Social science

Authority: building a definition

Hunt, Janet (2008). *Local NGOs in national development: the case of East Timor*. PhD thesis, GSSSP, RMIT University.

For this research into the roles of non-government organisations (NGOs) in East Timor's national development, Janet Hunt (2008:9) needs a working definition of **civil society** that will include the work of human rights organisations in 'conflict zones'.

1. Look at Hunt's four sources for the construction of her definition. Think about the authority of the sources and the issues or variables they include.

2. Think about the order in which Hunt has presented the definitions of civil society.

3. Underline the sentences that indicate her voice.

TEXT	NOTES
The Cardoso Panel of Eminent Persons on UN-civil society relations set up by UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in 2003 defined civil society as:	Source 1
…the associations of citizens (outside their families, friends and businesses) entered into voluntarily to advance their interests, ideas and ideologies. The term does not include profit making activity (the private sector) or governing (the public sector) (**Cardoso 2004:13**).	Source 2
Kaldor (2003:1) suggests that the term has always been associated with 'a rule-governed society based largely on the consent of individual citizens rather than coercion', noting that different definitions reflect 'different ways in which consent was generated, manufactured, nurtured or purchased, the different rights and obligations that formed the basis of consent, and the different interpretations of this process'. **Van Rooy** notes its diverse political and philosophical origins, but defines it for practical purposes as 'an observable reality' (organisationally) and 'a good thing', in that even an imperfect one is better than no civil society at all (**1998:30**). Essentially, it seems at its core to be about the relationship between citizens and their state, and it may take organisational form. Whilst the term 'civil society' is often used in the development literature in a normative way as something worthwhile, it is clear that civil society organisations may work towards internationally agreed standards embodied in human rights agreements, or may actively engage in violence (**Keane 1998, 2003**). This study acknowledges this broad understanding of civil society but deliberately seeks out organisations which are working for development and the attainment of human rights, broadly defined (i.e. for social, economic and cultural rights as well as civil and political ones) in a context in which the end of violence is sought.	Source 3 Source 4

Authority: building a definition

TEXT	NOTES
The Cardoso Panel of Eminent Persons on UN-Civil Society Relations, set up in 2003 by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, defined civil society as:	Source 1 Institutional definition; Generalisable: - citizens - voluntary - non-government
…the associations of citizens (outside their families, friends and businesses) entered into voluntarily to advance their interests, ideas and ideologies. The term does not include profit making activity (the private sector) or governing (the public sector) (Cardoso 2004:13).	
Kaldor (2003:1) suggests that the term has always been associated with 'a rule-governed society based largely on the consent of individual citizens rather than coercion', noting that different definitions reflect 'different ways in which consent was generated, manufactured, nurtured or purchased, the different rights and obligations that formed the basis of consent, and the different interpretations of this process'. **Van Rooy** notes its diverse political and philosophical origins, but defines it for practical purposes as 'an observable reality' (organisationally) and 'a good thing', in that even an imperfect one is better than no civil society at all (1998:30**). Essentially, it seems at its core to be about the relationship between citizens and their state, and it may take organisational form. Whilst the term 'civil society' is often used in the development literature in a normative way as something worthwhile,** it is clear that civil society organisations may work towards internationally agreed standards embodied in human rights agreements, or may actively engage in violence (**Keane** 1998, 2003). **This study acknowledges this broad understanding of civil society but deliberately seeks out organisations which are working for development and the attainment of human rights, broadly defined (i.e. for social, economic and cultural rights as well as civil and political ones) in a context in which the end of violence is sought.**	Source 2 Voluntary, not coerced **However,** the type of consent & rights influence the definition Source 3 'organisationally visible' - worthwhile Hunt summarises key features of civil society thus far Source 4 Can focus on human rights or violent action. Hunt qualifies the definition to focus on orgs who uphold human rights and peaceful resolution.

Note: Hunt's voice is underlined