Chapter 4
Network Governance and Policy Making: Developments and Directions in Asia

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Introduction

Governance, understood as a complex dynamic phenomenon, strives to bring about excellence in governmental operations within a democratic setup. Designed to be sensitive to citizen and societal demands, it is concerned with a complex matrix of interactions and interrelations between different actors and institutions (society, state, civil society, the market, global regimes, etc.), and between different sets of ideas and practices (capitalism, neo-liberalism, social democratic, etc.). Governance thus has significant implications for policymaking and implementation, and, to that end, development (Zafarullah and Haque 2012).

Among several governance applications that are relevant in today's complex social, political, and economic configurations, one that is vital in inclusive policymaking is *network governance*: "a form of organizational alliance in which relevant policy actors are linked together as co-producers where they are more likely to identify and share common interests" (Junki 2006, p. 22). Policy development is reinforced by three key activities: *interference* (the uncoordinated and informal forms of social interaction), *interplay* (coordinated but semi-formalized networked and collaborative formations) and *intervention* (formalized modes of social interactions occurring within legal structures) (Kooiman 1999, pp. 68–69). In an ideal sense, inclusive policy making is the outcome of complementarities between an array of state and non-state actors, each possessing sufficient knowledge and expertise to contribute to agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, monitoring, and evaluation. Social-political interaction can also help produce such strategies in social and economic development, for instance as public-private partnerships, social investments, cooperative management, entrepreneurial community ventures, and social forestry.

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These are just a few examples of types of network governance activities with wide ramifications for both economic growth and social progress.

In this chapter I examine the notion of network governance. In one of its most basic forms, it can be conceived of as horizontally organized social subsystems with sensibilities and rationalities that are expected to influence policy development and contribute to policy evaluation. While reviewing current trends and developments in network governance and development policy making from a conceptual perspective, I focus on the 'state of play' in the Asian countries of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, South Korea, Taiwan, China, the Philippines, and Singapore, exploring the nature of policy networks and their contributions to the policy process within a broader social-political context. In Asia, policy networks exist and operate within civil society in various forms, and they exhibit common or dissimilar attributes. Evidence suggests that notable breakthroughs have been achieved in some of these countries and in specific development sectors, but there is a lack of coherence and consistency in the way network governance works. Lessons from successful enterprises can be drawn and applied to situations where headway has been constrained by social, political, and bureaucratic factors. This paper is based on conceptual literature relating to network governance, policy analysis, stakeholder dynamics, and participatory development, as well as on empirical evidence from Thailand, India, South Korea, Singapore, China, Bangladesh and a regional initiative.

Conceptualizing Network Governance Vis-à-Vis the Development Policy Process

Governance understood as "the exercise of political power" (World Bank 1992, p. 1) always has constructive significance, being essentially an assortment of attributes and values that contribute to a positive end in terms of citizenship, inclusiveness and participation, rule of law, governmental accountability, integrity, and effectiveness (Huque and Zafarullah 2006, p. 5; Agere 2000, pp. 7–9). The ethos of democracy is expected to influence or drive the practice of governance. A government obtains legitimacy and authority to perform its socio-economic functions and undertake moral responsibilities in providing the services citizens need. It also broadens the scope for citizen and non-state stakeholder participation in the public policy process. Because of its deliberative and consensus-building qualities, democratic governance is capable of promoting more effective policies and strategies for change (Kozul-Wright and Rayment 2007). A democratic decentralized structure creates "new political spaces" within which relationships between people, civil society, the private sector, and the state may be built for productive developmental initiatives (Cornwall and Gaventa 2006). This type of interface, however, can only emerge and sustain itself for productive purposes in an enabling environment that encourages pluralist engagements.

Nature of Interface

Both formal and informal interfaces between the state and an assortment of non-state actors may serve useful purposes in the policy process. *Hierarchy-based governance*—which is based on organized hierarchies in state structures that are subject to process-based steering and directed planning and coordination without engaging service recipients—may be efficient, but needs to be complemented by self-organizing entrepreneurial or informal structures, exemplified as 'networks', to boost governmental performance. Also, unlike *market-based governance*, where the interface is more formalized and business-like and coordination is horizontal and influenced by competition, *network-based governance* is expected to play a key role in socio-economic development initiatives and outcomes, and, more generally, in resolving societal issues (Bouckaert et al. 2010; Valkama et al. 2013; Koppenjan and Klijn 2004; Rhodes 1997). Network governance entails interdependency, collaboration, and consensus between autonomous stakeholders; they pursue specific interests but engage in deliberation to obtain compromises when making policy choices, and in promoting a policy-development regimen that will be inclusive, participatory, transparent, and accountable. Given that network governance is focused on power, legitimacy, urgency, and salience, it is basically a stakeholder approach that can be productive in building synergy and providing credibility to policy making in developing countries.

Network Properties

Informal civic networks represented through civil society organizations (CSOs) create social synergies based on trust, shared knowledge, apportioned tasks, reciprocity, and mutuality. These factors constitute "spaces of cross sector connection" (White 2009, p. 7), and, either at the individual or group level, inform citizens and promote their active participation in public affairs. These sorts of interrelations gradually become routinized at a more formal level and complement state arrangements. Over time, therefore, networks might have set preferences for the specific goals each constituent wishes to achieve. Within the parameters of their common interests, they might seek mutual resolutions to problems.

   Networks often face challenges in accomplishing three key functions: *communication*, both horizontal and vertical; *creativity* achieved through free-flowing interaction among assorted stakeholders; and *consensus* among compatible and mutually accepting actors working towards common goals (Perkin and Court 2005, pp. 2–3). That said, consolidated networks are able to provide strong social backing, gain recognition for the goals they strive to achieve, and they are taken into confidence by policy makers. Through network governance, democracy becomes more functional: it empowers people and groups, enhances the quality of public policies and

their outcomes, improves accountability, adds legitimacy to the policy process, and enriches state policy capacity. The involvement of CSOs in network governance enables social capital to be built and sustained to help actors pursue shared goals in development. In fact, as Putnam (2000) suggests, civil society is highly relevant to social capital, which is a 'collective value' that can both build and bridge social networks, enabling them to play important roles in policy formulation and execution.

Public administrators, private sector bodies, NGOs, and citizens—the actors or stakeholders—take on the role of *entrepreneurs* or *problem solvers* in the networks they fabricate. Here, "problem solving, joint responsibility, continuous performance-based and collective learning become potential building stones of a viable alternative strategy" in deliberative policy development (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003, p. 10). This enhances the potential for issue-based CSOs to contribute to policymaking in a variety of development sectors (Sørensen and Torfing 2005; Kickert et al. 1997).

Policy Networks and Stakeholders in Network Governance

In network governance, key actors include people's representatives, bureaucrats, stakeholder and interest groups, professional associations, epistemic communities incorporating academic bodies and learned organizations, CSOs, federating 'peak' bodies, citizens' coalitions, and so forth. At the core of network governance there are collaborations and interdependencies between state and non-state stakeholders in any development policy sector working for mutual benefits (Agranoff and McGuire 2001). It is argued that in issues such as poverty alleviation, "an institutionalized form of engagement framework can work well in assessing poverty needs, which, in turn, can be integrated analytically into a task network so that their interrelationships with other bodies … can be identified and the scale of their risks anticipated" (United Nations 2008, p. 41).

In achieving desired results in various development sectors such as poverty alleviation, healthcare, education, social housing, capacity building, and environmental management, network governance enables participation and collective action by relevant stakeholders in policy formulation and project implementation. Extensive and intensive consultation with concerned stakeholders is the way to go in achieving positive policy outcomes. The governance praxis underscores the pluralist nature of the policy process; it can be realized through the formation of policy networks linking state and non-state actors who share similar policy choices and agree on the instruments needed to attain goals. Network governance will flounder if it is exclusionary at any level—either local (sub-national, provincial or national) or global (including regional). For networks to incarnate the democratic ethos and to positively realize their goals, it is important for them to be inclusionary, both in terms of incorporating diverse representation in their ranks, and of giving constituents equal opportunities to contribute towards policy design and implementation. Inclusion injects legitimacy into the process by offsetting elite dominance, fostering

democratic decision making, ensuring transparency of operations, and building a sense of ownership amongst all participants (Reinicke and Deng 2000, pp. 69–71; see also Castells 2000).

In some Asian countries (India and Sri Lanka, for instance), even where democracy has been practiced for many decades, we find a high degree of state domination but where non-state stakeholders are gradually making their presence conspicuous. In most other Asian countries (e.g., Singapore, Indonesia, and South Korea), the corporatist approach is the prevailing mode, the government being selective in including its preferred groups/networks in the policy process. Maintaining consistent links between the government and political society (consisting of non-state actors) has been a problem, and this disables the latter in influencing pro-people policies. Such is the case in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, Bangladesh's non-state actors "have found a niche in the gap between society and state, seeking to promote people's welfare through grassroots initiatives" (UNDP 2014, p. 106).

Network Governance in Asia

Network governance is still feeling its way in Asia, although rudimentary forms of policy networks have been around for a while. Systematic evidence on their nature and working, however, is scanty. Research has mainly concentrated on civil society in general, on CSOs in particular, and their role in participatory development. Stress has been on people's and stakeholders' involvement in designing and implementing local projects in social sectors. From the empirical literature on civil society dynamics, we can extrapolate the interrelationships among CSOs, the articulation of their ideas on specific issues, approaches towards the realization of their mission, and their relevance to the public policy process. Because of its western pedigree, the notion of network governance *per se* may not be conventional, or at least it is yet to be cogently incorporated into Asian development or policy discourse. However, considering most of its attributes, it is generally being acknowledged in some countries as integral to the policy phenomenon. In other countries, by contrast, policy networks are treated with disdain and kept at arm's length by the political leadership, regardless of the contribution they can make to sound policy development.

The social-political context in which network governance is pursued in Asia influences its character and dynamics. Except for India, which has been practicing democracy ever since gaining independence, and, to some extent, Sri Lanka, which has had various forms of democratic government despite ethnic conflicts, none of the other Asian countries have experienced democratic rule for long periods. South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore have only recently shed their bureaucratic-authoritarian guise to some extent, while Malaysia has been under continuous one-party dominance since independence. Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Thailand have had their fair share of military rule, quasi-democracy, and electoral democracy over the years, while both the Philippines and Indonesia have rid themselves from long episodes of authoritarian rule. Most of these countries are still in transition and, despite dif-

ficult political terrain, are making strides towards democratic consolidation. They are gradually reflecting elements of integrated and participative political culture, as opposed to the fragmentation and parochialism that have long characterized their approach to political objects and events.

Generally speaking, Asian societies and polities have shown a propensity to accept the usefulness of civil society and the networks it creates as key variables in democratic praxis. Network growth is noticeable, particularly as the networks—rather than posing threats—seek to connect society with the state and contribute to democratic institutionalization. CSOs with similar objectives have formed networks to influence governments on social and economic matters. At times, they have played important roles in incorporating their ideas on a variety of issues in the public policy agenda (Case 1993). They serve as agents of change, organizing people and groups such as NGOs, fraternities of intellectuals, trade unions, student groups, social activists, advocacy coalitions, and the like, for working together towards common goals for policy reform. In some places they have formed powerful alliances, constructed their narratives of problems and problem resolutions, and made their presence felt in the policy universe.

East Asia

China presents a classic case of policy making in a communist state that is gradually opening up to outside influence. In the past, the policy process was insular, totally dominated by the inner circle of the Communist Party. Civil society was almost non-existent or worked covertly. However, different varieties of CSOs have emerged in recent years; some are state-sponsored, decentralized but regulated social entities with close links to the state, while others are social groups advancing common goals but disregarded by the state. The corporatist element is clearly noticeable in China. Gallagher (2004, p. 421) points to "the role of the state in initiating, running, and controlling [the former] groups … through mutual penetration, converging interests, and co-optation. Under state corporatism, associational life is strictly controlled by the state". CSO activities are under constant surveillance, and those deemed "superficially apolitical" are allowed to work in healthcare, environmental protection, disaster management, and other social sectors (Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2012e). As China moves from a totalitarian political system to one that is more liberalized and open, the extent and quality of participation perhaps have been increasing (Teets 2011).

The democratization process that began in South Korea in the 1980s was to a certain degree the product of a movement in civil society, which sought freedom from long-term bureaucratic-authoritarian rule. CSO alliances made notable contributions in consolidating democratic institutions and practices and in crafting the social agenda and economic restructuring and reform (Kim 2004). Yet despite breakthroughs in democratic consolidation in South Korea, the policy process still remains a closed activity. Policymaking as a transparent phenomenon is not quite

effective in dealing with complex social problems, and the successive governments have been oblivious to the shortcomings of policy strategies and instruments. Secrecy enshrouds the process dominated by a small band of elite policy makers, and the absence of "an effective decision making system [hampers] effective communication between policy stakeholders [who need to] coordinate their legitimate demands". In South Korea, therefore, network governance suffers from the lack of participation of genuine stakeholders in policy agenda building, policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. The government only allows policy input from those it can trust to support its policy ideas (Ha et al. 2009, p. 650, 662).

Southeast Asia

CSO networks in Malaysia contribute to "processes of negotiating, building trust, and setting rules among diverse elements"; they help "bridge gaps or fortify links between political parties' leaders, members, and perspectives" (Weiss 2006, p. 6). Their active presence has had major influence, even on a one-party dominated government, and served some useful purposes in policy change. In the past the activities of these networks were severely constricted by the government's overly regulatory tactics, but in recent times they have been operating with more freedom. They are now more effective in raising state capacity through reciprocal moderation and collaboration (Ibid.), though their policy influence is often regulated by strict laws that reduce their role (Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2012a).

In New Order Indonesia (1965–1998), the political space available to CSOs was rather narrow, being accessible only to a small band of participants who were chosen by the state and who supported its policies and actions. During the next period—called the post-Suherto *Reformasi* era—the political space expanded, enabling new networks to emerge or reenergize themselves and provide greater input in policy discourse (Aspinall 2004). However, even within a democratizing environment, the policy arena is overwhelmingly dominated by ministers and bureaucrats who are deeply engaged in political transactions between the ruling party and other group interests close to the political leadership. Citizen input into the policy process is mainly confined to the local level (Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2012b).

Civil society has been slow to emerge in Thailand, given persistent political instability since 1932, when absolute monarchy gave way to coups and counter-coups. The country has therefore experienced several changes to its constitutional character. Decades of political turmoil adversely affected the party system by making it weak and incoherent. In recent times, the people began to manifest their participation in public affairs. Cordial state-business relations have begun to give business alliances a greater say in policy formulation. Despite antagonistic state-NGO relations, NGOs have been able to play a key role in policymaking, particularly in the health and environmental sectors (Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2012c; Guan 2004).

In Singapore, compliance and vertical linkage between state and society are managed by the perpetual governing party—People's Action Party (PAP) (Case 2001).

The country has a unique civil society-state relationship that is typified by collaboration or partnerships between the state, the private sector, and interest groups such as labor unions (Conteh 2009; Lee 2002). The policy process appears to conform to corporatism, with the government utilizing "a complex battery of controls and incentives to influence the public's social and economic behaviour in many circumstances" (quoted in Mauzy and Milne 2002, p. 35). The state and PAP have remained closely intertwined and have been ubiquitous in societal life. Because of the state's corporatist nature, "sectional interests are submerged, allowing the state to focus on uniform socio-economic development at the expense of political diversity" (Bierling and Lafferty 1998, p. 293). The government has full command over the policy process and is cautious about intelligence and recommendations they may offer regarding specific policies. Some policy networks are embraced because of their ideas being congruent with those of the government, while others are eschewed for "any direct challenge to [the state or PAP's] political domination or core values" (Kadir 2004, p. 325). The "steering capacity" of the government is strictly maintained and policy priorities and strategies are stipulated and executed without being constrained by "powerful economic interests or foreign governments" (Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2012d).

A pendulum effect is noticeable within civil society in the Philippines. With each regime change, CSO influence swings: one group of CSOs is more influential during one regime, while an alternative group enjoys more clout under a different one. This shifting CSO empowerment/disempowerment has fragmented civil society, its dynamics being affected by unwarranted political intervention. Opposing elites have been engaged in unending skirmishes in advancing conflicting policy ideas (Franco 2004). Often, politically patronized vested interests have clear leverage over those that are remote from the centers of power. The former manipulate the shaping and execution of policy and hinder the emergence of cohesive, purposeful, and democratically premised network governance (Llanto 2007).

South Asia

The South Asian scene is somewhat different from that in East and Southeast Asia. Most countries of the region have been under British colonial rule and share a common history; after gaining independence, they have displayed variations in the development of their respective political systems. Three countries—India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh—all started with variants of democracy, but while India succeeded in sustaining democratic rule (albeit with occasional miscues), democratic institutions collapsed in Pakistan due to the interplay of parochial political interests in the largely divided nation. India built its political institutions on British traditions of political competition and representation. Its political culture since independence has reflected consensualism, tolerance, and accommodation in resolving conflicts, as far as practicable, despite ups and downs in politics. In the other two countries, the process of democratic consolidation has stumbled in the aftermath of several

episodes of military rule. Democratic politics has been experiencing a checkered path due to systemic fragility, institutional defects, continued political confrontation between ruling and opposing parties, and, more importantly, disdain for democratic values by the leadership. Accordingly, in comparison with Pakistan or Bangladesh, civil society in India is far more robust, dynamic, and "engaged in alternative strategies, mechanisms, and visions of development, society, and politics" (Behar and Prakash 2004, pp. 191−192). India's state-CSO relationships may vary, however, they are either collaborative (involving CSO-government partnerships in public programs), cooperative (CSOs working with the government but critical of government policies), or negotiation-oriented (CSOs highly critical of and opposed to certain policies but willing to moderate their stance) (Ibid., p. 203). Some CSOs have a strong institutional base and committed leadership that make them assertive in public affairs and policy making. They serve as effective non-state actors in network governance (Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2012f).

The entrenchment of authoritarian politics in Pakistan thwarted the emergence of an effective civil society, or at least it failed to create an enabling environment for its development. A continuous power struggle between military, bureaucratic, and political elites, though often overlapping, has marred the formation, consolidation, and expansions of CSOs. During military rule, CSOs were generally sidelined. Yet even in unfavorable conditions, associational alliances began to emerge in the 1980s in response to authoritarian repression and human rights breaches. Today, most CSOs are engaged in development enterprises, but they also serve advocacy purposes. These networks do serve important purposes in development planning and in influencing the social agenda. With business activities increasing from the 1990s, federations of commerce and industry and other business alliances have been providing some input to policy development (Shah 2004). For all that, policy networks "have to compete with the (hidden) power of interest groups like the army or the clergy" (Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2012g).

The political system in Bangladesh is polarized and highly charged. Since the restoration of democracy in 1991, the two major parties have been at loggerheads on most basic issues of governance and have adopted confrontational postures. This is also reflected in civil society, which is fractured and partisan. Most CSOs belong to one of the two opposing camps (Parnini 2007). Along with interest groups, which in some ways constitute policy networks, the CSOs "are organized along party lines", and whichever party is at the helms every five years patronizes and gives the groups of its choice access to policy discourse. This happens during the preparation of the annual budget or development plans. Chambers of commerce and industry, manufacturers' associations, and peak bodies of NGOs "are more vocal on political issues and try to exercise influence over the government and political parties" (Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2012h). The policy advocacy role of CSOs has been remarkable, although most of what they profess or try to get incorporated into policies remains unheeded. On the other hand, CSOs have been playing an effective role in policy implementation in such sectors as family planning, nutrition, healthcare, and environmental protection, and they do so in partnership with the government (Pelon 1999).

Table 4.1 Significant challenges in network governance

Regions	Challenges
East Asia	Getting over the strictures of corporatism
	Organizing a more open and transparent policy process
	Creating more space for genuine stakeholders
Southeast Asia	Generating more reciprocal moderation and collaboration among stakeholders
	Reducing the domination of state actors in policy making
	Lessening the rigid steering influence of the state
	Getting rid of unwarranted political intervention
South Asia	Designing strategies for effective collaborative, cooperative, and negotiative procedures
	Attenuating the struggle between military, bureaucratic, and political elites where this exist
	Depoliticizing policy networks

Although similar challenges confront network governance regimes in all three regions of Asia, it is possible to identify certain attributes that are peculiar (but not exclusive) to each region (see Table 4.1).

Policy Networks in Practice: Selected Cases from Asia

As has been indicated before, network governance is still embryonic in South and Southeast Asia. It is gradually taking shape, perhaps extemporaneously, without design and beyond the cognizance of those involved. Thus 'true' forms of policy networks, as conceptualized in the literature, are rare. It is nevertheless possible to locate their presence and functioning, even if to a limited extent. The following sections provide 'snapshots' of policy networks operating in different sectors in certain East, Southeast, and South Asian countries. The snapshots contribute to understanding collaborations, partnerships, strategic alliances, advocacy coalitions, community development initiatives, and the like. These policy networks work in tandem with the state, contributing to policy change and implementation and the socio-economic context in which they operate.

Health Policy Network in Thailand

Health is a key area in human development, and it is in this sector that we find relatively successful forms of network governance. According to the researcher Green (2000), Thailand's healthcare is dispensed by public, private, and non-state providers, the former offering a much wider range of services than the latter two, who work

in specific locations and with limited scope. The Ministry of Public Health (MPH) is in charge of this sector and delivers services at different levels, from the national to the local. Administratively and financially, it manages all public hospitals and clinics, recruits and trains health professionals, and regulates the accreditation of medical schools. The private sector basically runs for-profit health enterprises such as hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies that are mainly located in metropolitan areas. The non-state health sector is run by NGOs—groups tending to offer specific kinds of services such as post-natal care, family planning, HIV/AIDS care and awareness campaigns, disaster relief, and emergency services. Prominent NGOs are the Rural Doctors' Society, the Family Planning Association, and advocacy groups on different health issues.

The health policy network in Thailand, apart from including the government agencies (MPH, National Economic and Social Development Board, Bureau of Health Policy and Planning, National Epidemiology Board, and Health Systems Research Institute), also includes several business and non-state actors such as technical advisory panels consisting of specialists, researchers, and NGO representatives. Other actors in this network are joint public-private coordinating committees, politicians with business interests in the health sector, the Board of Investment (which encourages private assets, such as hospitals), and the Private Hospital Association, which "represent[s] the interests of the increasingly powerful private-for-profit health care providers" (Green 2000, p. 47). Then there are NGOs, bodies conducting health-related research (like the Health Promotion Institute), trade unions including the Thai Medical Association, and, of course, international agencies (WHO, ILO, and SIDA, to name a few) (Tantivess and Walt 2008). The actors have been instrumental at various times, interacting with the government and amongst themselves in advancing prescriptions and advice on health policies. CSO campaigns have opened up avenues for dialogues with the government; at times they "became 'insiders' in the policy process, involved in developing policy for implementation" (Ibid., p. 332).

Participatory Forest Policy Network: India

Social forestry is a key area in development that has potential for close networking between a line-up of stakeholders. While evidence suggests that state-civil society partnerships are useful in developing forestry management policies (Zafarullah 2004; Kumar 2002), the development of forestry policies depends on insight into problems, needs, and priorities, and such insight can only be acquired through continuous research. In this respect, networks can play a definitive role. Borgoyary's (2006) exploration provides perspectives on the research policy gap in participatory forestry in India, and the role played by networks in influencing policies. These perspectives serve as a platform for lobbying and advocacy and bridge the gap between evidence and policy. Borgoyary's study shows how three different networks with different formations and configurations have functioned as 'connectors' or 'policy champions' in order to contribute to policy change.

Borgoyary (Ibid.) notes that the policy networks created awareness on important issues, provided access to a pool of information and 'options', and provided a platform for the exchange of information for consultation. Obviously, these positively contributed to enhancing the quality of policies relating to social forestry and management in the country. These networks did their own research, generated evidence, and shared their findings with the policy community and policy makers in government, who also sought solutions from the said networks. Regular interaction between the networks, policy community, and governmental policy makers helped dilute tensions and made the policy process more participatory and transparent.

Community Development: South Korea

On the local level, network governance has tremendous potential and scope to facilitate development. The 'Happy Korea' initiative is an interesting example of active collaboration between a number of state and non-state actors at the local level to enhance community living from social, cultural, and economic standpoints. Stakeholders (that is, local government councils, private firms, CSOs, and communities) form alliances "to share knowledge, to advocate, and to take action" for the purpose of building "beautiful, comfortable, and characteristic communities" with the financial support of the national government (Park and Park 2009, p. 91, 97). The project, which is coordinated and managed by the Ministry of Public Administration and Security, monitors community-based planning and implementation. Local government bodies corresponding to each community serve as the link between the latter and the national government. This is an example of government-led network governance. Specifically, the national government plays the *initiating role* (providing economic incentive, encouraging participation, and evaluating performance), the local government plays an *intermediating role* (delivering information and coordinating), and the community takes on a *practical leading role* (suggesting ideas for development and decision making and production). The central thrust of this initiative is to help develop a sense of ownership amongst communities and to encourage people's genuine participation.

Private Sector Development Network: Singapore

The Singaporean state, as Conteh (2009) makes clear, is at the center of development, be it in the public or private sector. The economy has flourished over the years through 'pragmatic' national planning, incorporating both statist and market-influenced approaches with a focus on private sector development (Conteh 2009; Alten 1995). Within the policy process related to private sector development, a number of statutory economic development agencies are engaged in providing strategic directions. The Economic Development Board (EDB) is the principal national agency coordinating private sector development. Its main functions are to enter into part-

nerships with industrial enterprises, to provide technical advice and assistance, and to manage, supervise, control, and invest in industrial enterprises. Other agencies in urban infrastructure and residential development, such as the Jurong Town Corporation, the Housing Development Board, and the Urban Redevelopment Authority, are linked together in a network responsible for information sharing, decision making, and action. Specialized sections in each of these organizations liaise and interact with their counterparts and provide financial, technical, or consultancy services to prospective clients. Thus, multinational corporations, government-linked companies, and local enterprises are intertwined within the network and obtain support in their activities. Conteh (2009, p. 78) elucidates:

> This model of network governance conditions the policy implementation environment such that the operation of collaboration among public agencies and private actors does not compromise the leadership of the state or conflict with some level of intra-organizational hierarchical systems within the administrative machinery of the state.

Thus, network governance in Singapore is state-centric, and like all other state initiatives, is also regulated by the state.

Urban Health Insurance Reform Network: China

China's social-political situation is different from that of other Asian countries, and so also is its approach to network governance. Networks themselves find it hard to operate freely; they are constrained by legal norms and consequently face hurdles in going about their work. CSOs have limited room for maneuver and find it difficult to influence government policies (Zheng et al. 2010; Fulda et al. 2012). The reform of urban health insurance is one area which has seen collaboration mainly between state agencies, and with limited input from outside interests. The reform of the health insurance scheme was to be both government-oriented and market-subordinated, meaning the state was to be at the center of the changes. The Coordinated Organization of Health System Reform was created with eleven government departments and outside experts. This body was supervised jointly by the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Health. International organizations such as the World Health Organization and the World Bank, an external private consulting agency, national academic and research institutions (Peking and Renmin universities), and the Development Research Center were also brought into the network, and their ideas on reform were elicited. Provincial and local governments, supervisory agencies for medical institutions and pharmacies, insurance companies, hospitals, doctors associations, and patients played only a cursory role in the policy formulation phase, and the entire reform process was overtly directed by the State Council, with infrequent interaction between the other actors. As Zheng et al. (2010) points out, this approach did at least avoid deadlock:

> [F]ragmentation among different ministries make univocal policy-making difficult, and competing decision-making centers thus emerge. This, in turn, produces a deadlock. No actor will be able to execute sufficient authority to bring about the required policy changes to bring the reform to a successful end.

Early Childhood Development Network: Bangladesh

A key element in any human development initiative, one recognized by the international development community, is early childhood development. The United Nations' Millennium Development Goals include two that are especially relevant to children: the eradication of poverty and achieving universal primary education. Since children are victims of hunger, poverty, and lack of education, their needs must be fulfilled not only in order to ensure their good physical health and wellbeing, but also for sake of their intellectual and cultural development (http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview.html).

Bangladesh provides a solid case of network governance in this area; governmental, non-governmental, and international agencies have worked together with academics and research institutions to find solutions to Early Childhood Development (ECD) problems. Among the many objectives of Bangladesh's ECD network, four are worth particular mention:

- Advocate for and support the government in preparing and implementing a national policy and framework for ECD initiatives throughout the country
- Strengthen ECD capacity in Bangladesh by ensuring co-ordination of ECD activities and convergence of ECD best practices among ECD partners
- Support the establishment of a solid knowledge base and organizational culture on ECD, as well as facilitating a common understanding of the concept of ECD and of the whole child approach underlying ECD efforts within the network
- Support ECD partners in sharing information about ECD activities and research as well as ensuring that the same partners can gain easy access to new information and knowledge on ECD (ECD 2012)

The network is managed by an executive committee consisting of representatives of the government (Ministries of Women and Children's Affairs and Primary and Mass Education), a national, a local, and an international NGO, the United Nations, and the academic community. It has made significant contribution in formulating the policy and operational framework for pre-primary education in Bangladesh. Most of what the network does is through regular interaction between the government and all the constituents. Technical teams work with inter-ministerial bodies to monitor the progress of policy implementation and to adopt other measures supporting ECD. Its annual national conferences are a platform for knowledge-sharing, reviewing ECD activities, evaluating the implementation of relevant policies, and providing solutions to problems (BEN 2008).

Roll Back Malaria: International, Regional

Roll Back Malaria (RBM) is a tri-sectoral network involving partnership between the public, private, and civil society sectors. The general aim of this global network is to eliminate or reduce malaria from the planet. At the national and sub-national

levels, its implementation program is mainly targeted towards developing countries. Launched by the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, UNDP, and the World Bank, it pursues three rather specific aims:

- Support malaria endemic countries in developing their national health systems
- Undertake to develop the broader health sector (i.e., all providers of health care to the community)
- Encourage the needed human and financial investments, national and international, for health system development (Ballegoyen 2000)

WHO is at the core of the 'inner circle' of the RBM network. It provides strategic direction and funding to the program and builds and sustains partnerships amongst other agencies representing the three sectors. It fulfills these tasks through seven constituencies: national health departments and services in malaria-endemic countries, multilateral development partners, private sector organizations (mainly medical related industries), the epistemic community (universities and research bodies), CSOs (including health-related NGOs), philanthropic foundations, and non-voting ex-officio members (RBM 2011; see also http://www.rbm.who.int/mechanisms/ec.html). The organizations that make up the 'outer circle' serve only as outposts of the network and have very little influence on the decisions of the inner circle. They provide information to the network and in turn are fed with policy prescriptions and plans of action. Actually, the relationship between the inner and outer circles is not clearly defined and thus leaves a lot of room for confusion and speculation. Nonetheless, interactions between various working groups (advocacy, communication, harmonization, vector control, procurement and supply management, monitoring and evaluation, and malaria in pregnancy) add value to the overall purpose of the network.

Concluding Comments

Network governance in Asia, like the spectrum of civil society as a whole, is still crystallizing. It will take a while before policy networks there conform to conceptual ideal types or become closer in character, substance, and role to those at work in pluralist democracies in the West. The Asian networks are unique in composition: there are vertical, horizontal, and lateral relationships, numerous modes of engagement with constituents, and interactions with other networks, especially with the policy system. Since most of the groups involved in the networks operate within a policy structure that is far from democratic and essentially dominated by state bureaucracy, their inputs to the making and unmaking of policies, their influences on 'official' actors such as the political executive and legislators, and their obligations to societal demands remain circumscribed. Network relationships are adversely constrained by lack of trust, reciprocity, or mutuality, particularly whenever there is a tendency among certain interests to dominant or even capture the network itself. In China, South Korea, and Singapore, networking is highly formal in nature,

and inner circles within networks dominate the process. Informal forms of social interaction are much less appreciated and ignored, or they are formalized to the advantage of the network or certain actors within it. Interplays and interventions of network constituents are more common in other parts of Asia, with CSOs obtaining greater recognition for the roles they play.

Networks, as platforms for sharing ideas and information, do facilitate communication, both vertically within their ranks, and horizontally with other networks and society at large. From some of the case studies mentioned in this chapter, we do get an indication of creativity and innovativeness happening, but consensus is difficult to reach in all situations. Very rarely do we find a win-win situation. More often than not, state actors have their way, particularly where partisan politics overpower societal interests. In such cases, the participation of non-state actors simply becomes a pretense rather than a serious commitment by the government to genuinely incorporate stakeholder perspectives on policy issues. Due to the prevalence of state-governed networks, it is rare to find participant-governed networks at the national policy level. Perhaps only at the local project level can one actually notice some measure of participation. In development, government-led network governance is more common in macro-economic planning, with some input from private sector alliances such as chambers of commerce and industry, trade union federations and the like. Partnership types are present in infrastructure development enterprises, such as in the energy, transport, communications, and housing sectors, to name a few. Nonetheless, participatory networks composed of communities and NGOs have begun to make inroads in social development initiatives focusing on healthcare, education, and the environment.

More in-depth research needs to be done to ascertain the presence of networks in Asia, the modalities of their working, and the problems associated with realizing their goals. It is critical to understand social, political, and economic contexts in order to assess network performance and how exactly they contribute to policy making and implementation, not to mention the outcomes. While Asian governments are gradually acknowledging the usefulness of networks in statecraft, they should take more concrete steps to facilitate their participation, not merely as a formality, but as a means of enabling them to make meaningful contributions in public affairs. Network governance will be able to uphold a democratic ethos only when exclusionary norms are offset by greater inclusion.

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