pieces with huge scissors, for cleaning. The economic benefit deriving from recycling of plastic depends on the manufacturing process of the raw material:

In the workshops the men sort the plastic according to type and color. After sorting they crush it in the machine, the plastic is still dirty. Then they sell it and another person who buys it inside the community cleans it. In another process people sort and then clean it by washing in boiling water with ammonia, and after that they dry it under the sun, and then crush it in order to sell it as clean pieces, so it is ready for recycling. In the first type of process the price is cheap, and the latter is more expensive thus more profitable ... Why, then, is it not cleaned first? Maybe because there are no machines or workers for cleaning ... In the past, the El Gam’iyya used to give loans to people for machines, but not any more. Now people themselves save money and start to organize their own projects. (Guindy, 1997.)

The settlement receives at least 700 tons of solid waste daily from households, of which 250-300 tons is organic waste. The amount of unrecyclable waste is relatively small, 10-15 per cent. Since the flow of waste is so enormous, it is difficult to avoid accumulation of waste in the living environment. Unrecyclable waste is usually burned or just dumped outside the settlement. The largest dumping site is in Qattameyya, 35 kilometers from Cairo. El Gam’iyya rents trucks for which a waste collector has to pay LE 15, in order to get rid of his waste. Half of the people hire trucks to move unrecyclable material to Qattameyya, and another half burns the waste, or dumps it in the streets. Burning environmentally noxious materials creates dangerous smoke, and the smell of manure attracts swarms of flies — all of which create exceptionally choking conditions in the settlement, especially during the hot summer months when temperatures reach 40 degrees. Even though the living conditions have improved greatly compared to the past, in some places dead animals can still be found lying in the middle of unrecyclable plastic bags, rags, discarded razors and batteries, which add to the severity of the health hazards.
The most serious problem in solid waste recycling is the type of plastic waste that cannot be reused. Due to increasing Western-style consumption in the city, the amount of unrecyclable waste is expected to grow in the future.

Anything which is not for selling ... nobody asks for black plastic bags since everyone knows you can’t use them ... white bags can be recycled. Also children’s diapers and family size Pepsi or Coca-Cola bottles are not recyclable. Mostly things that are burnt are these. We arranged through our team health visitors’ awareness activity ... they visited the people from door to door: ‘if you fire the waste, your children will get sick and then you will pay about 50-60 pounds for the doctor per one child, so paying the fee for dumping is cheaper and your children are healthier’. (Guindy, 1997.)
One side effect of the recycling industry in the settlement has been severe air pollution from vehicles and machines, a consequence which was not taken into account initially.

**The APE’s relations with other associations and the government**

The Association co-operates, more or less, with the other associations in Muqattam and the neighborhood: El Gam‘iyya, El Gabarty Services, El Salam Hospital, El Mahabba Clinic and the Anglo American Hospital (Kamel, 1994: 126). Networking and collaboration would be necessary in order to avoid duplication of effort. Knowledge is said to be exchanged in NGO meetings, workshops, and seminars as organizations ‘train’ each other (Guindy, 1997). However, at least in the case of the CBO (El Gam‘iyya) and the NGO (APE) the relationship has not prevailed without obstacles. Volpi (1997: 31-32) observed that El Gam‘iyya has felt challenged by APE, particularly in the case of receiving funding. Likewise, APE has criticized El Gam‘iyya on the grounds that it represents only the privileged families and fails to promote the position of the poorest, and women. Furthermore, the whole settlement is geographically divided in two parts, according to the location of the two associations’ offices: each sub-area falls under the influence of the respective organization.

The antagonist relation between APE and Gam‘iyya prevents self-sustainability for the activities implemented in favor of the *zabbaleen*. On the other hand, from the beneficiaries’ point of view, it favors the multiplication of projects and ensures a constant influx of resources to the settlement. (Volpi, 1997: 32.)

The international NGO community knows the APE quite well. The Association has co-operated with several European NGOs, many of which are religious and health organizations, and with larger organizations such as Oxfam and the Ford Foundation. Moreover, the Association was selected as one of the global 500 environmental organizations by the UN Environment Program (UNEP).

The association receives funds both from national and international donors, e.g., the Egyptian International Co-operation Ministry and the European Union. Any funds received must be approved by the Ministry of Social Affairs; no external funds may be channeled directly. The reports from the General Assembly have to be submitted to the Ministry, which sometimes sends a representative to attend meetings. The APE personnel have pointed out that these arrangements have not imposed constraints on the organization so far.

The Association has started cultivating contacts with the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) and is approaching industry by inviting representatives to visit the settlement. So far, interest has been only slight. It was hoped in 1997 that an awareness program with the help of the Ministry of Information and national media would be initiated. The
organization’s Board members and other volunteers have several personal connections with governmental institutions and the political system, which are very important in lobbying for the goals of the APE.

The future

Although the Association was initiated in a top-down fashion by outsiders, today it promotes itself as a grassroots organization, for it is 80 per cent run by the zaballeen, particularly their few educated and trained, ‘new generation leaders’ (Assaad, 1994, pers.comm.; Guindy 1997, pers.comm.). But what they have not succeeded to produce, is alternative forms of grassroots organization in the settlement. There has been great difficulty in “promoting horizontal participation in a context traditionally foreign to this approach” (Assaad 1993, quoted in Volpi, 1997: 36).

The zaballeen experience as a whole demonstrates how a squatter settlement upgrading project evolved into a development intervention, transforming the lives of the waste collectors to that of recyclers and owners of micro-enterprises. Hence, despite the numerous internal difficulties El Gam‘iyya and APE are going through, their experience in solid waste disposal as a whole is considered as a successful example for other big cities. In addition, the case represents a peculiar phenomenon in the country. Notwithstanding the overwhelming positive international and national attention the Association has received, some Egyptian scholars (e.g. Hopkins, 1997, pers.comm.; Bayat, 1998, pers.comm.) point out that the settlement is in the middle of a great deal of bustle, and that it overshadows the good work of other organizations and communities elsewhere in the country.

The question of land ownership should be clarified with the municipality, in order to reduce living costs, and contribute to the sustainability of the projects. At the moment land may be purchased but it is too expensive for most of the people in the settlement.

10. SCALING UP PRACTICES AND CONCEPTS

10.1. WHAT ARE THE COLLECTIVE CIVIC ENDEAVORS MADE OF?

To make a synthesis, what are the collective civic endeavors, the practices, in Cairo and Delhi comprised of? How can they be interpreted through and extrapolated into the wider framework of urbanization and environmental questions in large Third World cities; how applicable here are the theories on (new) social movements; what internal characteristics of the NGO sector do they have; and finally, what kind of relations do they have with other actors in urban governance? There are no simple answers concerning ENGO roles and relations, but a few attributes could be used in interpreting these
Urban environment-oriented associations represent a recent phenomenon; nevertheless, they have not evolved from an associational vacuum in Third World cities. Various charity, relief, service and community associations have existed since colonial times, and much earlier. When analyzing the emergence of five case studies through social movement theories, there can be found certain common impulses or incidents. The societal conditions from which these associations emanated between the 1970s and 1990s support the ‘governance failure’ thesis and also, the worldwide rise of environmentalism and green movements in this period. Several international environmental conferences, attended by environmental and social activists, have been innovative forums and bred local associations universally and later on, further stimulated their work and enabled international networking and coalitions. The governance failure thesis includes the diminishing role of governments accompanied by modernization; structural adjustment policies; economic liberalization and privatization; and thus also globalization, which accelerated in the 1990s. Political change; the opening of political opportunity structures, have contributed to the rise of associations in general, although especially these ‘unpolitical’, environment-oriented actors have not been felt as a security threat by the government. But, both in Egypt and India, the governments’ plans to tighten control over NGOs through bureaucratic maneuvers, etc. may hinder the work of the sector as a whole. Subsequently, it has not only been a question of ‘withdrawing states’ but moreover, the limitations of city authorities in managing urban growth, and the consequent issues, like great demand for low-cost housing and the rise of environmental pathologies which, in some instances, have led to city- or nation-wide epidemics such as cholera or the plague (see e.g. WRI et al., 1996: 42-43). Although in the Third World there has never actually existed a real ‘welfare state’, and suspicion of public authorities is more common than trust, it yet seems that the state is expected to be the ultimate agent in solving various urban everyday-life problems.

The associations in this study were registered bodies so they operated within the institutional system, and also, on the formal-informal boundary connecting the two urban sectors. All case study associations were generated from outside the communities and neighborhoods they worked with. The situation corresponds with the social movement theories highlighting the vital role of ‘organizational elites’ and their ‘mobilizational’ strategies – thus common deprivation or interest have not been sufficient factors in forming collective action and societal change. Eckstein (1990, in Douglass, 1992) asserts that the support of ‘better situated’ individuals and groups is a precondition for citizen and community mobilization. The founders and leaders (in some cases still the same persons) of the associations were professionals in the field, concerned about the worsening state of social services (and particularly health care); housing; infrastructure; and a healthy
urban environment in general. They were not themselves exposed to worsening socio-environmental conditions, however, particularly doctors working in the public sector also felt the negative consequences of privatization in terms of diminishing job opportunities. The founders represented the upper middle class or elite, and had overseas, Western, or otherwise high-level education. It seems, at least after brief observations, that they had a quite good understanding of the local culture and benefited from the situation of being exposed both to indigenous and foreign influences; the result was the innovation of a specific environmental practice. Religious or/and ethical reasons, including environmental awareness, motivated the founders to commit themselves to collective action; however, it is difficult to assert as to how the sense of altruism, for instance, affected their actions and what the other motivations were. It could be argued here that by carrying out ‘development interventions’, these outsiders have also enabled the neighborhoods to overcome those obstacles that often sustain ‘urban silence’.

An ENGO may deal with a set of multiple issues or concentrate on a single issue, like most of the associations in this study, at least in the beginning of their work. In any case, in environmental issues it is often required that several other environmental and social matters should be resolved along with the initial or the most obvious problem – think about housing or health. The goals of the associations varied quite a lot: slum or squatter settlement upgrading; mitigation of toxic substances in the air; conservation of water resources; building low-cost sanitation systems and eradicating scavenging; or the improvement of solid waste recycling processes – all these issues covered the central fields listed in the brown agenda. Additional goals to all cases were: improving the positions of marginalized groups in society; motivating people to collective efforts to improve their livelihoods; fostering employment and education; and bringing up environmental awareness. After having achieved success in their work, it was considered important to make a scale up effort, i.e., for the association to disseminate the knowledge on the environmental practice to new areas.

The target urban population of associations varied from small urban neighborhoods to even the international level. In one case, the national level also comprised the relevant ministries and industries. Nevertheless, the basis of their work was located at the local level, in the ‘streets’. In this study, particularly socially marginalized people were the affected parties of the associations’ work. Geographically, these groups were located in both peripheral and central areas in the city, depending on the settlement type, a slum or squatter settlement. The location of low-quality areas was due to cheap land cost prices, and/or due to the proximity of employment, but choosing the peripheral areas was in some instances affected by the general public, who rejected the group’s presence in their neighborhoods. Nevertheless, the role of the poor as the ‘caretakers of urban environment’ is vital for the city, its economy and environment – a fact, which has yet to be
better realized by the authorities and the public. A normative, moral question can be raised here: should city governments encourage activities which are vital to entire city, but health-threatening to a certain group of people, especially the waste collectors and recyclers? While some argue for total eradication of these ‘subhuman’ practices by technological solutions, others may favor less radical actions, technological and social changes in order to improve the situation of the practitioners, whose identity and livelihood is often built around the practice itself. What we end up with is the difficult question of setting priorities: which is then chosen – for instance, sustaining the ‘subhuman’, health-threatening practices of the waste collectors and recyclers, which, however, helps to keep a large part of the city clean with minimal economic input by the city authorities, or, to direct huge public expenditures to the modernization of municipal solid waste collection and disposal systems? However, in the face of reality, this is an interesting but not innately relevant question.

The **philosophy** and **approaches** of the associations were more or less based on a holistic and integrated approach to urban neighborhoods’ problem-solving, in which environmental questions were treated as an integral part of people’s everyday lives and livelihoods. Especially the introduction of a broad health care concept, in which women were treated as central actors, was common. In light of this study, in response to the argument that NGOs represent ‘alternative’ development approaches, it can be said that the answer is both yes and no. As the leaders and some of the staff have overseas education, training and other forms of exposure to Western influences, they do not necessarily reject modernization, but rather, favor the **indigenization** of ideas and innovations and turn them into **socio-technological** solutions. The technical and administrative know-how of the APE, for instance, was soon complemented by social approaches, unlike in many other development initiatives worldwide (cf., e.g., Vaa, 1993). Neither are these associations against development **per se**, but urge development that is locally specific. It could be argued that in general, most urban ENGOs take advantage of Western scientific knowledge – if only for the reason that cities are the places, in which its implications are concentrated, compared to rural areas. It is also another question, how appropriately this knowledge was adapted to new conditions; for instance, how far do people themselves favor the modern values and to what extent do they still want a past practice, based on traditional values, to continue? (Pathak, 1998a: 11). Socio-technological solutions also imply the combining of personal and impersonal knowledge systems (Banuri, 1990a). For instance, **Sulabh** differs from conventional government approaches, because it believes that slums should be upgraded rather than cleared away and technologically its innovation is more affordable for the low-income groups. The organization has also demonstrated that its innovation is also a more environmentally healthy option compared to the conventional bucket latrine, which has been the usual option in cities. Hence, the five organizations’ endeavors can be better
described as *unconventional* compared to those of city authorities – in that sense we can consider ENGOs representing as ‘alternative’ solutions.

Religion is a universal impetus for NGO work, also coming up in some organizations in this study, while others called themselves secular actors. Especially in the case of APE, a Coptic or Christian worldview was important in the volunteers’ work. Religious worldviews and beliefs may be used in promoting environmental protection, in regard to both philosophy and tactics. In this study also some associations utilized local religious places, leaders and practices in disseminating environmental awareness or promoting human resources. In contrast, religious practices may also be a hindrance for societal progress and social equality, including environmental aspects. Hinduism and its caste hierarchy in India is a case in point, for which some practitioners and theorists regard modern science as a tool in abolishing old discriminating traditions (see e.g. Nanda, 1998). Other worldviews and philosophies, such as the Gandhian tradition, have affected the ideologies of many NGO founders in India. *Sulabh* has introduced the Gandhian philosophy into a new, urban context with a liberation ideology and conscientization of marginalized urban groups (cf. Fisher, 1997: 458), thus regenerating and rearticulating the existing knowledge of the ‘subaltern groups’ (Parajuli, 1991). Thereby it is not question of only ‘human-to-environment’ relations here, but, moreover, ‘human-to-human’ relations, the *equality* between the urban residents. As it also came up (explicitly or implicitly) during the interviews, the founders’ and leaders’ concern had begun due to a wider understanding of the need for societal, urban environmental change (see Furedy, 1992), and creating a ‘vision’ of a city as a more equal society, as well as an ecologically healthier place to live – one person’s vision and expectations of innovation even comprehended the global level.

For any organization, **leadership** is a crucial factor, although it entails numerous problematic points. The significance of a ‘charismatic’ leader has been fundamental in many successful projects (see Riddell & Robinson, 1995: 38; Mega-Cities Project, 1991; 1995), which especially the experiences from *Sulabh* and ASHA verifies. Sometimes the leader’s charisma is so great that (s)he is treated as a very respected teacher or guide, a guru. Furthermore, charisma is often connected to an authoritarian character – should the NGO leadership then always be democratic, as is required by the institutional and political systems in urban governance in general? The professionals and volunteers constituting the majority in the Board of Directors (which often appoints itself) may not be just an asset for the organization. It may be difficult for them to avoid their ‘paternal’ or moralistic tones and approaches to a target group, particularly the poor. It is also possible that professionals gradually destroy or suffocate the organization and its grassroots potential (Bayat, 1998, pers.comm.). Leadership built around only one person, even quite an authoritarian one, has been vital for some organizations’ success in general (see, e.g., Ødegaard,
1998). Despite the fact that organizational accountability and transparency and other internal affairs of the organizations were not elaborated here, it could be asked, how does undemocratic leaderships fit into the principles of good governance? Furthermore, a problem will arise when leadership skills are not delegated and the organization has not prepared for a natural change of the leader. At least some of the case study associations have understood this possible threat and prepared for it by training new people to take responsibility; for instance, the local, educated and trained youth, or ‘new generation leaders’ in APE, and also in AOYE and Sulabh. A normative argument is made here that if the organization is genuinely interested in downwards legitimacy, and the wealth of the target group in the long term, more local people ought to be involved into the organization’s activities. The size of the core personnel in associations varied between less than twenty to 500 or even tens of thousands if the national and international scales were included. The personnel comprised paid staff (both professionals and locals) and volunteers, who often represented the middle class or elite, and were more or less social activists. In addition, some persons with special skills (e.g., engineers) joined the development ventures occasionally.

In order to pursue their goals in different societal settings, associations have adopted a great variety of strategies, or more specifically, tactics. How did the associations organize, mobilize and support citizen action? Here most of the tactics were adopted in incremental steps, rather than through radical actions. A confrontation with influential enterprise managers, or the leader’s socio-culturally ‘dauntless’ performances represented the most exceptional, ‘rebellious’ actions within the case studies. The associations took advantage of certain cultural aspects of life, such as religious places, when introducing their practices to people. Public participation and ‘invoking the grassroots’ were the articulated goals for all associations; however, the extent of participation varied quite much, from including people in the planning processes of their areas and self-help, to vocational training. While ASHA achieved high level participation, in APE’s case there emerged some problems with horizontal participation. Since participation does not inherently imply em-powerment, nor changes in social relations within neighborhoods, it was an issue that probably would have deserved more systematical attention in the study. The following tactics can be found in the five case studies:

- raising environmental awareness through schools, universities, public meeting places, and the media;
- educating local communities in resource conservation and renewal (from door-to-door info; arranging group discussions, i.e., using participation methods; training health care workers and other occupations, and training young, community opinion-leaders;
- facilitating self-help activities;
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- putting philosophies into practice through the leaders’ own example; using peaceful collective action in order to put pressure on institutions and their representatives;
- organizing local to national campaigns;
- adopting integrated programs of health care, including services, infrastructure, education, sanitation, water conservation and garbage removal.
- advocating the basic rights of the urban population and contesting societal actors that threaten public health or inequality, with the help of environmental lawyers;
- using scientific evidence in validating the association’s arguments and influencing opinion-making;
- lobbying policymakers and planners through personal relationships;
- formulating and suggesting guidelines for environmental law and regulations; and
- exchanging knowledge through networking locally, regionally and internationally with other NGOs.

In the light of rather intensive relations to donors and their funding, one may ask as to whether NGO leaders in general have become enterprise managers rather than people’s representatives? The fact that all associations here enjoyed external funding to some extent – which was either the whole basis of their activities (‘induced ENGOs’) or comprised just a few projects (‘mixed ENGOs’) questions their organizational sustainability. The funding varied greatly within the five case studies: the annual budget of an association operating both locally and internationally was gigantic compared to a very locally operating organization with a relatively small budget. Sulabh and APE leaders (despite that the latter’s project was initially funded by outsiders) stated that their organizations are self-sufficient (‘indigenous ENGOs’), in which one or more central activities cover the other costs of the organization. They sought to increase self-sufficiency by creating cooperatives in the communities; by focusing on one main activity; or by imposing user fees for environmental services. The civic associations here (to a lesser extent with AHED), are very visible and affluent organizations, recognized by international donors, etc. In all, it is worth pointing out that when competing over donor funding, the largest associations may become ever more influential, whilst the smaller groups may remain in the ‘vicious circle’ of limited resources and weak capacities. In general, this subject warrants closer examination, in order to find possible biases within the civil society, and further, to enable smaller groups to strengthen their capacities. Competition over funding poses a hindrance to collaboration within the sector. Thus, when the core activities and relations of the organization rely heavily on donor funding, the situation may eventually turn to an overall threat to civil societies.

In terms of urban governance, all five case organizations have established several partnerships with other urban actors in the field, particularly with
international development agencies and home governments. Approaching the target urban neighborhoods and the relations with local community-based organizations is fundamentally a sensitive issue due to the suspicion and mistrust toward outsiders’ interventions. When approaching the target group or neighborhoods, an association’s first challenge is to establish working relations with local leaders, be they slum lords, *sheikhs*, *imams*, priests, and perhaps, the local police. In that way the organization also seeks to gain public acceptance in the community. In ideal situations the organization’s personnel explains their goal in appropriate terms and clarifies to local leaders and other people, whether they are treated as clients, participants or owners of the project. Since urban poor neighborhoods are the forums for the power struggles of local politicians, CBOs, police and slum lords, as well as being targets of international donors, NNGOs and INGOs, there are a multitude of nexuses to challenge a local association’s presence in the area. While on some occasions the founders established themselves after a long working experience in the area (e.g. as doctors), others have appeared in urban quarters which already had a functioning CBO. Those situations, in which a local organization does not share benefits equally among all members in the community, may become more complex when the association enters the place, not necessarily improving the overall conditions. It may worsen or cause a conflictual situation within the settlement and furthermore, induce a competitive situation with the CBO, like in APE’s case. From the viewpoint of those inhabitants who could not have enjoyed CBO’s benefits, a new actor that is expected to improve their lives might be a welcome option. Some of the associations benefited from their connections to the media. In addition, collaboration with environment-oriented lawyers helped AHED to use judicial tools in tackling the problem.

Government-ENGO relations may vary from very close to distant, for instance, a member of an association can even formally participate in the government’s Environmental Agency meetings, or, in other situations, the government just offers the land for the association’s activities, or scrutinizes its foreign funding. In the most distant cases the organization is registered and scrutinized by the government on regular basis. It could be argued here that all civic associations somehow sought to operate as mediators or facilitators between people and city authorities, as well as other actors, though in some cases the association’s work was also more that of a doer’s, e.g., when building facilities for neighborhoods. On the other hand, it could be asked, is it always necessary and appropriate that the only link between the neighborhood and outside actor is an ENGO – and not a CBO if possible? What are the problems that might emerge over time along with this role of a ‘mediator’ ENGO?

The *dynamics* and transformations of an organization are utmost important aspects to examine; however, it is difficult to trace what the ‘right’ time period would be for analysis (e.g., Riddell & Robinson, 1995: 55-56); here only APE’s case was studied during longer period. In order to generate
collective action, understanding the internal dynamics of the specific area was stated to be fundamental. During the formation of AOYE, for instance, a movement of people changed into an organization, which was considered important in order to achieve their goals. The positive impact of relatively successful achievements of the five associations has been the point of departure in the whole study when introducing these locally driven responses, environmental practices, to various urban environmental problems. In any case, it has to be considered that their experiences are not complete success stories, but rather, a processual set of accomplishments and hardships. What emerged was that in any development intervention it is difficult to anticipate the snowballing, the both positive and negative effects the process will bring forth. For instance, slum or squatter settlement upgrading initiatives may attract additional settlers and increase land market values, which easily leads to the displacement of original residents or overcrowding of housing and environmental services. Therefore, the ‘reformist ENGOs’ may not only create societal reforms, but conversely, may actually maintain (or even worsen) the deficient service structure or infrastructure and other environmental, social and economic conditions in the city. Local power struggles within the urban communities are common and they may arise over the improved facilities or resources. Difficulties may also emerge in charging fees for environmental services. In addition, to succeed in ceasing the polluting activity in one area through judicial or other actions may just shift the basic problem to another place with lower environmental standards, causing a kind of an air pollution ‘leakage’.

It is argued here that the work of all these civic associations can be considered indispensable to city environments and beyond, particularly when expressed in quantitative terms: ASHA has sheltered over 115,000 residents; Sulabh has provided sanitation systems for 10 million people and trained 3,500 families; APE has promoted and facilitated the work of garbage collectors and recyclers, who take care of a third of household waste disposal in the city; AOYE has offered water conservation technologies for three governorates and educated more than 10,000 youth; and AHED has disseminated environment-related health awareness. The associations introduced several novel solutions, for instance, AHED and AOYE fought against environmental violations either by judicial means or by giving an opportunity for citizens to expose crimes to authorities. In ecological terms, APE and Sulabh promoted reuse of waste produced in the city, as ‘circular systems’ instead of linear ones, which gives new direction to urban management. In building up a new urban neighborhood, ASHA brought together various relevant actors who seldom meet in urban management. The ultimate crucial question to be solved is how the target group, the community, can manage to sustain the practice after the association has withdrawn: the association’s most important task, after all, is to gradually make itself useless in the area – as ASHA and Sulabh, for instance, have
made. It is also common that associations spatially expand their working area by moving to another place.

‘Success’ can be assessed by the replicability and scaling up potential (see Riddell & Robinson, 1995: 38-39) and the geographical scale of the practice. Two practices of the case study ENGOs were already replicated at the international level; three at the national level; and four at the city level. Four practices were rewarded or acknowledged internationally. Although the experience of one group (AHED) has not (yet) been replicated as a ‘practice’, it might indicate the rising, worldwide trend that addresses the partnerships between civic associations, lawyers and judicial institutions. It could be expected that this type of tactic will attain more interest among ENGOs, and specific working procedures for it will get a foothold within the sector. Table 6 summarizes the main attributes of the ENGO case studies.

Diverse urban circumstances have made these associations ‘tailor’ solutions to be appropriate to specific conditions of these cities. Based on the case studies, I could formulate here one working definition of an urban environmental practice in a Third World context:

The basis of an urban environmental practice is an unconventional response; a culturally specific combination of a socio-technological innovation and collective endeavor, which is often led by professionals. It is meant to spur a positive and lasting socio-environmental impact on the urban neighborhoods, by fostering the sustainable use of scarce urban ecological resources and preventing pollution. A holistic and integrated approach, with special emphasis on brown problems – including social equity, employment creation and empowerment of women – are its central attributes.

10.2. CONCEPTUAL TYPOLOGY FOR URBAN ENGOs

The well-known, universal problem in NGO debates has been the confusion on the subject matter, as ‘NGO’ can be applied to a wide variety of organizations. Theorizing the phenomenon requires elaboration of the central concepts, but currently, the conceptual apparatus of NGOs – and one of its subgroup, ENGOs – is obviously very poor. Theorists interpreting the ongoing NGO boom in the Third World try to grasp the most turbulent and swift object of study as new configurations of organizations are constantly springing up, while others are merging with governmental or private sectors. Despite rapidly increasing knowledge on NGOs, there appear to be only few attempts to ‘make order’ in this sector and its subsectors, i.e. to classify or make typologies on NGOs. As Ng’ethe (1989: 33) remarks in the case of Africa, the necessary data are not complete, or even if the data were complete, NGOs, by the nature of their activities, have a way of defying classification. He almost sarcastically concludes that for those who have been foolhardy enough to attempt such a classification, the task has been
Table 6. A Summary of the attributes of the ENGO case analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NGO ATTRIBUTES</th>
<th>ASHA -local</th>
<th>Sulabh -local to international</th>
<th>AoyE -local to national</th>
<th>AHED -local</th>
<th>APE -local</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>founders; incident</td>
<td>doctors; cholera epidemic</td>
<td>sociologist; volunteers; bureaucratic and unequal inst. system</td>
<td>doctors; journalists; Stockholm conference</td>
<td>doctors; privatization of 'open door' policy</td>
<td>consulting firm; volunt.; WB; weak local gov. capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goal; main environmental area</td>
<td>slum upgrading</td>
<td>improving sanitation; eradicating scavenging</td>
<td>activating youth; conserving water resources</td>
<td>promoting environment – health linkages</td>
<td>connecting local and city-wide waste disposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>target group</td>
<td>the poor (women)</td>
<td>the poor marginal group of outcastes</td>
<td>general public; ministries; industries</td>
<td>low-income areas</td>
<td>the poor marginal group of zabbaleen (women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>philosophy; approach</td>
<td>holistic; broad health concept; community participation</td>
<td>holistic; ‘appropriate technologist’ (Gandhian)</td>
<td>socio-techno</td>
<td>broad health concept and policy</td>
<td>holistic; socio-techno; women empower-ment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leadership</td>
<td>community-centered</td>
<td>guru-centered</td>
<td>BOD</td>
<td>BOD</td>
<td>BOD 'new generation leaders'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staff</td>
<td>max 20</td>
<td>max 500</td>
<td>~100</td>
<td>max 20</td>
<td>~50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tactics</td>
<td>people self-help; training health-workers</td>
<td>vocational training, people participation</td>
<td>lobbying; training; people participation</td>
<td>healthcare &amp; awareness judicial action</td>
<td>vocational training, healthcare &amp; awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>funding; annual budget</td>
<td>middle-scale</td>
<td>quite close MinEF CPCD local gov.</td>
<td>very close to sector ministries &amp; EEAA</td>
<td>distant</td>
<td>distant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relation to gov.</td>
<td>minimal Govl offered land</td>
<td>quite close MinEF CPCD local gov.</td>
<td>very close to sector ministries &amp; EEAA</td>
<td>distant</td>
<td>distant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partnerships (GG)</td>
<td>many; DDA slumlords planners</td>
<td>multitude; donors soc.work. NGOs</td>
<td>multitude; donors media, mosques</td>
<td>a few; governor researcher media</td>
<td>many; donors INGOs NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impact</td>
<td>sheltered 115,000 people</td>
<td>provided for 10 million people sanitation; 3500 wards trained</td>
<td>provided new techno-logy for 3 governorates educated 10,000 youths</td>
<td>stopped polluting industrial activity</td>
<td>improved recycling methods (1/3 of all city waste production)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Practice</td>
<td>self-help slum-upgrading</td>
<td>low-cost sanitation</td>
<td>water conservation (env. hotline service)</td>
<td>air pollution mitigation campaigning</td>
<td>household waste recycling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, some have tried to categorize various types of NGOs, in order to be slightly more specific on what is referred to. A more general level distinctions in the NGO sector can be made in terms of ‘indigenous’ and ‘foreign’ NGOs; ‘modern’ and ‘new’ NGOs; ‘induced organizations’ and ‘indigenous organizations’; or ‘old’ and ‘new’ organizations, i.e. chronological classification (see further Ng’ethe, 1989: 33-36). In addition, distinctions can be made in regard to what NGOs do, or emphasize their sectoral classification (e.g. charitable or philanthropic organizations; research NGOs, etc.). Organizational accountability and the organizational resource base can also be used in looking for distinctions.

Cherrett et al. (1995) suggest a taxonomy for environmental NGOs (which they based on surveyed 45 African environmental NGOs in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa). However, their analysis emphasizes rural NGOs and distinguishes the following NGOs according to the organization’s performance; i.e., what they do, which is the most common way to classify NGOs: governmental (as a product of multi- and bilateral funding, technology-driven); entrepreneurial (opportunism); networking (international networks as response to the needs of Northern NGOs); conservationists (‘classic ENGOs’ of the white population); advocacy (to influence policy makers, societal transformation); environmental (emphasize grassroots training in sustainable development), and community-based (with traditional welfare background, or, coalitions between the grassroots and professionals). A substantial majority of organizations working with the poor were engaged primarily in relief work, and gave little attention to development questions.

Gomaa (1995, 1992: 31-35) has made a directory of the Egyptian ENGOs and divided them into three types: multiple-issue organizations, which are open to anyone who likes to join, with fairly large membership; single issue organizations, with an open but small membership; research institutes, with a small and limited (size of) membership. Gomaa also noted that some organizations were somewhat surprised when they found themselves from the list; even if an organization does not regard itself so much ‘environmental’, it could be viewed as an ENGO if it works with basic health issues, for instance.

It would be simplest to categorize urban ENGOs just according to the sector in which they primarily work: solid waste disposal; water resources conservation; air quality protection, etc. But this may not always suffice since: a) tackling one environmental problem often requires the resolving of another environmental concern, for instance, air pollution that originates from...
from improper solid waste disposal, and b) the organization may have more wider goals, such as uplifting the position of socially marginalized groups. The basic shortcoming of the most categories is that they are overlapping and vague; an ENGO often seems to belong to more than one or two categories. To sum up, when we are trying to ‘squeeze’ these variegated organizations into rigid conceptual categories, we cannot avoid ending up with a dilemma that reflects the inherent nature of developmental and environmental questions ENGOs tackle, as being multi-dimensional issues.\footnote{Especially slum upgrading needs to address multiple problems in people’s living environment. In some instances, an NGO is engaged in ten or more activities. In addition, NGOs may have to compromise their long-term objectives by fulfilling short-term expectations. (Desai, 1999.)}

But perhaps we just should endorse these characteristics of ENGOs, and furthermore, consider it a point of departure when looking for more fitting conceptualizations, in order to decrease misunderstandings when discussing these actors. In many instances, a specific concern or certain goal rises above others, which is usually explicitly stated in the organization’s agenda. Being aware of these difficulties and dilemmas in conceptualizations, I will next endeavor to make one typology for urban ENGOs by combining theoretical approaches with empirical material from secondary and primary sources (cf. Myllylä, 1998a). The typology is based on the two dimensions: the role of the organization in society on one hand (reformist, reflective or nominal), and its main objective on the other. ENGOs’ roles are reformist (‘reformist environmentalism’) when they seek to make reforms in socio-environmental issues. Organizations located in the center of the model can be regarded as reflective (‘reflective environmentalism’); those which merely cure the symptoms of the problems. The third category comprises people who work for their own benefit, or for a small and privileged group, thus being nominal (‘nominal environmentalism’), and therefore, farthest from sound ENGO work. (See Table 7). Totally three main categories emerge with 13 subcategories. These civic society formations of ‘street environmentalism’, the reformist ENGOs, could also be named ‘proactive’.

A National policy formulator ENGO may regarded as rather an uncommon organizational type. It is capable of putting pressure on policymakers and planners, and/or provides guidelines for drafting environmental laws and regulations, as an accepted actor of the formal decision-making system. To cite an example, in Cairo AOYE has been one of the very few ENGOs influencing national environmental policymaking, however, it could also be better labeled an educative ENGO with its explicit goal to educate and train, youth especially in environmental issues.
Table 7. A conceptual model for urban environmental NGOs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL NGOs</th>
<th>Role in society</th>
<th>Main objective</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REFORMIST</td>
<td></td>
<td>Policy formulator ENGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Development-catalyst ENGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Empowering ENGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Educativive ENGO</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advocacy ENGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFLECTIVE</td>
<td></td>
<td>Research ENGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Watchdog ENGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Public-service contractor ENGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conservation ENGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(NOMINAL)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Family ENGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>White-glove ENGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Politician s ENGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bureaucrat s ENGO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Development-catalyst ENGO aims at pushing forward several changes towards improved quality of life among its target group. It may focus narrowly on a particular constituency (cf. Dicklitch, 1995), by enabling the local community to fulfill some of the basic needs, such as access to low-cost housing and/or secure land tenure. Due to this development intervention, the target community is able to generate further development; with its own human resources it can also achieve infrastructure, jobs, services, etc. In these cases, the ENGO has often acted as a mediator towards the government and other relevant actors. In many slum upgrading initiatives, like those of ASHA in Delhi; SPARC in Mumbai; or OPP in Karachi, it could be said that their task has been to give an impulse that turns on other, multiple positive effects in the area.

An Empowering ENGO carries out both conscientization and mobilization tasks among very narrowly focused urban groups with marginalized, if not stigmatized, social status, in which poverty is aggravated by ethnic or religious subordination. The work of some empowerment ENGOs contributes to the emancipatory process through the politicization of previously depoliticized realms, for example, issues concerning gender, or the environment (Fisher, 1997). Both Sulabh in Delhi and APE in Cairo worked with despised, socially rejected people, who were de facto caretakers of urban environment. In both cases, the ideology of social liberation was also complemented by locally sound, technological innovations. In addition, in Delhi, the Society for Civic Rights also focuses on poor, discriminated groups and women’s empowerment, as well as consumer issues.
An **Educative ENGO** educates people by helping them to become more responsible and careful users and producers of environmental resources; for instance, to make them aware of the activities that cause environmental damage (Gamman, 1994: 180). In some instances, it has been used to refer to NGOs operating as training grounds for democratic citizenship, developing the political skills of the members; recruiting new leaders; stimulating political participation; and educating the public at large on a wide variety of public interest issues (e.g. Korten, 1990: 99-101).

An **Advocacy ENGO** is often used as more general term for NGOs. I would prefer to use it for those organizations which literally operate, with the help of their lawyer contacts or members, as advocates for certain affected groups, e.g., when taking legal actions against environmental violations, or otherwise improve the state of affairs through the judicial system. An advocacy ENGO also has a reformist role in society, if it succeeds in changing governmental routines or regulations; in Cairo, AHED is a good example of an advocacy ENGO. Other definitions imply that some NGOs can provide citizens with an alternative or supplement to political parties that may not fully represent their interests; it also channels interests and deprivations to government. (Brown & Korten, 1991: 53.) Another view prefers to regard an advocacy NGO as an activist organization which prepares people for struggles against bureaucratic injustice and is interested in radical reforms; the advocacy aspect with social change is an important feature in Indian ENGOs (Gupta et al., 1998).

A **Research ENGO** produces information or knowledge on the state of the environment by monitoring and analyzing environmental quality in the city. In Cairo the National Research Center, which consists of researchers from various environmental fields, is a case in point. Its role is merely reflective when offering environmental data, however, if this elevates into the policymaking processes, as guidelines, etc., and thus prevents further degradation of urban environment, it also could be considered a reformist organization.

A **Watchdog ENGO** is also a typical name for ENGOs in general. It could be defined here as an organization which reactively observes the circumstances and incidents in society, using its newsletters or media as a forum to inform the public on various environmental concerns. Instead of empowering people, it exposes environmental violations and propagates actual topics taking place at the government level, for instance.

In the context of ‘shrinking states’, there is a pressure on ENGOs to become service providers (May, 1995). Many NGOs hesitate to become politically active and thus eschew any relations with political parties, which may imply that they want to operate in non-controversial fields. NGOs may actually disempower people by propping up weak governments and functioning as gap-fillers in service production. The main interest of a **Public-service contractor ENGO** is to pursue contract work for donors (Manuh, 1993, in Dicklitch, 1995; Korten 1990: 102-104). It may also have
no commitment to the voluntary cause; little experience in empowering or mobilizing people; and it may adopt a sectoral approach (Gupta et al., 1998). This type of organization may sometimes work so close to government that it resembles a ‘GONGO’, a government-owned NGO.

In urban context, the work of a Conservation ENGO focuses on the preservation of parks and other green areas, and/or historical and cultural sites. Sometimes an ENGO may carry out mere urban beautification of well-to-do areas by tree planting activities. Since green areas are becoming a scarce natural resource in urban areas due to extensive construction, they are also becoming privatized and thus to be used by affluent groups only. While some ENGOs seem to run almost anti-poor agendas by stopping tree logging by the poor, others are eager also to create parks for low-income areas. However, it is obvious that maintaining or increasing greenery makes the quality of life better in the city as a whole. In Cairo, the Tree Lovers’ Association seeks to save the last green areas in the city, while the Society for the Preservation of Nature establishes small parks and other green spaces in urban neighborhoods. (Myllylä, 1998c).

The great demand for NGO services and the stream of donor funding, together with favoring the NGO sector rather than government, have led to the bursting growth of opportunistic organizations. For instance, a Family ENGO attempts to have a great influence in an urban neighborhood, usually by representing the most powerful family in the district. In Cairo, women with an aristocratic background, many of whom are wives of politicians or celebrities, establish a White-glove ENGO, in order to support their spouses (Bayat, 1997, pers.comm.). A similar type organization is a Politician’s ENGO, which is established by a politically oriented person who wants to win new supporters. It seems to be quite a common phenomenon that one person runs several organizations. In India, relatives of politicians or top bureaucrats have launched ENGOs of dubious status that avail themselves of funds, and retired bureaucrats also often act as ENGO leaders or consultants (Gupta et al., 1998.) A Bureaucrat’s ENGO consists of a person working in the public sector, who has found the bureaucracy a profitable channel through which he can raise his personal income. Hence, the rise of the ENGO sector as a whole can easily offer an environment for many questionable, non-altruistic purposes, which may have nominal or even negative effects on civil society formations in general.

If we still want to continue finding more refining concepts, we can try to combine the above typology with other dimensions or categories, such as the urban sector and the organization’s funding base, for instance. Hence, in the city, when referring, e.g., to ‘an induced, advocacy ENGO in water quality’ (although in a rather complex way), instead of just using an ‘ENGO’, we may then know at least four features of this organization: 1) it is environment-oriented, non-governmental organization focusing on protecting the quality of water resources in the city; 2) as an NGO, it is run by professional leaders; 3) its main goal is to protect or defend the interests
of a certain constituency (e.g. a neighborhood) in case of environmental violation; 4) its core funding is based on the aid of foreign donors.

To sum up, the above typologies, at least, demonstrate the great diversity of Third World urban ENGOs. It also directs attention to the sector as a whole: what kind of organizations the government or the local community wants to deal with, that is, to make a difference within the sector in terms of identifying the most appropriate organizations in new urban governance structures. The rapid expansion in the entire NGO sector will inevitably put pressure on the sector itself in order to create some qualifying factors, indicators, when tracing organizations performing sound development work. In some countries, such as in India, this has already been initiated.

10.3. BACK TO THE CITY LEVEL: TRANSFERRING URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE

Sustainable cities and knowledge
In many instances, the situation in megacities resembles the circumstances of the European cities two centuries back, or even that of the very ancient cities.

History tells of ancient and not-so-ancient cities which drank up their surrounding water and perished. This was the fate of Babylon …in the Middle East… and of Fatehpur Sikri in Northern India… and it is not too fanciful to imagine that in the 21st century, water shortages could cause similar damage. (Water and Environment, 1994.)

The five case studies in the present work illuminate civic responses towards more ‘sustainable development’ in large cities. The idea of sustainable cities has emerged as a reaction not only to the environmental deterioration of urban areas of Third World, but also to those processes of unequal development that continue to leave large portions of the urban population in poverty (Douglass & Zoghlin, 1994). According to Mitlin (1992: 3), what is sought in sustainable development is not merely “cities that can sustain themselves” but “cities where the inhabitants’ development needs are met without imposing unsustainable demands on local or global resources and systems”.

As elsewhere in environmental discourses, sustainable development in cities is also considered to have numerous paradoxical ideas. For instance, the sustainability rhetoric is seen as superficial moralizing (Meier, 1993); the policies, as recommended and sometimes employed by the Northern societies, are obviously not powerful or relevant in Third World societies with large populations living in poverty. Their leading politicians are advised by the North to “control population growth”; “recycle wastewater”; “save energy”; “educate”; “mobilize human resources”; “quit polluting water, air and soil”, etc. – good prescriptions, which, however, are treated in isolation
from each other, and have never been integrated into a package. Thus more pragmatic programs for achieving sustainability in megacities could be called for. A fourfold strategy for urbanization and sustainable development includes a) an economic policy that is conducive to labor-intensive growth; b) a social policy that is concerned with the provision of essential social services; c) an urban management policy that deals with major problems, such as transport, water, and housing; and d) an environmental policy that will promote sustainable development. (Pernia, 1991, in Yeung, 1994.)

Let us consider the future of such a city which has stopped growing in infrastructure, physical apparatus, biomass and human population. Its future survival will then depend upon additions to knowledge that will develop ways to overcome the increasing scarcity of the natural resources and other inputs it needs to keep going. (Meier, 1993.) The flow-through of vital info must continue to increase, just to stay even. Information stocks may be held in ever expanding records, or they may be shared as a commons with other cities. Since education is required to share knowledge, the sustainable city is suggested to as appearing “highly educated in the subjects of survival” (ibid.). Social indicators of education and social welfare for use in comparative national accounts have been sought, but such data are virtually meaningless for the Third World societies, as well as their large cities. Almost every society has looked along the trend lines for the growth of demand for various services, and concluded that the city of the future is an ‘information city’ but they have not decided information about what? (ibid.)

The notion of an urban ecosystem deals with the various environment-development trade-offs affecting the well-being of the poor in particular. This urban ecosystem idea also makes it possibile to visualize the city as a place in which a wide variety of resources – natural, human, and social – are intertwined, some created, some consumed, and others left as wastes. Thus among the most important environmental resources for the urban poor are informational resources in the form of social ties and networks that help sustain the survival strategies of low-income populations. (ibid.)

Energy efficiency will be critical as the world becomes more urbanized; another key issue in regard to sustainable urban life is the fate of solid wastes, their reduction and proper disposal. Herbert Girardet (1995) suggests that environmental improvement and job creation must be tackled together, since cities that are ecologically viable also have enhanced employment potential. In this, resource use ought to be turned from linear to circular working processes.

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58 In conventionally run cities, metabolic processes are usually linear - inputs and outputs are considered as largely unrelated. The linear model of urban production, consumption and disposal is quite unconcerned with the overall ecological viability of the urban system, and it tends to disrupt natural cycles. The linear system is profoundly different from nature’s own circular metabolism where every output is also an input which renews, and thus sustains life. (Girardet, 1995.)
Hence cities which also take responsibility for their global environmental impact and potential benefits from this for their own populations, should adapt circular metabolic systems. (Figure 5)

**Figure 5. Reshare of waste in reproduction/consumption cycle.** (Waas, 1991)

The Brazilian metropolis, the ‘ecological capital’, Curitiba, could be used as a positive example again, since the city has introduced new urban governance structures: 30 years ago it was on its way to becoming another automobile-dominated city, plagued by traffic congestion, air pollution, urban sprawl, and inadequate infrastructure. Instead, the city authorities decided to take a different course and gave preference to public transportation over the private car; using locally appropriate rather than
high-technology solutions; and innovating with citizen participation instead of master planning. (see more in Leitmann, 1999: 328; Rabinovitch, 1992).59

**ENGO transfers: problems and possibilities**
Despite a number of non-governmental organizations representing ‘reformist environmentalism’ have succeeded in producing positive changes in specific urban neighborhoods, it could be argued here that it is not sufficient in the long term, if these effects remain within very limited areas. For the city as a whole, it would be indispensable to disseminate urban environmental knowledge, that is, new practices with socio-technological innovations, finally pushing changes at the national and international policy levels. Remembering the basic feature of cities as nodes for rapid diffusion of innovations, this should not be too a burdensome task. ENGOs’ role could be seen as collectors and developers of this urban environmental knowledge.

However, while very few ENGOs have succeeded in scaling up their social and technological innovations, the majority of organizations – though very understandable because of scarce resources etc. – seem to work somewhat isolated in relatively small geographical areas – even if there could be good potential to introduce the practice to the wider urban region. So far, neither NGO-coalitions nor governments have been able or interested in taking the facilitators’ role and seeking to scale up sound practices extensively. Ideally, there is need for those international, intermediary bodies (whether non-governmental or combined with governmental), which would be capable of putting forth efforts to disseminate prominent ENGO practices at the city level and between cities. Miranda and Hordijk (1998) deplore that as more international agencies begin to work on urban issues, they usually begin by supporting action at the neighborhood level, avoiding the local or city level and leaving aside experiences which seek to promote change on a larger scale at the city level. This tendency helps to explain why we cannot find many examples of ENGOs working at city level in urban environmental management.

Thus, while on the city or national level scaling up of ENGO practices has been quite rare so far, there can be found some examples at the international level. An international organization, the New York based Mega-Cities Project, is the coordinating and connecting body between several megacities. The author of *The Myth of Marginality* (1976), Janice

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59 It is a question of how cities can be transformed from being only consumers of food and other agricultural products into important resource-conserving, converting waste into resources, put vacant and under-utilized areas into productive use and conserve natural resources outside cities while improving the environment for urban living. Because the household wastes, e.g, in Asian cities typically comprise 70-85 percent organic, dirt and dust, compost-making has long been considered a way to reduce waste volumes for municipal disposal. Centralized compost-making through mechanical plants has generally failed, so attention is being given to both decentralized approaches and dump-site composting. Experiments have begun in household backyard composting and composting in boxes on apartment balconies. (Furedy, 1992). On urban agriculture see e.g Smit & Nasr (1992).
Perlman founded the organization as a response to new forms of urban management, which apply to populations of this megacity size issues. She defines (see 1995) the organization as an international network of action-researchers with a presence in most major cities in the world. The focus is on identifying and promoting innovations in urban life which impact especially in the areas of poverty, environment, women and governance. She points out (1990) optimistically that over the past 100 years, the major advances in science and technology have been applied to military and to consumer products; now the question is to find creative ways to apply these advances to the building and maintenance of the urban infrastructure and the preservation of the environment: “[t]he test of the success of civilization is the extent of poverty”.

The Mega-Cities Project is also a ‘big catalyst’ as the former Director of Programs, Akhtar Badshah (1995, pers.comm.) described it. The basic idea of the organization is that all very large cities have more in common with each other than with the smaller size urban areas (even within the country), so they can learn from each other to solve their problems. This is sought by finding the innovative projects; transferring knowledge adaptation; and focusing on grassroots leadership. Their key methodology is formation of groups which can learn from each other, a kind of network of committed individuals who promote sustainable urban development. The opening of decision-making in cities, especially for non-governmental actors, is considered a prerequisite for the transfer. The organization searches for ‘charismatic’ and knowledgeable local leaders to carry out development projects in the world’s largest cities. (Badshah, 1995, pers.comm.; Badshah & Lazar, 1995; Mega-Citizen, 1995: 2). In the mid-1990s, so-called ‘megacities teams’ were initiated, comprising public-private-grassroots partnerships in 18 megacities, also including a couple of cities in the North; the organization transferred over 30 innovations within and among these regions and also produced a database on innovations (Mega-Citizen, 1995). Since these urban centers exist and cannot be demolished, Perlman (1994) calls for a positive perception of the development in megacities and rejects their much-discussed ‘collapse’. Rather, she characterizes them as ‘a sign of life’ thus the question is how to “push an enormous human energy, which is abandoned, on the move”; due to their population heterogeneity, megacities are most likely places to look for solutions. Moreover, she argues that, in fact, a Third World city has its assets in its incompleteness because the city structure is in many instances not yet complete. For urban inhabitants, it is useful to get organized and not just submit to the system, which cannot fulfill people’s needs; and for the organization, the most interesting question is how to lift micro level solutions to macro level. The Mega-City Project has introduced transfer, which does not take place only South to South, or North to South, or but also from South to North, for instance, the metro system adapted from Curitiba, Brazil to New York.
Facilitated by the Mega-Cities Project, the Zabbaleen experience in Cairo was adapted in Manila and Mumbai, with funding from UNDP-LIFE Program. Hence, this ‘garbage to income’ innovation, with entrepreneurial activity, environmental regeneration, and improving living conditions of a low-income group, attracted interest in other cities with similar environmental conditions. In Metropolitan Manila, the transfer site was located in the Patayas dumping grounds in the district of Quezon City, which received 35 per cent of the city’s collected garbage. After the closure of the well-known ‘Smoky Mountain’ dump site, the 15-hectare open pit in Payatas, an urban poor barangay, became the biggest operating open dump site in the city. The population exceeded 32,000 with growing numbers of slum settlements, and the site provided home and income to 4,000 scavenger families. The main NGO working with the scavengers has been the Vincentian Missionaries Social Development Foundation Inc. (VMSDFI), which has also played an intermediary and main implementor role in the Cairo-Manila transfer. The transfer was initiated by a group of several NGOs together with two Payatas leaders who visited Cairo and assessed the appropriateness of the Zabbaleen experience to the context of Payatas. As a result, an integrated community development initiative, a Payatas Environmental Development Program was formulated in order to promote small-scale waste management system as an alternative to open dumping. The social conditions are similar to the experiences of the Zabbaleens in Cairo: residents do not own their land and therefore they lack security of tenure. The organization has helped the establishment of internally generated financial services important to micro enterprises, such as credit and savings facilities (which is adapted from the model of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh) and enterprise development. It has initiated waste recycling micro-enterprise activities in particular among the poorest women. The central element of the program was the so-called ‘package of demands’, the major concerns (from basic needs to recyclable marketing issues) that scavengers themselves formulated in groups, to be presented to the Quezon City mayor. Various projects were initiated so that scavengers could better realize the potential of their trade. The Program aimed at larger people’s participation and involvement in practically all stages of planning, implementation, operation, maintenance and evaluation; its goal was the creation of a more sustainable community for the Payatas while providing more effective waste collection services to the rest of the city. (Vincentian Missionaries, 1998.)

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60 Using local moneylenders the people in Payatas have to pay very high interest rates, thus opportunities to raise income have proved to be hard in this way. As an alternative, within the loan programs some families, for example, could have established junk shops specializing in construction site waste, thus recovering sacks and cement bags that are directly sold outside the community, e.g. as materials for fishing. It is important that the poor are capable of servicing their loans and collectively generating savings, without entirely relying on external funds or grants.
At the end of 1990s the PEDP was processing ‘scaling up’ with plans for a Metro Wide Material Recovery Center. The center was meant to handle collection, transport, sorting, recycling, composting and marketing of recycled products. The PEDP team hired a German Catholic NGO to carry out a feasibility study to determine the most effective way to set up the center. Preliminary plans for the center were approved by various government agencies. Other new activities were also initiated, such as composting waste to be sold as fertilizer. It was expected that part of the financing for the project would come from a debt swap that was arranged with the Swiss government. (see Mega-Citizen, 1995.) The Foundation worked in partnerships with local, national and international NGOs, in which the programs served as a forum for cooperation. The Foundation’s goal was that over time, the people would completely take over the management of programs, i.e. a full take-over was expected. As one stage for that target, the Foundation played a supportive role in the establishment of the Scavengers’ Federation, a community based intermediary organization, which received official recognition as the legal organization for negotiations concerning the area. Local staffing, particularly the hiring of young professionals (as in Cairo) was regarded as complementing participation and the prospect of continuity. (Vincentian Missionaries, 1998.)

In Mumbai, on the other hand, the coordinator and the Additional Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Bombay (MCGB) visited Cairo in 1994. The following year the city’s multisectoral task force met and agreed on a new plan of action for the Cairo-Mumbai transfer, which had a two-part strategy. The first component involved working with MCGB, which ran solid waste collection in the city, to introduce separation of waste within households. In the two residential target areas in the downdown city, rag-pickers went to households and collected recycled waste in place of rummaging through roadside dumpsters, leaving waste on the roadways. Surveys conducted among residents and rag-pickers in the city’s Churchgate area showed that this approach was feasible. The second part of the strategy was to provide an integrated social services program for the rag-pickers living at the Deonar dumping ground. Later on, the British Council offered funding for a two year project at the dumping site. (See Perlman in Mega-Citizen, 1995.)

However, as Leitmann (1999: 294; see also Jänicke & Weidner, 1995) critically remarks, there is a great deal of enthusiasm for identifying and disseminating examples of ‘best’ practice in urban management. Yet there is no standard definition of ‘best’, which makes it difficult to locate one particular case at the pinnacle. One crucial question is who or what constituency defines a best practice. It is also worth notice that larger or more affluent institutions, municipalities, or organizations, with better prospects of financing and with a higher capacity, are better placed to be acknowledged as best practices. Thus there is a need to help the weaker
10. Scaling up Practices and Concepts

Institutions and organizations. (Miranda & Hordijk, 1998.) In addition, the term good practice is now preferred in urban management discourses. But what characteristics make these practices ‘best’ or ‘good’? According to the selection criteria recommended by UNCHS, the practice should (Leitmann, 1999: 294-295):

- have positive and tangible improvements in people’s living conditions (impact);
- involve partnership between at least two or more actors (partnership);
- usher lasting changes in legislation, decision-making procedures, institutions, social and sectoral policies, partnerships (sustainability);
- encourage innovative action, foster change and promote accountable, transparent, and inclusive decision-making (leadership);
- enhance the capacities of people to improve in their own lives, access resources and assistance, participate effectively in decision-making and partnerships, and hold organizations and leaders to account (community empowerment); and
- accept and respond to social and cultural diversity and promote social equity (gender and social inclusion).

Good practice should fulfil all or most of these criteria, and furthermore, achieve at least one of the goals of urban environmental management (ibid.: 295):

- improve the access of low-income and other marginalized groups to urban infrastructure, services, and housing;
- promote sustainable use of environmental resources and services; reduce or prevent environmental pollution;
- build urban planning capacity or encouraged a city-level process supporting sustainable development; and
- reduce natural or man-made risks and protected natural or cultural heritage.

For instance, household solid waste management by APE in Cairo was acknowledged as a Best Practice in 1998 within Habitat, and Sulabh already in 1996. It can be considered that the other three case study associations in this study also fulfill most of the above requirements. The idea of replication subsumes the scaling up goal, the transfer of ‘successful’ solutions for various urban problems. On the other hand, keeping in mind the diverse and specific conditions ENGOs have evolved and their different target groups and areas, there probably emerge certain limitations when attempting to replicate a practice in another area with different cultural context (see also Patel & Kalpana, 1998). A critical view of the replicability of ‘best’ practices is also evinced by John Turner (1996), who observes that despite many impressive cases presented in Istanbul, descriptions of the actual procedures and technological solutions clear enough to show their applicability in various urban circumstances were still lacking, and raises the problem of different understandings of ‘best’. In addition, he presses the unanswered question: upon what does a sustainable civilization depend? The
proposed new urban priority areas for the 21st century in Third World are directly interlinked with environmental concerns: poverty alleviation and redistribution of resources; decentralization and democratization; self-employment and microenterprises; infrastructure, services, and housing; community development and women empowerment; and, ecological regeneration (recycling of water, waste, energy, food) (Mega-Cities Project, 1991).
How to achieve healthier and thus more livable cities in the Third World; what can residents themselves do? The study has looked at the broad context behind the ‘urban crisis’ in Third World large cities, with a particular emphasis on the possible role of collective civic action in offering solutions in urban environmental governance. The study has covered theoretical issues concerning urban growth; environmental problems; city morphology and informal settlements; new social movements and NGOs; and urban governance. This work has elaborated a variety of theoretical perspectives by combining a comprehensive literature analysis with empirical evidence. Locally initiated solutions to urban governance problems offered by five civic associations were analyzed and finally synthesized through the various theoretical approaches. Investigating and combining these different disciplinary viewpoints and contexts, what can be learned from the study of this relatively novel social scientific phenomenon: the civic activity in megacities focused on environmental concerns?

The rapid changing urban phenomenon

Large Third World cities are not a new phenomenon in human history, but contemporary urbanization, since the 1950s, is a relatively recent development; what is noteworthy is its fast pace in the least urbanized regions, in which the notion of megacities can be seen as its pinnacle. Two urbanization tendencies can be found: first, the gravity of population growth has shifted from North to South, and second, the growth is concentrated particularly in Asia, which will have the highest number of megacities in the coming decades. Most of the largest cities are in just a few nations, particularly in India, China and Brazil. Megacities that comprise only 5 percent of the world population today will be the future condition for many cities that are currently experiencing rapid growth rates. Large cities have possessed certain qualities that have attracted in-migrants from rural and
smaller urban areas, and resulted in city population growth. Today this pattern has decreased, as natural population growth is the predominant factor: cities are growing and expanding from the inside out in the form of urban sprawl.

All megacities are part of the two processes of globalization, global convergence and global divergence, which are replacing the effects of the modernization project. A new geography of centrality cuts across the North-South division, and changes the order in a few Third World cities in the global economy. Urban romanticists see a chain of cities emerging and connecting various sizes of urban areas throughout the world as a polynuclear urban system, in which global cities function as key command points in a dense network of megacities, ‘overshadowing’ the position of nation-states. These urban nodes, with large-scale technological and economic structures, would then epitomize the ‘highest manifestation’ of humanity. However, some scholars argue that many of the Third World’s largest cities do not qualify as global cities due to their societal unrest and ‘lack of order’. Their conditions are symptomatic of urban crisis, and as a result, they can thus be categorized here as ‘non-global’ cities. Delhi, the capital of India, for instance, has great difficulties in becoming a global city due to its poorly functioning infrastructure, whilst Cairo has experienced similar difficulties due to manifestations of political unrest in the 1990s. As megacities seek to be global actors, this may lead to improved conditions in the poorest settlements, due to globally operating enterprises, which are primarily interested in these areas as a source of productive labor. From another viewpoint, a technocities vision, comprising rapidly operating information and communication systems, does not much fit into what is actually going on in those areas, where the majority of the world’s population – and the most striking social inequalities and extreme poverty – are located. This vision can be regarded as inherently elitist, most probably leading to widening socio-economic gaps in lopsided societies (cf. Bell, 1999).

Geographically and administratively, delineating megacities is a rather problematic task, and causes certain twists in international comparisons of city size in terms of population. The function of peri-urban areas in a formation of a city also deserves more recognition: is it really possible to delineate where the megacity starts and ends, when the rural and urban features and functions are mingled? Also, the role of various peri-urban ‘borderzones’ as intensive spaces of socio-spatial change deserves more attention and new angles.

Ecological conditions of cities have determined the location of various human settlements according to socio-economic factors. In trying to manage in harsh urban habitats, some people have discovered socially exceptional or disrespected behaviors, such as living on top of cemeteries or in street tents; or deriving their livelihoods from other people’s waste through scavenging, which has long traditions in many cities. Urban land has become scarcer and
more costly, resulting to the situation in which the growth of informal settlements, the *informal city*, coincides with the oversupply of more expensive, formal housing units. Slums and squatter settlements can be defined through certain physical and social features, however, there is again a great variation between cities. A few scholars consider informal cities innovative locales, which as productive places have an important role in the national economy; these ‘cities built from the bottom-up’, such as squatter settlements, demonstrate a high level of activity and self-help among the residents.

After having finally received infrastructure and other necessary services, informal cities gradually become part of the *formal city* thus accelerating its expansion. Thus, while the majority of scholars seem to condemn the Third World population growth – which means the poorest groups in particular – there are also those who see the issue more positively.

**Ad hoc urban management and elastic cities**

The current *urban crisis* can be seen here as a twofold occurrence, comprising on the one hand, every-day life ‘micro’ problems, ranging from unemployment and insecure housing, to depletion of environmental resources and pollution. These have ultimately evolved into ‘macro’ problems, as such issues have become the concerns of millions of residents, pinpointing the limitations of the city authorities to carry out their tasks properly. Thereby megacities epitomize the current urban crisis in terms of governance, implying the limits and failures of city authorities to keep pace with urban growth and services, infrastructure, housing, and sustenance of environmental resources.

Epidemics and other health challenges in today’s large Third World large somewhat simulate the circumstances of ancient cities or the European cities a couple of centuries back. Today’s crisis, however, differs from the past in its dimensions; the broad scale and rapid pace at which problems develop. This study has drawn a profile of the main environmental problems in large Third World cities by tracing several of the *weakest links* between society and the environment. Despite specificities, megacities share certain common features in regard to their environmental problems. It can be summarized that they are complex, interconnected issues which have multiple origins and synergetic effects. Above all, it is a question of political ecology, reflecting the socio-economic inequity in such megacities. The issues people can observe and experience directly in their daily lives are local questions, such as solid waste disposal, water supply and local level air pollution.

Northern perceptions and criteria, such as chemical agents in the environment, are gradually replaced by addressing the impact of biological agents on humans through the *brown agenda*, which is a set of the most critical urban environmental problems. However, this not to say that smaller cities have lesser importance; in fact, some of their environmental problems may be even more severe than in larger cities in some instances. In addition,
it could be argued that the closer an environmental issue is to the neighborhood level, the more likely a household feels responsible for contributing to its management or abatement.

Third World cities have been an ignored global environmental subject. Meier (1993) and Girardet (1995), among others, argue that sustainable policies in the North will utterly fail if the hugely difficult environmental cases in the rest of the world are not solved; it is difficult to achieve global-level sustainable development without sustainable human settlements, and therefore sustainability is critical to humanity. For instance, population growth debates have not dealt with a proper elaboration of the role of Third World urban areas. In addition, contrasting brown problems to green ones is a false dichotomy, since cities are the most significant users of natural resources in multiple ways, and also they are sources of emissions that contribute to climate change and ozone depletion. There is now an emerging global context for urban environmental research, in which the human dimension is figuring more prominently.

National policy responses have put efforts into controlling the ‘urban explosion’ and therefore attempting to limit the growth of the largest cities – the same primary cities that have been reinforced through centralization efforts for decades. *Urban governance failure* implies limited institutional capacities of public authorities; a lack of popular participation and trust; a lack of accountability and transparency; closed policymaking; a poor service delivery record; a lack of professional administrative systems; jurisdictional complexities and intersectoral coordination and communication; a lack of democratic systems, etc. However, colonial influences, such as segregationalism, can also be considered forces that have aggravated today’s governance problems (King, 2000: 49).

But when considering these multifaceted issues, can we really discuss the ‘failure’ of the authorities, since the processes and changes in the city – like natural population growth, in-migration, or squatter settlements – occur so rapidly? As long as city authorities intend to keep the policymaking and implementation in urban management closed and to prevent the local agents from stepping in, it is valid to argue the urban governance failure thesis.

*From urban silence towards ecological citizenship*
When governments are unable to help residents to attain the numerous aspects of quality of life, one could expect either collective protests or vigorous community activity in these regions. But why are the former rare, and the latter far from sufficient in the face of urban crisis? It would be easy to assume that these regions have the potential for widespread protest, however, it is quite unusual that people’s discontent to burst out as violent protest. I have named this condition among the population *urban silence*, which implies various reasons for presumable non-action, from the poor to the wealthy: welfare state perception; authoritarianism; bureaucracy; tolerance; egoism; powerlessness; lack of ownership and sense of
community; and, improvisation and resiliency. Heterogeneous neighborhoods (i.e., due to hybridity) have tensions and disjunctions that lead to urban silence and which have also weakened the position of some informal associations (see, e.g., Hoodfar, 1997: 218). In all, people have several options in responding to urban problems: non-action or ‘invisible’ action; participating in mass social movements (peaceful or violent); or working in non-governmental organizations.

At the neighborhood level, spontaneous action and social movements in environmentally related issues have thus proved to be of limited interest among the residents due to numerous socio-political and economic barriers. Also community-based, better organized groups in environment-related issues appear to be a relatively scarce resource in most of the urban areas, although many urban areas experience vivid community action. In general, it seems to be difficult to establish social networks and community groups in large, heterogeneous megacities. The poor usually lack the organizational resources, such as educated people, to defend their issues. Also, the middle class has been rather reluctant to initiate responses.

New social space has opened up to environment-oriented non-governmental organizations, such as civic associations, which have entered the urban scene. This change has also been intensified by the international development agencies. The late 1970s and particularly the 1980s have been the moment for the rise of non-governmental sector. It has faced high expectations in reinforcing or thickening and expanding civil societies. Governance can also be considered a system, which gives space for the growth of civil society. The NGO ‘sector’ is a most heterogeneous phenomenon, comprising groups which are both enabling and hindering the civil societies. Many of the expectations have been based merely on beliefs or assumptions, as in ‘doing good’. Some of their advantages can be understood in an opposite way; for example, ‘low cost’ may actually imply ‘underfinanced’.

The emergence of new social movements (NSMs) has coincided with the declining hegemony of the development discourse both in the First World and in the Third World (Parajuli, 1991). New social movements include very diverse phenomena, of which the environmental movement just comprises a fraction. While the old social movement theories located NGOs outside the traditional movement structure, in the anatomy of new social movements, NGOs are often the core of an amorphous movement, being the organizational nucleus of the group.

In India environmentalists have succeeded in influencing politics and public debates, unlike in Egypt, where the ‘greens’ have comprised a small group of educated, upper class people. Also movements in these two countries have varied greatly in terms of their capacity to involve the poor, or to adopt effective tactics. Today, Egyptian ‘mainstream’ environmentalism could be viewed as run by urban ENGOs, while in India environmentalism is still predominantly non-urban despite the fact that also
its cities have an active associational life in environment-related concerns. The study found a gap in the literature concerning the relationship between rural and urban-oriented environmental movements. The assumption is that the relationship between ‘traditional’ green movements and urban ENGOs appears to be weak and there is some tension between rural and urban groups, in which urban groups are often labeled as elitist. It still appears that what is understood by ‘environmentalism’ only implies non-urban issues, and therefore, usually urban environmentalists are considered to be those who are members of conservation organizations such as the WWF etc. in the Third World. However, it can be suggested that a new ‘brown branch’ is evolving within Third World environmentalism, as urbanization and its impacts become more recognized.

Theories on NSMs are based on experiences that are not drawn from Third World cities, and hence their applicability to ENGOs operating in cities is rather limited. Such theories are unable to encompass many of the specific characteristics of ENGOs and their richness in functions and relations. Also, it is not appropriate to try to force diverse and often contradictory new social movements into narrow models, but instead, to use sociological and other theoretical approaches as tools in explicating the movements, their structures, lifecycles, and functions.

It has been argued in the beginning of the study that the Third World urban crisis calls for novel innovations. Is it then possible to create indigenous environmental knowledge systems in large urban contexts? The study has introduced a new concept, street environmentalism to give a name to the growing, ‘intrinsic’, environmental knowledge creation by city residents, and based on experiences from the largest cities of the Third World. Socio-environmental practices try to demonstrate how humans could live in very large settlements and yet seek to sustain their ecological systems as healthy. Furthermore, these practices can be explored as a form of cultural knowledge. A normative statement could be made here that they also imply in the shift towards an urban ‘ecological citizenship’ (Smith, 1998), or even an ‘ecologically enlightened civil society’. Thus this knowledge has to be found in the Third World and not in First World, experiences.

The study developed a conceptual typology for urban ENGOs. It is obvious that relevant concepts are lacking in contemporary discourses on NGOs in general; in this study, ENGOs are used as an umbrella term, while civic associations are regarded as its subgroup. I have divided ENGOs into three types: reformist, reflective and nominal, with a total of 13 subgroups. The five case studies focused on the reformist ENGOs and also demonstrated the diversity of urban associational life. However, modeling or categorizing urban ENGOs proved to be a complicated task; for instance, it was difficult to avoid overlapping in conceptualizations. This was a result of the central feature of ENGOs’ work: environmental issues, connected to aspects of development, inherently contain many issues and dimensions to be tackled. It can be considered that, again, rigid models are not best in
interpreting elements of new social movements. On the other hand, we need new, more specific concepts when discussing and studying ENGOs in cities.

**Civic associations and urban governance**

The case study associations combined technological solutions with social aspects. In addition, when merging modern scientific applications with indigenous elements, the dichotomy between modern and traditional, or scientific or non-scientific, loses its relevance. Hybridization could be defined here as “the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices, and recombine with new forms in new practices” (Rowe & Schelling, 1991, in Pieterse, 1995). All five case study associations could find a way to solve one or (usually) more environmental problems with their integrated approaches. There are no simple interpretations or explications concerning ENGO roles and relations, but a few analytical tools concerning their societal origin, founders, tactics, philosophy, leadership, personnel, target population, etc. could be found. Also, instead of broad generalizations, the case studies were contextualized; it was emphasized that their origins and working field were culturally specific.

In terms of urban governance, the associations worked as mediators between the neighborhoods and particularly central and local governments as well as international development agencies. In regard to the conceptual typology of urban ENGOs, the case study associations represented reformists, such as development catalysts, as well as empowering, educative and advocacy organizations which initiated integrated community development; empowered marginalized groups and educated people in the management of environmental resources and health issues; and arranged environmental campaigns. However, just one of them seems to have been able to affect policymaking on the national level. The value in ENGO endeavors is probably that they can indicate some new ways for urban governance in praxis, which takes place through combining resources from professional leaders, urban neighborhoods, and a variety of other actors within particular cultural contexts. The case study practices have some features common also to with other ‘successful’ NGO experiences in the world, such as that of SPARC in Mumbai or OPP in Karachi. They all display the capacity of people to generate collective responses to every-day life questions in cities and to enable neighborhoods to overcome some of the constraints that I referred to here as ‘urban silence’. In addition, the solutions these associations offered were not against development or Western modernization per se, but since they combined Western scientific technological applications with local cultural elements, or otherwise applied uncommon solutions – compared to those of city authorities – one could say that the practices were ‘alternative’. Furthermore, the practices were reformist in terms of their orientation toward socio-environmental change, their unconventional nature and in most cases, their promotion of novel environmental resource use. In due course, summarizing some of the
strengths of ‘reformist’ ENGOs, the positive attributes include at least the following: the capability to promote human rights and equality; to mobilize people; to reach the marginalized, poor population; to be innovative and flexible in problem-solving; to operate in fields where governments are unable to work; to be committed to long-term work; to find ecologically circular modes of resources use; and to be low-cost in delivery of services. In light of the empirical case studies, the competence to promote these kinds of practices can be suggested to be the most important asset of the civic associations in urban governance. As a result, some civic associations are able to make a permanent impact on the morphology and development of urban centers in the Third World. The case study associations demonstrated noteworthy achievements, which in some instances were very vital to the city as a whole, particularly in such issues as solid waste disposal. ENGOs seem to have a great potential concerning local-level brown agenda issues, but to a lesser extent in addressing city-level issues like air pollution originating from traffic and large-scale industries.

The case study associations indicated some dilemmas that may emerge more generally concerning the ENGOs’ impact. Firstly, by working with health care, associations can help to tackle the issue of natural population growth with resulting lower birth rates in the city. On the other hand, their work may hasten the growth of cities by attracting more in-migrants who are aware of improved facilities and employment. The result may also be the further aggravation of low-income settlements due to congestion. Secondly, civic associations often work on an ad hoc basis, and despite achieving societal reforms, are often unable to tackle the very root causes of the problems in the city. Thirdly, when attempting to cease the operation of a polluting industrial unit in a local neighborhood, it might result in severe side effects, such as unemployment in the neighborhood, or even the shift of the problem to another area.

A new paradigm has evolved to rectify the deficiencies of traditional urban management approaches. In the study I have elaborated the new governance structure as a three-dimensional approach, viewing urban governance as fostering: a) a new relational character of the state; b) diversity, complexity and dynamic patterns; and c) collaboration and coordination among stakeholders. These can be considered good governance constituents, which include at least two subcomponents: actors and principles. The new urban governance approach addresses the changing interaction between the state and civil society, and particularly the emergence of new civil society formations – it is very much a relational concept. It is based on principles or ideas of a multidisciplinary approach, also including principles such as democracy; decentralization; interdependence; human rights and equality; privatization; legitimacy; credibility; transparency; accountability; reciprocity; popular participation, etc. Nevertheless, these principles – which can be heard from the lips of every development practitioner, researcher and donor today – ought to be
treated with caution, since many of them are incompatible by nature, and used lavishly without indicating clear modes of action in praxis.

Urban governance investigates the way in which communities relate to technological processes, meaning that it also includes a socio-technological aspect, as the case studies demonstrated, too. Furthermore, it would be ideal to conceive of the city as an ecological whole, for instance, through a systems orientation, which recognizes complex interrelated forces as well as takes into account both vertical and horizontal-level relations. There is a great need to shift from reactive to proactive planning procedures, which will need institutional reforms, particularly the arrangement of inter-institutional collaboration. In addition, the interrelating functions between the city and rural areas also have to be better taken into account when considering comprehensive urban policies. In practice, there have been few attempts to initiate city-level urban governance. Functional allocation and coordination; increasing the capacity of key departments; prioritization of environmental questions (with equity as one of the guiding principles); and ecological integrity are central concerns when promoting city level governance. Important questions include, for instance, what tasks are best undertaken in collaboration among stakeholders, and when is it best that just one actor, such as the state or an ENGO, undertakes the work alone.

The stakeholders in urban governance are numerous and multi-level, but numerous scholars argue that the key change agents are local ENGOs (and also CBOs). Hence, despite hard criticism of the NGO sector in general, they are considered one of the most important stakeholders in the new urban governance approach. When ENGOs encounter other actors in urban environmental affairs, numerous problematic ‘nexuses’ come out. For instance, ENGO relations to home governments vary from close collaboration, if not fusion, to control and harassment by the governments. Generally speaking, the change in the state-society relationship may be regarded as positive because ENGOs can reduce the burden of the state – although they might also face too high expectations, which they are not (yet) ready to fulfill. In spite the fact that non-governmental organizations will be an increasingly important actor group in urban governance, it seems that it is still the Third World governments who are expected to be the ‘backbones’ of these societies, and ultimately take care of people’s welfare. One of the most important relationships is between ENGOs and local governments, where pragmatic forums can be created in which this partnership could materialize. However, ENGOs with their well-educated professional leaders may contest weak local environmental bodies and thus cause conflictual situations.

Probably the most intensive relationship occurs between ENGOs and international development agencies, particularly the World Bank, which has initiated or otherwise affected urban environmental programs worldwide. It is afraid that the sustainability of civil societies becomes threaten if they are influenced by or collaborate too much with these powerful, international forces. This relationship usually brings up a problem in the direction of
accountability; is it towards the target groups, communities, or towards the donors. For the sake of the ENGO sector’s long term development and sustainability it is vital to find new, indigenous sources and methods of funding. ENGO cooperation with local enterprises has several positive effects in which the former may benefit from the encounter in terms of improved management skills, and the latter from learning participatory development methods. The partnerships between Transnational Corporations and ENGOs, on the other hand, create many problematic points and easily weaken the credibility of ENGOs on the local level.

If civic groups aim at becoming more influential, it can be asserted that they need to have better knowledge of administrative and judicial systems in society and close relations with environmental lawyers, to be ‘watchdogs’ and ‘advocates’ and, for example, to help to file cases concerning environmental violations. In addition, cooperating with the media can be a powerful tool in disseminating environmental awareness and provoking public debates. The NGO sector or ‘community’ is a diverse and growing entity, therefore it can be expected that opportunist and corrupted actors will operate beside those groups who seek to carry out sound development work that benefits larger and particularly marginalized sections of the population. Despite mutual discrepancies, some ENGOs have been able to create social movements and alliances in important national-level environmental questions.

As NGOs make demands that public authorities should be more transparent, accountable and foster participation – in their own relationship to local communities, ENGOs themselves should also conduct their activities according to these principles and develop routines and other systems by which these principles could be implemented and monitored (an issue that was not studied here). In addition, supporting local CBOs is a sensitive task, in which the development intervention has to take into account the internal dynamics of the community. An ENGO can also challenge a local CBO and as result, create tension, if not confusion, in the community. In addition, keeping also in mind the heterogeneous and inharmonious features of the most urban neighborhoods in general, I would suggest that the concept ‘Community-Based Organization’ (CBO) warrants more critical definitions and usage in cities.

In many instances, ENGOs have emerged as complementing or substituting for local government efforts in coping with various urban problems both in Cairo and Delhi, which supports the governance failure thesis, i.e., the state does not fulfill its duties. However, this situation faces a paradox. On the one hand, spontaneous grassroots activism has been very difficult to engage in for the residents, due to strict government control and a lethargic bureaucracy, as well as a lack of various resources in the poorest communities, or, simply due to the disinterest of the middle class. On the other hand, the ‘outsiders’, professional leaders and other educated individuals from the upper classes, have founded the majority of NGOs in
the environmental field. This has invoked criticisms of elitism in the work of these organizations. However, I argue that since collective action does not always start up spontaneously in urban neighborhoods due to various ‘urban silence’ barriers, there is a role to play for the intermediary level actors, such as ENGOs. Furthermore, despite the fact that the capacities of local CBOs should also be reinforced, these two actor groups should not be juxtaposed, since their work is not necessarily mutually exclusive. In addition, urban governance principles appear to be rather equivocal and vague, most probably creating confusing situations in which stakeholders or actors have different understandings concerning the meaning and implementation of the principles and roles of actors. Thus, it is too early to make generalizations, as to whether NGOs operate ‘better’ than governments – if it is a relevant question at all, since the basic premise for new urban governance structures is that the tasks of formal actors are complemented by informal actors. In all, generalizations on the NGOs’ relations in urban governance are very difficult to state clearly, because the subject is little studied, and thus requires long-term and wide-scale assessments. In this task we need more appropriate fieldwork methodologies, particularly developed from urban contexts.

ENGOs have certain comparative advantages that ought to be exploited more widely – as the case study associations showed operating in fields in which the state has not fulfilled its duties. What comes up at this point is that when looking at the relations between just two-actor situations, multiple points of difficulties, as well as potential partnerships, can be anticipated in urban governance. Furthermore, many of the hindering factors in urban governance are much due to the historical legacy typical of post-colonial, undemocratic societies, added to more recent forces such as structural adjustment programs, which have had controversial effects in Third World regions. It could be argued that since elements from new urban governance have been injected into the rhetoric, projects and programs of international development agencies (such as the UN), as well as development practitioners, and academia – something is ‘going on’ which hints at forthcoming societal changes in megacities, too.

Third World megacities as hybrid cities
Instead of considering city spaces as contrasting, in many instances, there can be found integrated or symbiotic relationships developed over time, which indicates the prevalence of more complex forms than the traditional dual city hypothesis has been able to grasp; it will gradually give space to hybrid city approaches.

61 For instance, the UNDP Management & Governance Network (MagNet) (see more in internet homepage: http://magnet.undp.org/) and the UNCHS Good Urban Governance Campaign and the research inputs of the Network-Association of European Researchers of Urbanization in the South (N-AERUS) (http://www.naerus.org/); also the Global Urban Research Institute (GURI) (http://www.chass.utoronto.ca:8080/guri).
Global processes, though twofold, seem to lead to further differentiation among regions. Large Third World cities are indeed a crossbreed or mixture of a great diversity of urban structures, functions and populations. The whole urban mosaic can be seen as a borderline condition towards change (or mutation); between ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’; informal and formal; and drawing elements from multiple identities or ‘Othernesses’. Perhaps here it could simply be described as a condition balancing between chaos and stability: _hybridity can be seen as contributing to the elastic capacity of cities, and it helps to explain why even 20 million people inhabitant agglomerations keep on existing and functioning at all_. This implies that residents in megacities have been able to cope with various day-to-day problems, and their solutions have arisen outside the formal system: the state could not have offered people better living conditions. People’s actions are often illegal, but they also have become commonly accepted survival methods. To sum up, the following features connected to hybridity can be found in large cities:

- very high urbanization rates and the rise of informal cities and their variegated structures;
- city morphologies that combine indigenous and alien elements, including both symbiotic and conflicting relations (the ‘inherited’ and ‘colonial’ cities);
- multiethnic and multicultural, but often isolated and heterogeneous neighborhoods;
- the emergence of new spatial patterns, having borderzones as centers of gravity, where the changes (e.g. transitional zones between ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’, or decaying slum areas) or new interrelations (e.g. rural-urban fringe) take place most speedily;
- places where transnational and transregional processes take on localized forms (of both diversification and convergence);
- mixed economies, including formal and informal sectors; and
- the emergence of new organizational forms, such as ENGOs and their unconventional innovations, i.e. urban environmental practices.

To conclude, the ostentatious term ‘megacity’ refers to mere the size of an urban agglomeration, being too plain to catch the real character of Third World cities. The American or European traditional spatial features, and the whole way of thinking and planning – what constitutes a ‘city’ – must be rejected in the Third World context. Since hybridity and its various (structural, functional and spatial) manifestations seem to be the most prevalent or denimating feature of today’s large Third World agglomerations, we need study it in greater depth in order to find more fitting terms and concepts for these cities.

Finally, the scale and pace of current Third World urban crisis has placed humankind in an entirely new, ahistorical situation: we do not have previous knowledge, a tradition, for coping with our large conglomerations and the
consequent pathologies. The possibilities for humans to settle in large agglomerations and to try to sustain environmental resources in the region have proved to be incompatible. City authorities have been relying merely on scientific or technological solutions, which have not succeeded in solving the majority of problems. It can be expected that among others, ENGOs with their work are ushering in a new era of urban governance, which I have sought to illustrate by introducing the five case studies from Cairo and Delhi – because the basis of theory on urban governance, the modes in implementing its principles and partnerships, can be drawn mainly from empirical, street level experiences. The central thesis in this study has been that despite criticism of the NGO sector in general, a segment of ENGOs with ‘street level’ practices operates as ‘collectors’ and ‘developers’ of urban environment-based knowledge. But this does not suffice alone in the longer term. It is vital to scale up these practices, either by ENGOs themselves or other intermediary bodies, at the city level, all of which can then really foster development towards novel governance structures in large Third World cities.
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