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SOUTHERN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AS PRACTICAL HYBRIDS

Dealing with legitimacy in a Ugandan gender advocacy organization

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Introduction

Analysis of civil society collaborations often focuses on how Northern civil society organizations (CSOs), including international non-governmental organizations, conduct their programming in cooperation with their Southern partners, frequently featuring critical discussion of the asymmetries in such North–South collaborations. Focusing on the North–South dyad easily excludes the examination of the web of influential relationships in which Southern CSOs are embedded. In this chapter, we scrutinize how CSOs navigate between diverse audiences and logics in negotiating their organizational legitimacy while trying to maintain their aspirations for social change and transformation. Previous research on the legitimacy of development CSOs has focused on, for instance, the challenge for international non-governmental organizations to be simultaneously seen as legitimate by their audiences in the Global North and their partners and beneficiaries in the Global South (Dodworth, 2014; Lister, 2003; Mitchell et al., 2020; Ossewaarde et al., 2008; Walton et al., 2016). Some studies have examined Southern CSOs' efforts to gain legitimacy vis-á-vis the field of international development through certain management practices and 'development speak' (Claeyé & Jackson, 2012), whereas others have investigated the divergence among accountability mechanisms perceived to be legitimate by international donors, governments, and local communities (Buchard, 2013; Claeyé, 2014; Dar, 2014); scrutinized different interpretations of sources of CSO legitimacy held by donors and grassroots organizations (Elbers et al., 2021); and investigated sources of legitimacy of local advocacy CSOs in their relationships with communities (Matelski et al., 2021). Scholars have also discussed the ability of CSOs to act as legitimate representatives of those they claim to speak for, and the extent to which CSOs legitimately follow their own explicit values in terms of societal goals (Atack, 1999; Dodworth, 2014; Mitchell et al., 2020, p. 100).

To contribute to debates on CSO legitimacy, in this chapter, drawing on two distinct bodies of literature, we discuss diverse legitimacy audiences and logics in relation to which legitimacy is assessed and negotiated. First, we join the debate on 'going with the grain' (Booth, 2011; Crook & Booth, 2011; Kelsall, 2008, 2012) in development studies. This literature leads us to view CSOs as 'practical hybrids' (Booth & Cammack, 2013, p. 99; Rusca & Schwartz, 2014) that must balance between being embedded in existing institutionalized practices and promoting the transformation of these practices. Second, we draw on organization studies literature on hybrid organizations – organizations combining diverse institutional logics to perform legitimacy in the eyes of different audiences in varying fields (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Battilana et al., 2017; Deephouse et al., 2017; Pache & Santos, 2013).

We explore CSO legitimacy through the case of Action for Development (ACFODE), a Ugandan gender advocacy organization that negotiates its legitimacy in alignment with diverse audiences and logics while striving to maintain its core concern – gender equality. We ask, first, what the main legitimacy audiences for ACFODE are, and second, according to which different logics its legitimacy is assessed. We reflect on the ways in which the organization negotiates across differing legitimacy expectations. In the following sections, we first briefly discuss the notions of practical hybrids, hybrid organizations, and legitimacy. Then, we introduce the case of ACFODE and present our findings concerning legitimacy audiences and logics. We conclude with some ideas concerning the implications of our findings for North–South CSO collaborations.

Practical hybrids: balancing between diverse perceptions of legitimacy

In this section, we introduce our understanding of CSOs as practical hybrids, building on the bodies of literature concerning 'going with the grain' and organizational legitimacy. In both the Global South and the Global North, CSOs are often preoccupied with transforming existing ideas, practices, and institutions. However, these organizations typically need to anchor their approaches within the very institutions they seek to eventually change. CSOs in this position are conceptualized as 'practical hybrids' (Booth & Cammack, 2013, p. 99) in the literature on 'going with the grain', a notion that originated in research on African power and politics as an alternative to the 'good governance agenda' that mostly promoted Western-type CSOs in Africa and that faced many implementation and sustainability challenges (Booth, 2011; Booth & Golooba-Mutebi, 2012; Kelsall, 2008, 2012). The idea of 'going with the grain' emphasizes working with the existing social fabric, such as extended family, religion, women's organizations, and clientelism, instead of importing a new kind of 'civil society' (Kelsall, 2008, pp. 637–640). Practical hybrids consider existing institutions' potential resources rather than old-fashioned hindrances to be 'swept aside' and emphasize anchoring development interventions in local cultural repertoires to ensure their

sustainability (Booth & Cammack, 2013, p. 101), thus seeking to promote some-
thing new in culturally legitimate ways (Rusca & Schwartz, 2014).

   However, the legitimacy of CSOs can also be defined more broadly than the
cultural legitimacy of their interventions. In organization studies, legitimacy is
understood as 'a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity
are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed systems of
norms, values, beliefs, and definitions' (Suchman, 1995, p. 574) and therefore
also as a kind of 'perceived appropriateness' of an organization (Deephouse et al.,
2017, p. 32). Moreover, this appropriateness is assessed by multiple audiences
(Deephouse & Suchman, 2008, p. 62) in a continuous process (Suddaby et al.,
2017, p. 462) and embedded in social relationships (Meyer et al., 2013). Further,
as suggested by the literature on hybrid organizations (Battilana & Dorado, 2010;
Battilana et al., 2017; Fisher et al., 2017; Pache & Santos, 2013), legitimacy can
be evaluated vis-á-vis different institutional logics. Here, 'logics' refers to the
'socially constructed, historical pattern of material practices, assumptions, val-
ues, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material
subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality'
(Thornton & Ocasio, 1999, p. 804), further discussed in reference to organiza-
tions rather than individuals (Thornton et al., 2012). Logics do not refer to char-
acteristics of certain actors but rather to institutionalized rationalities available
in society, such as the market or religion (Friedland & Alford, 1991), that hold
up different models, goals, and practices as appropriate – and thus legitimate
(Thornton et al., 2012, p. 108).

   Using these two bodies of literature in combination, we define Southern
CSOs as practical hybrids, as well as hybrid organizations that negotiate their
legitimacy vis-á-vis varied institutional logics and in the eyes of diverse audi-
ences. Such legitimacy is needed so that CSOs can both anchor their work in
existing practices and promote the transformation of these practices.

Introduction to the case and methods

ACFODE is a Ugandan gender advocacy organization that was established in
1986 to catalyze action on issues related to women. The organization was initi-
ated by a few concerned activists, including many academics, in the aftermath
of the United Nation's Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985.
The organization played an important role in flourishing the women's movement
in Uganda, which contributed to several legislative advancements in the early
years of the regime of National Resistance Movement (NRM) and President
Yoweri Museveni, starting in 1986 (Tripp, 2001; Tushabe, 2008).

   One research participant narrated how ACFODE was born as a 'handbag
organization' hosted in a founding member's office at Makerere University in
the capital city of Kampala, at a time when all the organization's documents and
assets could be placed in the handbag of one of the founding members. It has
since evolved into a professional organization that owns an office building and

has a fully functioning secretariat (Kontinen & Ndidde, 2020). From the beginning, knowledge production and dissemination, research publications, and media presence have been central to ACFODE. For example, the organization has published the biannual *Arise Magazine*, which covers a range of gender-related issues, since 1991. The organization depends on donor funding, which accounts for almost 90% of its current budget. Consequently, ACFODE is familiar with balancing its core concerns related to gender equality with diverse donor agendas, including the good governance agenda. Long-term and constant support from some of its development partners, especially the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, has played an important role in ACFODE's stability.

ACFODE's 2019–2023 Strategic Plan describes how the organization 'engages in evidence-based advocacy working with the central and local government, development partners and other civil society actors to influence gender policy development and implementation'. The Strategic Plan goes on to state that it targets 'non-traditional gender advocates like cultural, religious leaders and other informal authorities and undertakes women's economic empowerment and community development programmes covering all the regions of the country'. Clearly, ACFODE must negotiate its legitimacy with a number of audiences and within varied logics. We explore these negotiations based on qualitative research material, including documents, interviews with 12 organization members and staff, and discussions held at two workshops on ACFODE's history and interactions with stakeholders. Additionally, selected parts of interviews with 60 project participants in rural communities in Namutumba and Kiboga Districts are used. We analysed the material in two rounds. First, we identified diverse legitimacy audiences, their expectations, and their organizations' responses, as perceived by ACFODE. Second, after analysing the different expectations of legitimacy defined as appropriateness in the eyes of diverse audiences, we interpreted these through the analytical lens of logics.

Findings: legitimacy audiences and logics

In this section, we present our findings concerning the main legitimacy audiences and logics revealed by our analysis. We first briefly discuss the audiences by whom ACFODE seeks to be perceived as appropriate, before proceeding to the identified logics in relation to which the organization's legitimacy is negotiated.

Legitimacy audiences

Five main, internally heterogenous audiences appeared to be the most significant for ACFODE's legitimacy. First, the central government (i.e. the President, Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, and other policymakers) is a significant legitimacy audience in two primary ways: First, the central government is one of the targets of ACFODE's lobbying on the formulation and implementation of policies and legislation that promote gender equality, and second, overall

legitimacy in the eyes of the central government is also needed for any CSO to be able to function in Uganda. ACFODE, like many other gender advocacy organizations, balances between being perceived as a legitimate participant in policy-making processes, being co-opted, being subject to control to be seen as posing no threat to the government's gender agenda, and being delegitimized (Nabacwa, 2021, p. 316). In the 1980s, ACFODE's relationship with the National Resistance Movement and President Museveni was mainly one of cooperation, as the regime perceived women's empowerment a shared agenda item. The overall stance towards ACFODE and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and CSOs in general changed with the shift to a multi-party system after the Referendum in 2005, and a move on the part of CSOs to adopt the good governance and human rights agenda. The increasingly suspicious and restrictive climate was exemplified by the 2016 NGO Act, which introduced new government control measures for organizations. The government considers ACFODE appropriate and legitimate as long as the organization focuses on women's empowerment programmes and supports government gender policies. However, ACFODE's activities concerning good governance or democracy are sometimes regarded as inappropriate, 'partisan' action, or 'elitist', and as not having the legitimacy to represent women in general. With recent restrictions on civil society, such as abruptly suspending the work of some CSOs in August 2021, ACFODE is in constant fear of encountering issues such as de-registration or the freezing of their bank accounts.

Second, the legitimacy audience of local government includes the Resident District Commissioners, councillors, and technical officers at different levels – groups to which ACFODE needs to demonstrate appropriateness to be able to work on its projects in communities across the country. In ACFODE's early years, the organization went directly to communities to implement their women's empowerment agenda. However, since the organization began to take up themes such as good governance and training local women councillors, the organization's legitimacy has been questioned at times by local government, leading to, for example, harassment and the interruption of events. To regain its legitimacy, ACFODE adopted the practice of 'signing a memorandum of understanding with the district leadership', inviting local leaders to raise any issues 'they may not be comfortable with' at review meetings, and asking local authorities to facilitate trainings so that 'they know what we are doing and will not consider it a sabotage'.

A third important audience consists of diverse project participants in the communities. ACFODE has faced several legitimacy negotiations related to its role and activities. In the beginning, the organization focused on training women only, which created suspicion and resistance among men. To increase their overall legitimacy in the eyes of communities, ACFODE started to train women and men together, which led to increased perceptions of appropriateness, as one participant stated: 'now [that] they taught the entire community, the message was more acceptable'. Additional legitimacy negotiations revolved around the

question of whether to focus on gender awareness training or livelihood improvements. In response to the expectations of the most impoverished communities, ACFODE began to include livelihood components such as farming and adding value to agricultural products in its activities. For example, in Namutumba District, the women interviewed considered ACFODE a fully appropriate organization because it has supported the improvement of farming methods and adding value to agricultural products, responding to the most pressing local needs.

Fourth, an extremely important audience is the organizations ACFODE calls 'development partners'. Over the years these have included the Ford Foundation, Hivos, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, EIRENE, Diakonia, We Effect, the European Union, and the British Council. Obviously, these partners do not constitute a coherent audience, and each assesses ACFODE's appropriateness on the basis of their own goals, programmes, and partnership criteria. Some have engaged in long-term partnerships, whereas others have worked with ACFODE to implement individual projects. Generally, all these organizations base their perception of appropriateness on assessments of ACFODE's expertise in gender issues, fluency with changing development discourses, and ability to implement activities and manage funding according to the partner's particular requirements.

Fifth, other Ugandan gender CSOs are an important audience that may be collaborators or competitors, depending on the situation. Women's organizations have proliferated at both national and local levels since the mid-1980s. Currently, according to the National Association of Women Organisations in Uganda, over 120 women's organizations are officially registered with the National NGO Bureau. Although many of them have specialized mandates in certain sectors or issues, they often expect ACFODE to provide leadership in advocacy on national gender issues and concerns. ACFODE has participated in many networks and coalitions, where it has been considered appropriate because of its ability to represent and work with women from diverse societal positions and because of its advocacy's strong evidence base.

Logics of patrimonialism: ACFODE as a nod to patronage networks

In this section, we discuss the logics in relation to which ACFODE's legitimacy is assessed, often simultaneously. According to the logics of patrimonialism, a legitimate organization is one that affirms reciprocal patronage networks characterized by power and support, both upwards towards the national power holders and downwards towards communities. 'Going with the grain' literature identifies patrimonialism as an institution that must be worked with (Kelsall, 2008). Patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism, sometimes referred as 'big men politics', characterize governance in Africa in general (Hydén, 2013) and in Uganda in particular (Therkildsen, 2014). In the patrimonial system, political power is established through reciprocal relationships between patrons and clients, where the latter provide the former (e.g. a parliamentary candidate) with support, such as votes, in exchange for financial assistance, protection, and jobs (Cheeseman, 2018). Patrimonial logics influence social relationships far beyond state politics

(Hydén, 2013). Going beyond power, patronage networks involve moral virtues related to giving assistance (Cheeseman, 2018, p. 47).

In Uganda, President Museveni's regime has built extensive patronage networks through which the regime's supporters are rewarded, whereas opponents and competitors are suppressed or harmed, often violently (Loozekoot, 2021). In this situation, CSOs are pushed towards co-optation by the regime, seeking to be included in the networks rather than treated as enemies (Nabacwa, 2021; Tripp, 2001, 2010; Tushabe, 2008). Following patrimonial logics, in the eyes of the regime, an 'appropriate' ACFODE occupies the position of a client to the government, providing expert support for government policies to ensure its freedom to act. ACFODE has long noted that the 'President refers to himself as the driver of the vehicle of [the] women's movement'. Within these logics, ACFODE is invited to comment on policies and access power holders for lobbying purposes. Sometimes, government officials perform patronage by appearing at ACFODE's events as guests of honour. Moreover, as an illustration of a typical co-optation strategy (Nabacwa, 2021), some ACFODE members have been offered leadership positions in government administrative bodies.

While patrimonial logics based on social networks rather than institutions are often perceived as corrupt and nondemocratic, such logics are nevertheless an influential part of the social fabric and norms determining what is morally appropriate (De Herdt & Olivier de Sardan, 2015; Olivier de Sardan, 2008) and thus commonly expected to be followed. In this vein, ACFODE occasionally aligns with these logics; for instance, by inviting top political figures to their events or building their own social network of 'friends' within the regime, ACFODE has been able to further push its core agenda and maintain the potential to act.

Patrimonialism manifests in everyday social life in communities as the moral obligation of those who are well off to assist others (Kelsall, 2008). Likewise, CSOs are often expected to function as patrons – sources of continuous assistance (Swidler, 2009). In Ugandan context, Scherz (2014) shows how community members can stop participating in CSO programmes if they consider the organization as a bad patron not willing to assist them in their needs. In our case, community members said that an appropriate organization provides long-term support, noting that ACFODE 'abandoned us at [the] breast-feeding stage', making them feel 'like someone is pulling your hand trying to save you from drowning; then, when you reach the middle of the waters, they let your hand go and they disappear from you'. There were expectations that the organization would have a continuous community presence and respond frequently to immediate problems by 'giving money for the school fees' or 'helping me to build a house'. Similarly, there was much discussion on the allowances paid for participation in ACFODE's activities. Training workshops, in general, create an arena for patrimonialism (Smith, 2003), as they offer access to financial resources and networks in exchange for participation, which is essential for the CSOs' reported success. Allowances paid to women participants sometimes made ACFODE legitimate in the eyes of their husbands, who would not let their wives to participate without such payments.

Thus, the organization must continuously balance between participants' expectations for the provision of continuing assistance and ACFODE's core concern of empowerment. ACFODE's response has not been to assume the role of a patron, delivering assistance to meet needs in exchange for loyalty from community members; rather, the organization has used alternative strategies described by a staff member as follows: 'Often, our beneficiaries keep asking for money, so we have adjusted our training packages to include things like proposal writing or general resource mobilization strategies because you cannot sustain by giving groups money all the time'.

Logics of professionalism: ACFODE as a modern advocacy organization

Following the logics of professionalism, an appropriate organization possesses specific substantive and management expertise. Professional logics have been described as meaning using paid staff instead of volunteers, engaging in strategic planning, and conducting systematic programme evaluation (Hwang & Powell, 2009). The skills required thus include professional management practices, which are often related to the global trend of managerialism in CSO development cooperation (Claeyé, 2014; Girei, 2014).

Professionalism and pursuing the model of a modern, rational organization (Meyer & Bromley, 2013) were at the core of the organizational capacity-building programmes that gained momentum in the late 1990s. Encouraged by its development partners, ACFODE went through an organizational restructuring process in 2000 (Kontinen & Ndidde, 2020), transitioning from a purely voluntary organization to a professional organization, and started to conduct regular strategic planning and recruit staff based on competence. During the process, the organization's legitimacy was challenged on the grounds that it had lost aspects such as its members belonging to a community and doing things together, notwithstanding their formal competencies. Nevertheless, alignment with professional logics plays an important role in gaining legitimacy in the eyes of development partners, who appreciate ACFODE's competence with multiple planning and reporting frameworks, as 'all donors have their way of doing things, their reporting formats, their concept notes, the requirements they have for us'. Additionally, it is essential for ACFODE to be able to adapt to constantly changing development terminology. ACFODE has shifted from talking about 'women's empowerment' to discussing 'gender equality'. Additionally, aligned with the 'good governance agenda', ACFODE has adopted vocabularies such as 'public expenditure tracking' and 'civic engagement', and they have long used models such as the human–rights–based approach, as one senior staff member narrated:

> For instance, we began to use the word 'right-holders' from one of our development partners. In a number of trainings, they introduced the whole

concept of [the] rights–based approach. I think we were already doing some rights–based approach, but it was not deliberate or clear–cut.

Many issues aligned with professional logics initially emerged in response to demands from ACFODE's development partners. These logics then gradually grew into everyday practices. Although staff members considered frequently changing approaches and numerous different reporting demands time consuming, they also perceived such changes as opportunities to learn something new.

Logics of community: ACFODE as a locally embedded organization

In community logics, an appropriate organization is part of everyday life in the community. Thornton et al. (2012, p. 73) argue that legitimacy in community logics is based on 'unity of will' and belief in trust and reciprocity and builds on common boundaries and group membership. Accordingly, an appropriate CSO would be located in the community and build trust on a daily basis. Such legitimacy would be difficult to achieve for an organization located in the capital city and implementing programmes nationwide. Initially, ACFODE was a group of educated urban women who went to communities to 'teach and preach gender equality', as a long–term member described it. The community response was hesitant and even hostile, as ACFODE was seen as promoting changes in cultural practices that were unwanted and lacking legitimacy.

ACFODE continues to be judged as an elite organization that did not emerge from underprivileged communities – the kind of organization that is often criticized as being distant from community needs (Banks et al., 2015; Elbers et al., 2021). However, ACFODE has undertaken a variety of strategies to align with community logics. The organization has moved its training events from towns to communities, employed local trainers, engaged community volunteers, and worked with traditional and religious leaders and existing community groups. Thus, ACFODE has gradually shifted towards being a practical hybrid, using the existing social fabric to advance its core concerns regarding gendered power relations. ACFODE has made efforts to contextualize its training material and translate it into local languages, as a staff member noted: 'We use local languages, local terminologies for rights [and] freedoms; the terms are there, so that is what we use, and we contextualize'.

Logics of activism: ACFODE as part of the Uganda women's movement

The legitimacy of an organization in terms of the logics of activism, typical of social movements, is related to its ability to promote change and transformation through mobilizing for collective action (Schneiberg & Lounsbury, 2017). Logics of activism are related to the possibilities to contest existing arrangements and propose alternatives (Thornton et al., 2012, p. 97). Therefore, from this perspective, an appropriate gender organization introduces equal gender relations that

differ from the existing unequal relations and succeeds in mobilizing people to act together to change their views and practices towards these alternatives.

In alignment with the logics of activism, as an integral part of the African women's movement, which is concerned with women's economic status, representation in politics, cultural positions, and legal rights (Ahikire & Mwine Ashaba, 2015, p. 6; Tripp et al., 2008, p. 14), ACFODE has always promoted change in unequal power relationships. In Uganda, the women's movement was robust from the 1940s until 1970, when it was suppressed by the dictatorial regimes of Presidents Milton Obote and Idi Amin. At the time of ACFODE's inception in 1985, the women's movement was reigniting simultaneously with the beginning of President Museveni's regime in 1986 (Ahikire & Mwine Ashaba, 2015; Tamale, 2020; Tripp, 2001; Tripp & Kwesiga 2002; Tushabe, 2008). Since then, ACFODE has been a legitimate part of the movement, showing success in lobbying for women's representation in policy processes and policy formulation commissions such as the Constituent Assembly. However, the legitimacy of some ideas, especially related to the Domestic Relations Bill, which was tabled in 2003, was not seen as appropriate by the government, whose representatives accused ACFODE of being 'funded by the enemies of state', 'elitists' and 'anti–African'. The response was the founding of the Uganda Women Network, a platform for the Coalition of 24, which pushed for the revised Domestic Violence Bill in 2018.

Therefore, ACFODE is a legitimate organization from the perspective of the logics of activism in terms of mobilizing for changes in policies, legislation, and women's participation in national politics. However, as Tripp (2021, p. 23) argues, without concrete changes in 'the daily practice of communities, the impact of changes at the national level are necessarily limited'. Aligning with activist logics means introducing changes in communities, where gender relations are ingrained in societal customs and culture. As described above, ACFODE has employed multiple strategies to align with community logics, but, as a practical hybrid, the organization couples these with activist logics in an attempt to promote transformation. Additionally, ACFODE often combines livelihood and gender issues as a strategy to introduce alternatives. Project participants talked enthusiastically about their improved farming practices and increased appreciation for their children's education in parallel with changing attitudes regarding gender violence and women's political participation.

In interviews, the project participants described how their practices had changed as a result of the human rights education they received through ACFODE: 'We studied about human rights; they told us that all of us have rights, including women. We did not know that even women have a right, children have a right, and men also have rights'. In addition, starting from the grassroots, ACFODE has encouraged community members to identify their own advocacy issues related to domestic violence and girl-child education and devise strategies for addressing them. Consequently, some communities in Namutumba and

Kiboga Districts came up with by-laws against these issues. These examples illustrate how working with activist logics led to ACFODE's legitimacy in the eyes of communities, who appreciated the changes, although the main reason for adopting an activist stance was ACFODE's own core concern and the agendas of the organization's development partners.

CSOs as practical hybrids: lessons learned for starting from the South

This chapter has shown how Southern CSOs balance between different legitimacy audiences and logics. For ACFODE, negotiating the logics of patrimonialism, professionalism, community, and activism is central. In advocacy relations with the government, ACFODE balances between the logics of patrimonialism, professionalism, and activism; in community projects, the main negotiations are between the logics of patrimonialism, community, and activism, and the emphasis with development partners is on balancing between professional, community, and activist logics. We thus see Southern CSOs as hybrid organizations (Battilana et al., 2017) seeking to perform legitimacy through combining diverse logics, as well as practical hybrids (Booth & Cammack, 2013) balancing between being embedded in and transforming institutionalized practices. In ACFODE's case, this means contributing to transforming gender inequality in legislation, policy, the societal division of labour, and community-level practices by 'going with the grain' – for instance, utilizing patronage networks to gain entry points for lobbying decision makers or working with existing community groups and traditional leaders to promote gradual change in gender roles in the community.

Understanding Southern CSOs' need to continuously negotiate their legitimacy in relation to diverse audiences and logics challenges the perception of them as merely 'partner organizations' whose main source of legitimacy is the successful implementation of Northern programmes. Often, different audiences simultaneously judge Southern CSOs as being too donor-driven to be indigenous activist organizations, too activist to be legitimate government collaborators, too unprofessional to master international partners' reporting frameworks, and too elitist to be community organizations. Faced with such challenges to their legitimacy, CSOs can successfully combine diverse logics and balance between working within and transforming existing institutions. Being a practical hybrid can enable organizations to preserve their own core concern in determining how they respond to diverse legitimacy demands, avoiding simply adopting a single set of logics imposed by one external legitimacy audience. Accordingly, when entering into collaborations, Northern CSOs could start with identifying the role they, as a significant legitimacy audience, could play in advancing their partners' core concerns, rather than primarily searching for somebody to implement their programmes.

Acknowledgements

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