1 · Introduction: making change happen – citizen action and national policy reform

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How can ordinary citizens – and the organizations and movements with which they engage – make changes in national policies which affect their lives, and the lives of others around them? Under what conditions does citizen action contribute to more responsive states, pro-poor policies and greater social justice? What is needed to overcome setbacks, and to consolidate smaller victories into 'successful' change? These are the questions taken up by this book. Understanding the answers is important for a number of contemporary debates that cut across policy, activist and academic circles.

In international development debates, the challenge of building responsive and accountable states which in turn will work to alleviate poverty, protect rights and tackle social inequalities has been a focus of attention in recent years. Much of the debate centres on improving the institutions of government – state bureaucracies, parliaments and justice systems. Yet, as this book demonstrates, states are not built through institutions alone. Organized citizens also play a critical role, through articulating their concerns, mobilizing pressure for change and monitoring government performance.

For those concerned with citizen advocacy, in recent years there has been a great deal of attention on building global or transnational citizen action, as witnessed in significant citizen mobilizations such as the Make Poverty History campaign on aid, trade and debt in 2005, as well as the continuing Global Call to Action Against Poverty, the UN Millennium Campaign, and now campaigns on climate justice. Yet increasingly, activists in these campaigns are also turning their attention to the importance of national policy change, with the realization that unless there are changes at this level, international policies will have little traction.

Similarly, an explosion of work over the last decade has focused on citizen participation and citizen mobilization to strengthen the 'voice' of civil society actors in governance and development programmes. Much of this has been on the local level, or on forms of public 'consultation',

which – while broadening participation – often lack real power to make a change. Recognition is mounting that policy change must scale up from the local to embrace the national as well, and that programmes for citizen participation must go beyond articulating voice to exerting real influence. How can this be done?

Drawing from eight case studies in which organized citizen action has contributed to significant national policy changes, this book will engage with, and we hope bring fresh insights to, these debates. Looking across these cases of change, we ask how and under what conditions they occurred, and what can be learned from 'successful' examples of citizen mobilizations changing national policy.

Each of the subsequent chapters in this volume attests to the power of people to make change happen. They fundamentally affirm that citizens can engage with states to create policy reforms which are important to the lives of poor people and for achieving social justice, but that intensive, long-term, organized collective action and coalition-building are required to do so. When this ensues, the results can be significant:

- In South Africa, the Treatment Action Campaign led to public recognition of HIV/AIDS as an issue, and to over sixty thousand people gaining access to publicly supplied antiretroviral medicines (Chapter 2).
- In the Philippines, the National Campaign for Land Reform secured the redistribution of half of the country's farmland to 3 million poor households, contributing to their economic rights and livelihoods (Chapter 3).
- In Mexico, a campaign to reduce maternal mortality put the issue of maternal healthcare on the national agenda in an unprecedented way, contributing to important changes in national budget priorities and health delivery mechanisms at the local level (Chapter 4).
- In Chile, an NGO-led campaign on child rights attained a new policy framework benefiting children, contributing to a decrease in child poverty (Chapter 5).
- In India, a grassroots-inspired campaign led to the passage of a strong National Right to Information law in 2005, and also provided impetus for further laws to enhance social security based upon new structures of public accountability (Chapter 6).
- In Brazil, the Right to the City campaign established a national framework for citizen participation in urban planning, critical to achieving housing and other social rights (Chapter 7).
- In Morocco, a women's social movement carried out a successful

campaign for reform of the *moudawana*, the Islamic family law affecting women's rights (Chapter 8).

• In Turkey, a campaign for women's rights led to a new penal code with thirty-five amendments for the protection of sexual rights (Chapter 9).

Such policy changes, at best momentous and at least stepping stones towards future significant reforms, also constitute steps towards internationally recognized development goals, and social and economic rights. Several of these gains link directly to the donor-established Millennium Development Goals – for instance, those related to gender equality (Morocco and Turkey), maternal health (Mexico), combating HIV/AIDS (South Africa), and ending poverty and hunger (Philippines). Others represent the sixty-year-old struggle to realize basic social and economic rights enshrined in the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights, such as those advancing child rights in Chile, housing rights in Brazil or women's rights in Morocco and Turkey. Others still establish the preconditions necessary for realizing these economic and social rights – for instance, the right to information in India and popular participation in urban planning in Brazil. By gleaning lessons for how change happens from case studies such as these, we can build more successful movements and provide better-attuned support towards achieving these international goals for development, social justice and deeper democratic engagement.

Project and case study background

While these cases are both inspirational and instructive, they have inevitably been shaped by their own particular contexts. The eight countries from which the cases are drawn are largely classified as middle-income nations, notwithstanding the high levels of inequality and large numbers of poor people within them.[2] Each has at least a modicum of democratic space, which is a prerequisite for citizen engagement on national policy issues, but is not a given everywhere. Each has a functioning state apparatus, another prerequisite for effective action on policy change, for without a functioning state there are few incentives to change its policies in the first place.

To a degree, these characteristics may limit the extent to which conclusions can be drawn for how change happens in other settings which lack these qualities. On the other hand, the fact that the successes arose in these contexts is an important finding in itself. In embarking on this project, we used our extensive networks to purposively seek

nominations for examples of significant national-level policy changes which involved a high degree of civil society mobilization or collective citizen action, and which presented very strong evidence of being able to make a difference for social justice and the material well-being of large numbers of people. Because we were interested in 'developing' or at least non-Western countries, we excluded countries in the global North.

Despite our attempts to capture diversity, most of the cases repeatedly nominated were in emerging or existing democracies characterized by functioning states and at least some democratic space. So it may be that rather than reflecting a sampling bias, this pattern arose precisely because these are the kinds of settings where we can most expect collective citizen action on national policy to emerge.[3] Such purposive case study sampling, as well as the 'thick description' case study approach we have used, affords us understandings of the complexities of change processes in these settings, as well as suggesting broader propositions about how change happens, which then can be explored more fully elsewhere.[4]

Following the selection of cases, the process of developing this volume has been an inductive and interactive one, involving experienced researchers who were either from or deeply involved with the countries from which the cases are chosen. These researchers first came together in a workshop in Washington in 2005 to share an early overview of the proposed case for study.[5] At that meeting, pooling their knowledge of the cases involved, the researchers collectively identified key themes for exploration. Refined over time, these have continued to shape the project. In early 2006, the researchers met again in Johannesburg, to discuss emerging findings and to hone some nascent propositions. A synthesis workshop followed in November 2006, where propositions were further developed and suggestions were made for deepening each of the cases. Since that time, the work has emerged in various iterations – the full in-depth cases published online in 2007, a set of policy briefs and a short synthesis for policy-makers (Gaventa 2008) and finally this collection.

Participation and national policy change: citizen 'voice' or collective action?

The themes of the book help to inform, and are informed by, a number of key debates in the literature about the importance of 'the national' as an arena of change and the role of citizen participation, voice and advocacy in the policy process. This literature, we argue, needs to be read in conjunction with a somewhat separate stream of literature

on collective action and social movements, with which many of our findings resonate. By linking a collective action approach to questions of how national policy change happens, our findings will suggest a more contentious and political approach to the policy process, and to ideas about citizen participation within it, than the narrative which has dominated many development and democracy debates in recent years. By offering core propositions about how change happens from this series of empirically grounded cases in the global South, we also hope to contribute to the existing social movement literature as well.

The importance of 'the national' During the 1990s a number of writers began to speak of the decline of the nation-state, and with it the weakening of national policy arenas for bringing about significant changes in social policies that affected poor people. On the one hand, many argued that with globalization new forms of global authority were emerging, breaking the monopoly of legitimate state power linked to national governments (Rosenau 2002). On the other hand, there was a greater emphasis on 'the local', on approaches to decentralization, which arguably would bring governments closer to the people they were meant to reach. Simultaneously, arguments of globalization and decentralization were connected with notions of neoliberalism, which urged the weakening of state control and the expansion of unfettered market forces.[6]

Many scholars and activists concerned with questions of where and how organized citizen engagement could make a difference followed a parallel trajectory. On the one hand, with a decline of attention to 'the national project', the focus of many shifted to the new opportunities for empowered forms of participation in governance at the local level offered through decentralization (McGee et al. 2003; Gaventa 2004; Cornwall and Schattan Coelho 2006). On the other hand, the last few years have seen an explosion of work on the need for new forms of global citizen action, which could influence global policies and players (Edwards and Gaventa 2001; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Tarrow 2005). National-level change represented something of a 'missing middle'.

In recent years, however, the importance of 'the national' has regained prominence in academic, development and advocacy circles. Even work along the twin axes of globalization, on the one hand, and decentralization, on the other, often began to point to the significance of the nation-state as a mediating and necessary force for change.[7] As Houtzager, among others, has argued

the territorially defined nation-state today remains the only actor able

to extract the vast resources from society that make possible significant distributive and redistributive policies, and the only actor capable of providing public goods on significant scale. It is also the only organizational form of authority with which most people have contact in their daily lives and that provides the most readily available route for poor social groups to influence the conditions of their own lives. (Houtzager and Moore 2005: 4)

The assertion has proven itself in practice in a number of contexts. In Latin America, social movements in countries such as Bolivia and Brazil focused on capturing national political power as a way to achieve their goals. International NGOs began to recalibrate their global campaigns to include change at the national level, recognizing that international gains on issues such as debt, trade, climate or the Millennium Development Goals required national, as well as international, commitment. And during the global financial crisis of 2009, in both North and South, growing attention has been paid to how nation-states can respond, providing safety nets to global forces through national policies and occasionally asserting their regulatory power over failed global systems.

The resurgence of the national has also been seen clearly as a factor in the development arena. The World Bank's 2004 World Development Report argues, for instance, that 'making services work for poor people involves changing not only service delivery arrangements but also public sector institutions' (2004: 1), including national governments. But, as J. Fox argues, 'the causal processes through which institutions become pro-poor are less well understood' (2005: 68). The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 argued strongly for 'national ownership', in which partner countries 'exercised effective leadership over their development policies and strategies, and co-ordinated development actions'. Increasingly aid discourse focused on 'building effective states' (DfID 2006), which could be capable, accountable and responsive to poor people, while also worrying about countries labelled as 'failed states' and therefore by implication not able to respond to pressing poverty and social needs.

Participation with the state: citizen voice in democratic policy processes As 'the national' has regained importance in development circles, so too have debates developed on how citizens could gain voice in shaping national policies that affect their lives. Traditionally, in much of the mainstream literature, national policy was the province of elites – government officials, technocrats or experts with little con-

cern for or focus on public involvement (Grindle and Thomas 1991). Increasingly that paradigm has also been challenged, as broader, more inclusive understandings of democracy and governance have come to the fore. Policy processes themselves are now widely understood in the literature as needing more inclusive stakeholder participation, and as involving networks of actors, with different sources of knowledge and legitimacy.

For democracy reformers, expanding citizen engagement in the policy arena is about the deepening or extension of democracy itself (Dryzek 2000; Fung and Wright 2003; Gaventa 2005). The project is one of extending the scope of citizen involvement from choosing representatives through elections, who in turn make policies, to a more substantive role, which engages citizens throughout the policy-making process – from defining priorities, to shaping policy proposals, to monitoring implementation. A growing literature exists on how to achieve such deepened forms of democracy and on how to develop more deliberative and inclusive approaches to policy issues (Chambers 2003; Clarke 2002), yet much of this has focused at the local level, or on forms of consultation and deliberation which lack substantive influence in creating new policy change.

Parallel arguments about the importance of participation in policy processes have developed in the area of development aid policies. In a 1998 World Bank speech, now Nobel Prize-winner Joseph Stiglitz argued that 'broadly participatory processes (such as "voice", openness and transparency) promote truly successful long-term development'. Moreover, he went on, 'Participation does not refer simply to voting. Participatory processes must entail open dialogue and broadly active citizen engagement, and it requires that individuals have a voice in the decisions that affect them' (Stiglitz 2001: 221–3, quoted in Odugbemi and Jacobson 2008: 41). A decade later, the idea of civic engagement in public governance is a proposition widely accepted by multilateral organizations. A UN report (UN 2008), entitled *People Matter: Civic engagement in public governance*, for instance, argues that engagement is important in policy development, as well as in budgeting, service delivery and accountability processes.

> Engagement is regarded as an important governance norm that can strengthen the decision-making arrangements of the state and produce outcomes that favour the poor and the disadvantaged. In this light, engagement emerges as conducive, if not critical to attaining the Millennium Development Goals. (Ibid.: 23)

International aid and financial institutions have encouraged such citizen voice and participation at the national level largely through mandating the involvement of poor people and other stakeholders in donor-created fora and processes, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy process, launched by the World Bank and the IMF in the name of national ownership and broad consultation on poverty policies (Robb 2001). Much has been invested by national civil society actors, often supported by international NGOs, in scaling up from the local level to engage in these new 'invited spaces' for reform. More recently, their labours have extended from augmenting citizen voice in formulating policies, to holding governments to account for implementation and delivery of existing policies. Yet at the end of a decade of such processes, with a few exceptions, there is little evidence that such 'invited participation' at the national level has substantively changed national policies and priorities (Brock et al. 2004; Rowden and Irama 2004). According to one review of attempts to mainstream citizen voice and accountability, the effects of such interventions have 'remained limited and relatively isolated at the micro-level' (Menocal and Sharma 2008: x). Indeed, the review identified relatively few examples of how citizen voice in this approach contributed to policy change and a dearth of examples of how the effects of citizen voice and accountability could be scaled up to the national level.

Challenging the state: citizen and civil-society-based advocacy While one strand of literature has focused on strengthening citizen voice and engagement in policy processes mainly through participation within 'invited spaces' created by the state, another has focused on more external and sometimes more adversarial approaches to advocacy, largely as a counterbalance to state power. This literature is deeply rooted in normative concepts of the importance of an autonomous civil society which can hold the state to account through advocating for and with various societal groups. In practice, many arguments for 'civil society' participation implicitly promote roles for professionalized NGOs and other formal associations in bringing about change (Court et al. 2006). Some challenge both this interpretation of 'civil society' and the idea that organized and professional intermediaries are necessary and desirable, arguing for a more participatory approach to advocacy processes (Samuel n.d.; VeneKlasen and Miller 2002).

The advocacy approach has a long history in development debates. The early 1990s, for instance, saw a growing concern with how NGOs could move from service delivery or participatory development in local

projects into the arena of policy advocacy. For instance, over a decade ago, Uvin and Miller referred to this as the process of political scaling up, which

> consists of deliberately building a political power base for furthering the goals of local communities and organizations through the political process [...] this involves developing strategies from the micro to the macro-level with the objective to bring about governmental policy changes. (1996: 348–9)

In 1994, studies in the Philippines by the Institute for Development Research showed how NGOs were able to take advantage of openings which developed following the overthrow of the Marcos regime to develop new coalitions and to increase their role in policy advocacy (Miller 1994a; Covey 1995). While a plethora of manuals and related studies on advocacy followed (e.g. Cohen et al. 2001), by the beginning of the next decade much of the advocacy literature had turned its attention to the global and transnational level. Only more recently, with the renewed emphasis on the state, has a focus on national policy advocacy re-emerged (Menocal and Sharma 2008; Dalton 2007).

While there is thus a vast literature on the advocacy approach to policy change, there are also growing critiques of it. Increasingly, some have challenged the possibility of NGOs, as key advocacy agents, bringing about far-reaching change, suggesting that their approach has become apolitical and excessively focused on professional and technical issues of evidence and effectiveness, to the exclusion of more fundamental changes in state power and politics (Bebbington et al. 2007). Some have wondered whether large NGOs have not themselves become too much part of the aid system to really work against it (Shutt 2009), while others widely challenge the idea that civil society itself can be seen as autonomous or independent from the state, and that such change will come from outside of the state alone.

'Working both sides of the equation': linking actors in state and society
While both the literature on citizen voice and civil society advocacy challenged the presumption that national policy was the province of government alone, some have also argued that it went too far in the other direction, challenging legitimate state authority and responsibility too strongly with a 'civil society'- or 'society'-based view. Increasingly, therefore, a third view has emerged – one which argued that policy change would come neither through state reform on the one hand, nor social action on the other, but through their interaction, through

'working both sides of the equation' (Gaventa 2004). Building on a long history of academic work in state–society relations, such an approach argues that it is through the interaction of states and societies, or synergy (Evans 1996), that effective change will happen. Applying this to the level of policy change, J. Fox argues that 'an interactive approach to institutional change suggests that pro-poor reforms require changes in three distinct areas: within the state itself, within society and at the state–society interface' (2005: 70). Similarly, Houtzager and Moore argue for a 'polity' approach, in which 'the capacity and nature of both state and societal actors are understood as the outcome of a two-way exchange' (2005: 2). More recently, this more interactive approach to state and society is also increasingly reflected in civil society and donor policy circles. An important Oxfam publication in 2008 focuses on both, as reflected in its title, *From Poverty to Power*: *How active citizens and effective states can change the world*, and argues for a more contentious view of how change happens: 'too often', Oxfam's research director writes, 'discussions about development are considered on the basis of policies rather than politics' (Green 2008: 13).

Bringing in collective action and social movement perspectives The emphasis on change happening at the interface of state and society, rather than from either alone, constitutes a welcome re-entry of politics into development debates (Hickey 2008). Yet on the whole, the literatures both on citizen voice and advocacy in policy change pay remarkably little attention to politics, nor do they portray citizen engagement as a contentious process in which conflict and contests over competing interests occur. Strikingly as well, with the slight exception of the literature on synergy between state and society, much of the literature on how citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs) interface with national policy does not engage at all with another important literature: that on the role of social movements and collective action as a base for empowered participation and advocacy.

To a degree, the gap is understandable: the voice and advocacy literature focuses on explaining how to strengthen citizen engagement and influence in the policy process, while, on the other hand, the vast literature on social movements and collective action focuses on explaining the hows and whys of these movements themselves, but not necessarily the policy changes to which they contribute. Nevertheless, there is a need to bring these approaches together: it is precisely by looking at how and under what conditions policy-focused collective action and social movements emerge that we can also gain some insights into

when and how organized citizen action can bring about national policy change as well.

There are two broad reasons why this is so. First, unlike the literature on citizen voice and participation, much of the social movement literature, especially that related to what is known as the 'political process' approach, focuses on the idea of 'contentious politics', defined by McAdam et al. as:

> episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants. Roughly translated, the definition refers to collective political struggle. (2001: 5)

This concept of 'contentiousness', we shall argue, is important for understanding how citizen action leads to national policy change, especially where such change is redistributive or supports the interests of previously marginalized groups.[8] Taking a contentious view of citizen participation and advocacy, which recognizes the importance of collective political action, is necessary, we argue, to move from voice, to presence, to real influence in policy processes (Goetz and Gaventa 2001).[9]

Second, the classical social movement approach is important in its consistent articulation of several concepts relevant to explaining how and why collective action and social movements emerge. These include the importance of

> *political opportunities*, sometimes crystallized as static opportunity structures, sometimes as changing political environments; *mobilizing structures*, both formal movement organizations and the social networks of everyday life; [and] *collective action frames*, both the cultural constraints that orient participants and those they themselves construct. (McAdam et al. 2001: 14–15)[10]

While we arrived at our own findings through a more inductive approach, and while we realize that some of the social movement debates have moved to new terrain, we find these factors highly relevant for ordering and presenting our propositions and findings. The implicit argument which emerges is that when political opportunities exist, and mobilizing structures are present, and when issues can be framed appropriately, then collective action is more likely to occur. Using this framework, we shall articulate in the following pages seven specific propositions which further elaborate the conditions under which collective action can lead to national policy change. From this discussion

we will return to the question of what we mean by 'success' in terms of citizen action and national policy, and how it is measured, and finally look at implications for various social and political actors.

Political opportunities: spaces for collective action towards policy change

An important line of thinking in the social movement literature concerns the idea that collective action emerges in response to, or because of, changes in the external environment, that is, in the political opportunity structures that enable such action to occur. In an important text on social movements (McAdam et al. 1996), Tarrow defines the concept of 'political opportunity structures' as the 'consistent – but not necessarily formal, permanent or national – signals to social and political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements' (Tarrow 1996: 54). A political opportunity, so the argument goes, creates one key incentive for citizens to mobilize.

While Tarrow talks of opportunity structures, other writers use concepts of 'political space' or 'policy space' to analyse under what conditions citizen action contributes to change on policy issues. Webster and Engberg-Pedersen (2002) argue that the strategies carried out by the poor to secure their interests by effecting change in the actions and policies of others are contingent upon the political space which is available. Grindle and Thomas (1991) use the concept of 'policy spaces' to mean 'moments in which interventions or events throw up new opportunities, reconfiguring relationships between actors or bringing in new ones, and opening the possibilities for a shift in direction' (cited in Brock et al. 2004: 22), a concept also used in our own previous work on participation in national policy processes in Nigeria and Uganda (ibid.).[11]

Political opportunities or policy spaces don't just occur.[12] They are themselves shaped by the contexts in which they are found and in which they are created. McAdam et al. (1996: 27) summarize four key 'dimensions' or factors which shape political opportunities, including the relative openness of the political system, the stability or instability of 'elite alignments', 'the presence or absence of elite allies' and the state's capacity and propensity for repression. While each of these may be important, they betray the origins of much of the earlier social movement literature, which drew almost entirely from studies on Western democracies. In our case studies, drawn from very different political contexts, three additional contextual factors seem especially important.[13]

First, as discussed earlier, it is clear that some 'background' level of democratic opening is critical to allow the space for any given reform to come to the fore. In several of the countries – the Philippines, Mexico, Brazil and Chile – the political opportunities available changed as victories were gained in the struggle for democracy. In turn, with gains in democratization came new political spaces within which CSOs and activists could operate.[14] For instance, as the rights to a free press and to assemble were re-established and respected it became easier to engage in public education and to mobilize for public participation in policy debates. In some cases, the process of democratization led to the appointment of officials and civil servants with progressive tendencies and this widened further the political spaces in which civil society could operate. In other cases, when new, democratic governments came to power, civil society actors found that they were welcome partners within or alongside government in a process of collaborative policy reform, such as in the cases of the Philippines and Chile.

Second, in each of these countries functioning state institutions exist which make the struggle for policy reform a potentially useful exercise. As Baviskar points out in the case study on the Right to Information (RTI) Act in India, the fact that India was a large bureaucracy, well schooled in the colonial arts of note-taking and filing, meant that there was information to be had. She notes that the implementation of the RTI Act 'relies heavily on a somewhat peculiar characteristic of the Indian bureaucracy – its passion for paper. Despite innumerable and routine subversions, rational-legal record-keeping about its decision-making process remains the hallmark of Indian government' (Chapter 6, this volume). Similarly, Friedman, in his case study of the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) in South Africa, argues that not only did democracy bring political space for action, it also brought constitutional processes, courts, participatory structures such as health clinics, formal checks on government and the like, without which mobilization and policy influence would not have been possible. Such a campaign could not have happened, he suggests, under apartheid (Chapter 2, this volume).

Third, in each of these settings, there were long histories of civil society action, many of them coming out of previous struggles to create democracies in the first place. In Brazil, South Africa, the Philippines and Chile, struggles against repressive regimes had created a repertoire of activism, replete with skills, networks and tactics, on which these later campaigns could build. India has a history of social movements for accountability, as seen for instance in the movement opposing the Narmada Dam, which helped prepare activists for the later RTI

campaign. Even in Morocco, which is still led by a monarch, the case study observes that new democratic openings in the 1980s and 1990s allowed the space for CSOs to flourish, while in Turkey women have been advocating for their rights since the Ottoman Empire. Such histories of prior mobilization by CSOs meant that when new political spaces opened up post-democratization, there were activists and organizations in place which had the political capabilities to use them.

This historical view challenges the idea of political opportunities as openings created from above to which activists merely respond. Rather, these cases would suggest, the process is more cyclical in nature. What appears a new political opportunity may in fact have been shaped by previous collective mobilization and action – or, as Gamson and Meyer put it, 'opportunities open the way for political action but movements make opportunities'[15] (1996: 276). For instance, while in the South African case the declining influence of President Mbeki and increased political competition were important in opening up the possibility of new alliances and concessions for the TAC, as Friedman points out, 'it is also important to see that the political environment itself is an outcome of collective action and that activism is not simply a passive recipient of political opportunity structures. This was certainly the case in the latter stages of the AIDS campaign: the change in the internal environment of [the governing] African National Congress was very directly a result of collective action [...] It would, therefore, be appropriate to understand political opportunity as a product as well as a precondition of collective action and to examine ways in which action can produce opportunity structures more conducive to citizen action' (Chapter 2, this volume).

Each of these cases therefore offered certain contextual preconditions for collective action, which were themselves often contingent on previous actions. Yet these conditions do not mean that change comes quickly, easily or automatically. In none of the cases studied did a positive change in the political opportunity structure lead to immediate victories for the advocates of policy reform. Success always required that coalitions be built, alliances with like-minded figures in government be strengthened, broad programmes of public education implemented, and citizens mobilized to put pressure on new governments – all of which amounted to an intense long-term process, not simply a short-term campaign.

As activists make their demands, new forms of resistance and opposition may also emerge, closing some spaces and opening others simultaneously. In some cases, as noted in the Turkey chapter, such

opposition involved miscalculations and blunders by those in power, serving in turn to crystallize mainstream support for the campaign. In other cases, opposition could close down the spaces for action, while groups had to shift their tactics to new realities. As Pittman argues in the case of Morocco, it was not only the opening of political space which affected the emerging movement, but also the nature of the opposition and how the movement responded. 'The interplay of activist and opposition forces [...] affects the movement playing field and political opportunities at stake,' implying in turn the need for a more iterative and dynamic understanding of change rather than an 'opportunity' or 'space' that occurs at a given point in time (Chapter 8, this volume).

It is this observation which leads to our first proposition:

Proposition 1 Political opportunities are opened and closed through historic, dynamic and iterative processes. While political opportunities create possibilities for collective action for policy change, these openings themselves may have been created by prior mobilization.

The importance of some democratic space, the existence of state institutions whose policies are worth struggling for, and the existence of a prehistory of activism are all thus critical for explaining the contexts of collective action. In the cases in this book, two additional factors seem to have been particularly important for 'triggering' how and when the particular campaigns for reform took place.

The first has to do with changes in political leadership, which either brought into power reformers with close links to civil society actors, or at least helped create a new opportunity for action from below. The case studies from Brazil, Mexico, Chile and the Philippines all point to the importance of electoral victories, which brought new national leadership to power. In Morocco, reform was aided by a new monarch, King Mohamed VI, following the death of his father, linked to a pro-modernization faction more open to gender equality. In India, Baviskar outlines the 'new political conjuncture' that occurred when the leader of the elected Congress Party, Sonia Gandhi, declined the position of prime minister and, instead, headed the National Advisory Council, a body that included people close to the emerging grassroots RTI movement. In Turkey, a 'political earthquake' in 2002 precipitated by the resignation of the coalition government created new opportunities, especially through the temporary appointment of a new female justice minister, an ally of the women's rights movement, who ordered a review of the Penal Code. In the Philippines, the election of Ramos in 1992 was accompanied by the appointment of a reformer in the Department

of Agrarian Reform. In Chile, the migration of leaders from CSOs into government following the democratic openings in the 1990s created the possibility for 'social actors to influence public policy', especially following the election in 2000 of Lagos, who then actively called for more participation of CSOs in the policy process.

In every case, then, changes in political leadership, either through electoral politics or other forces, helped to trigger opportunities for collective action to emerge, often bringing into power allies of campaign activists or former civil society leaders themselves. While other social movement theorists have also written about the importance of political competition or changes in political regimes for creating opportunities for collective action, what was significant in these cases was not only the competition, but that at least some of the elite competitors were linked or at least sympathetic to more grassroots reform movements, if not drawn directly from them. This gives rise to our second proposition.

Proposition 2 Civil society engagement in policy processes is not enough by itself to make change happen. Competition for formal political power is also central, creating new impetus for reform and bringing key allies into positions of influence, often in synergy with collective action from below.

While national politics are clearly important, a further critical factor that emerges from the case studies is the role of international discourses, norms and agreements in putting pressure from above on national governments, which in turn may open more space for domestic coalitions to bring pressure to bear from below. In most cases in this collection, activists and campaigning organizations were able to link their struggle to international standards of acceptable state behaviour, international law and treaties, or internationally agreed-upon goals, giving greater legitimacy to their claims.

For instance, the campaign for children's rights in Chile built on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), while in Mexico the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1981) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), as well as the Millennium Development Goals on maternal health, provided important sources of leverage. Sometimes international events or conferences can be particularly important. In the South African case, the international AIDS conference in Toronto in 2006 was a turning point, in that the government was visibly criticized by the international community, at a time when its support was needed by the regime. In Mexico, activists could draw on the Mexican government's statements at the UN International Conference on Popula-

tion and Development (2004), as well as other international fora where it had made public commitments to the international community on maternal mortality.

In other places, overt pressure on national governments from outside actors created the conditions for domestic actors to apply pressure as well. In Turkey the EU accession negotiations provided a propitious climate for the campaign for gender-equitable reforms to the Penal Code, since the EU was pressing hard to bring into line with European laws oppressive Turkish laws relating to honour crimes, the death penalty and freedom of expression. In India, pressure came more from international donors, pushing a good-governance agenda, in particular the World Bank's promotion of transparency as an aid condition.

In several cases, though, appealing to international standards or allying with outside actors was a double-edged sword. In the context of social movements in India, campaigners for the right to information had to distinguish and distance themselves from the World Bank's position, in order not to be seen as part of a neoliberal agenda, even as their cause was indirectly furthered by pressure from the Bank. Similarly, in both the TAC in South Africa, and the campaign for women's rights in Turkey, international actors built up political pressure on national governments on the one hand, yet on the other hand such support opened the national campaigns to charges of promoting a foreign agenda, posing tricky issues of navigation and framing. In Morocco, movement success was directly linked to a strategy of balancing appeals to universal human rights with local cultural and religious norms. This gives rise to a third proposition.

Proposition 3 While international allies, covenants and norms of state behaviour can strengthen domestic openings for reform, they can also be the subject of fierce domestic opposition. Successful reform campaigns depend on careful navigation to link international pressures with differing and constantly changing local and national contexts.

Evidence from our cases suggests that while the concept of political opportunity or political space is an important factor in explaining collective action for policy reform, a more dynamic and iterative account of what creates such spaces is required than is usually given. In addition, a reading of our cases offers two particularly important triggers for mobilization in response to policy openings – those involving changes in national political leadership and those involving international pressures on domestic debates.[16] At the same time, we argue below, such political opportunities are not enough to trigger change by themselves.

The opportunities need to be matched by social mobilization structures, which can convert political opportunities into actual change.

Mobilizing structures: actors, networks and coalitions

After political opportunities, a second factor often used to explain the emergence of collective action has to do with the mobilizing structures: 'the collective vehicles, formal as well as informal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action' (McAdam et al. 1996: 3). Who exactly are the change agents in our eight case studies of national policy change, and how are they linked through organizational forms and alliances?

A scan of the growing literature on policy advocacy in the global South that has emerged since the late 1990s may give the impression – explicitly or implicitly – that the key change actors are Northern-based international NGOs in coalition with their Southern NGO partners (Dalton 2007; Perkin and Court 2005; Jordan and van Tuijl 2006; CARE and ActionAid International 2006; Kanji et al. 2002).

Yet the case studies of successful national change in this volume present a different picture. The leading change agents are nationally based, with little evidence of international NGO actors to the fore. The key actors are a nucleus of usually urban-based actors of two broad kinds: professional groupings of academics and the intelligentsia, acting as individuals or members of their professional associations; and domestic NGOs, often middle-class, urban, professional and fairly elite, identified by profession or faith, sometimes explicitly advocacy focused or rights based and sometimes strongly service-delivery oriented. Among these are media organizations and women's rights or feminist organizations, both especially prominent in the Turkey and Morocco studies.

Central both to the networks to which they belong and specifically to the case-study campaign or initiative, these NGOs and professional associations harbour the professional and technical expertise necessary for getting the issue on to a government agenda in the first place (Gurza Lavalle et al. 2008). They infuse an initiative and its diverse actors with the necessary social and political legitimacy in adversaries' eyes, are well placed to feed an effective communications strategy and engage in detailed, proposal-oriented policy dialogue with government. What they lack in autonomy from the state they compensate for with their influencing power over the state, by reason of their allies within, articulateness, and professional and strategic expertise.

A number of writers talk about the importance of 'thickening' disparate 'civil societies' in order to influence policies (ibid.: 47; J. Fox

1996). In our cases, this thickening happens through the medium of collective organizations that call themselves variously campaigns, alliances, national committees, networks or coalitions. These collectives have diverse memberships and shifting organizational forms that adapt over time to fit the evolution of the initiative and its external context, including becoming more or less broad based as circumstances require. They can be seen as the advocacy spearheads that penetrate the state realm, usually at the national (or federal) level, but in the Mexico, Brazil, India and South Africa cases also at provincial (or state) levels. Generally peopled by individuals from the NGOs and professional associations and formed for the specific purposes of the campaign or initiative in question, many of these coalitions draw on the much longer trajectories of experience and relationships of those who constitute them, which pre-date the present campaign. Their lead actors have various relationships with the state, ranging from purposefully adversarial – as in the case of agrarian reform NGOs in the Philippines – to closely cooperative and even subcontracting – as in the case of Chilean child-focused NGOs. Even the most adversarial of them are capable of initiating and sustaining fluid dialogue with the state, and usually beyond the handful of close allies they have within it. In some cases there is but one forum or coalition throughout the initiative; in others (particularly Turkey, but also Chile and Brazil), there are several, and/or the forum itself mutates, dissolves and reforms itself in response to the circumstances and needs of the advocacy struggle.

Although indispensable, the coalitions are but the 'thickeners' of claims and agendas that emanate, directly or indirectly, from needs, experiences and rights held by actors in local communities and at the most local levels of governance. These, too, take diverse organizational forms, ranging from social movements to trade unions to associations to claimant groups; and are organized around various logics – territorial (neighbourhood), occupational (peasant or other livelihood or trade), ethnic (indigenous group), or a specific set of rights (people living with AIDS; rights to information, treatment, land). Spatially speaking they are located across wide areas of the country and reflect the interests of rural citizens or citizens from minor urban centres.

Perhaps best described by the Latin American term *bases* (bases or grass roots), these local groups harbour a legitimacy born of the first-hand nature of their members' needs or rights claims, and bring to the national collective the convening and mobilization power for securing and sustaining credibility among grassroots constituents and policy targets alike. A continuous reality check against which campaign strategy

is regularly tested and adjusted and on which communication actions can draw, they permit the campaign to successively rebut accusations of class bias, elitism or irrelevance. What these actors lack in professional and strategic expertise and articulateness they make up for in legitimacy and convening power. It is at this level of the collective that success is actually experienced and demonstrated – as objectively detectable changes in local realities and practices that benefit their members and participants, as we argue below in relation to measuring success.

In emphasizing the central role of NGOs and other associations as protagonists, we do not wish to detract from the importance of citizen bases in such initiatives – both normatively stated and empirically observed by many commentators and activists, in these and other cases of policy change from below. Our cases represent something of a spectrum in respect of how central ordinary citizens' roles are and how prominent NGOs are in relation to them. At the citizen-based end of such a spectrum would be the South African case, and at the NGO-based end, the Chilean case.

Adversaries and critics of these collective action coalitions may perceive these local actors as less than autonomous and subject to instrumental utilization by other more powerful actors in the collective. It could be contended that citizens are brought out in force only when the campaign's legitimacy is questioned or urgent activism is needed to drive a gain home – for instance, the mass women's march organized in the last stage of the Turkish campaign, or the sit-ins led by the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (Workers' and Farmers' Power Union) in the India case. Some other studies cite the instrumental use of citizen bases to lend legitimacy to what are essentially the campaigns of urban NGOs, and the consequent withdrawal of bases (Covey 1995: 860). There is no indication in any of our case studies that the bases experienced these instances as utilization; quite the contrary in some cases, especially South Africa. This is possibly because of a high correlation of interests between the bases and the other more powerful actors, or because it is precisely these instances of sporadic mass mobilization that tend to trigger tangible and immediate successes, felt throughout the collective.

Faith groups emerge as playing very diverse roles, not conforming systematically to common socially conservative stereotypes. Left-wing, liberation-theology-inspired Catholic organizations in Chile and the Philippines, after playing important roles in anti-dictatorship and pro-democracy movements, have redefined themselves around social justice issues such as land reform and child rights. In Mexico the heterodox

Catholics for the Right to Choose helped provide social legitimacy by aligning itself with the maternal mortality reduction campaign, and in South Africa the Catholic Church allied with the TAC despite the two having radically different positions over condom use. In the two majority-Muslim countries, religious groups and leaders were not generally among the change agents but among the detractors and adversaries, politically and socially conservative, as well as powerful; but here too a few remarkable exceptions stand out, such as King Mohamed VI in Morocco and Moroccan women's NGOs' use of progressive interpretations of Koranic and Islamic teaching.

Media and popular communications actors appear prominently in many of the case studies, usually located close to the central NGOs and professional organizations. They have acted as communicators about the change process in these eight countries, where media reach and access are generally widespread. In the Morocco and Turkey cases, they play a particular additional role, less of disseminating and communicating the policy change process than of actually helping shape it. In these two cases the issues at stake were intimately bound up with ongoing social and political conflicts reflecting deep divisions within society. Within these dynamics, communications media act as agents as well as transmitters of change, as seen in their active membership of the collectives and the close and supportive relationships between them and the key change agents. Thus, even when operating in a restrictive environment as they do in Morocco, the communications media occupy a particular niche in contexts where contrasting worldviews are locked in struggle and sociocultural paradigm shifts are under way, rendering certain issues particularly contentious and therefore newsworthy. It is clear that the central actors gained substantially from these alliances with the media, in terms of profile, as a vehicle for popular mobilization and public opinion-shaping, channels of strategic communication about the issue or campaign to the targets in cases where channels for direct dialogue were not forthcoming, and scope for outing key issues and naming and shaming detractors.

While we see in every case a broad-based coalition composed of a mixture of urban professionals, with strong links to local community or faith-based groupings, these society-based coalitions did not bring about change by themselves. Alliances were also important, be they with the media or with experts and technicians whose knowledge and technical skills could help to legitimize the struggle.

A number of analysts of social movements have written on the importance of the politics of knowledge in shaping and framing campaigns

for reform (Leach and Scoones 2007). These cases are no exception. In nearly every one there is strong evidence that civil society reformers were able to mobilize specialist knowledge that contributed to the overall quality of laws, policies and programmes ultimately implemented by governments. This technical knowledge was provided by civil society policy analysts, budget specialists or legal scholars. These specialists provided legitimacy to the campaigns and ensured that governments could not dismiss out of hand the claims being made by the coalition reformers. Further, the technical specialists contributed to broader patterns of public education through the media, educational systems and, in several cases, in testimony before legislatures.

In the Mexico campaign to increase the quality and quantity of funding for maternal healthcare, much debate revolved around the national government's budget allocations for this sub-sector. Many governments – Mexico's included – have traditionally taken the position that budgeting is a prerogative of the executive branch. Technocrats in the Ministry of Finance jealously guard the details of how budgets are constructed and regard the whole subject of budget allocations as too complex to allow citizens any participation in the process. Yet in the civil society campaign for better maternal healthcare, the Mexican NGO Fundar brought independent expertise on budgets to the table. In Chile, as Fuentes explains, civil society policy experts engaged in detailed negotiations with their counterparts in government to improve the quality of legislation, policies and programmes designed to enhance children's rights. In India, former civil servants brought years of government experience to the civil society RTI campaign. Their expertise helped civil society actors find the public spaces where the campaign could maximize its impact, while also helping to build alliances with potential allies still in government. In the campaign in Turkey to reform the Penal Code, detailed research on alternatives was carried out by specialists on comparative legal systems and policy analysts. Even representatives of the conservative religious government had to acknowledge that the women's coalition in support of gender-equitable reform had been the only actor in Turkey to work intensively on formulating and integrating its demands into the draft law, an undertaking that favoured their chances of getting their demands integrated into the new Penal Code despite the strong opposition of the government.

These cases, then, were not single-actor campaigns but rested on very complex mobilizing structures, which linked a national nucleus of reformers to local and faith-based groups, and also included links to media and expertise. Yet all of these were networks based in society,

existing beyond the perimeters of the state. This finding is consistent with the abundant and increasingly sophisticated literature on NGO-led policy advocacy that demonstrates the need for alliance-building in policy advocacy campaigns as a key to success (Dalton 2007; Covey 1995; Brown and Ashman 1996; Perkin and Court 2005). This leads us, then, to our fourth proposition.

Proposition 4 Successful policy change occurs not through professional advocacy alone, but involves complex and highly developed mobilizing structures which link national reformers to local and faith-based groups, the media and repositories of expertise. Such structures are built over time, deeply grounded in the societies where they are found, and linked to the biographies of those who lead them.

While these mobilizing structures are built on complex and diverse alliances across social actors, what is perhaps most striking is how they include alliances with actors inside the state as well. Yet, on the whole, in the abundant literature on alliance-building, discussion of alliances with reformers inside the state is scant. Some NGO analysts cast state actors as opponents of civil society reform activities, who are inclined to respond to influencing efforts by challenging their credibility, representativity or legitimacy, or by attempting to corrupt or co-opt them (Jordan and van Tuijl 2006; CARE and ActionAid International 2006). Other accounts of policy advocacy, while amply recognizing that any one organization will not get far in policy advocacy unless it forges links with a range of allies, situate state actors as merely targets, to be brought round to societal actors' viewpoints (Dalton 2007: 15; Court et al. 2005). Others still take an optimistic view, asserting that in relation to certain policy advocacy causes, such as those broadly related to poverty reduction, 'there is general agreement among national political leaders, civil society, and the international community that less poverty is a good thing' (Phillips Mandaville 2004: 6) – but whether such agreement actually translates into easy advocacy wins probably depends on the redistributive impacts of the pro-poor policy change in question. J. Fox more cautiously concludes that 'pro-poor reform initiatives are likely to have broader and deeper institutional effects if accompanied by strategic interactions between policy-maker and civil society counterparts that help the latter to identify and overcome obstacles to change' (2005: 68).

In these cases for reform, while the state may have been target or collaborator at different stages, actors within the state were themselves key change agents, often contravening the stated and unstated norms of their trade and risking ostracism or career disadvantage to forge

alliances with social advocates. One of the major lessons that can be drawn from this collection of case studies therefore is the importance of building alliances with progressive figures within government and from the broad cast of actors often simply assumed to oppose change. In countries that are democratizing after long periods of authoritarian rule, governments are frequently made up of coalitions in which reformists sit side by side with representatives of elites that are trying their best to hold on to what remains of their power and privilege. In other examples, even in those countries that are not on a clear path to greater democracy, there are almost always some progressive elements who occupy vital political spaces or control government institutions, and can be engaged to advantage by society-based reformers.

While it is important for reformers based in civil society to ally with others in the state, the converse is also true. Well-built social mobilization structures provide ways for state reformers to achieve their goals of policy change as well. For example, Ernesto Garilao, the Secretary of Agrarian Reform in the Ramos administration in the Philippines (1992–98), was one of a few progressives in a government dominated by traditional politicians. To achieve his own agenda within government and to accelerate the implementation of agrarian reform in the face of strong opposition from conservative landowners, especially in the national legislature, he opened a dialogue with like-minded figures from leading CSOs that had independent expertise in social mobilization, public education and the implementation of agrarian reform programmes. As the Philippines case study illustrates, both sides benefited from this partnership: the six-year tenure of Secretary Garilao was the high point in implementing a contentious land reform programme. The minister had mass public support that could be mobilized when needed to pressure the legislature to approve funding necessary for programme implementation. He also knew that at the local level potential beneficiaries could be mobilized at critical points and places where the local police and military units might be siding with the landowners to block the transfer of land ownership to programme beneficiaries. The evidence from the Philippines resonates with several of the other cases as well. This leads to our next proposition.

Proposition 5 Alliances between social actors and champions of change inside the state are critical to make policy change happen. Social mobilization structures provide opportunities for state-based reformers to generate change from within, just as political opportunity structures provide spaces for social actors to do so from without.

In building alliances, the framing of key issues is critical. It is to this issue that we now turn.

Framing the issue: mobilizing strategies and managing contentiousness

A third argument used to explain the nature of successful collective action focuses on framing processes, by which is meant 'the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action' (McAdam et al. 1996: 6). Framing strategies will depend a great deal on the nature of the issue, and how contentious it is to different actors.

In an earlier study of national advocacy, Covey argues that a campaign's ability to win policy advantage depends partly on how effectively it counters the forces of opposition, specifying that '[f]raming a winning issue requires that the alliance define the debate in terms compelling to grassroots groups and which limit the opposition's ability to mobilize its own forces' (1995: 862). Leach and Scoones, also writing about social movements, tell us that

[m]obilization takes shape around and actively involves the construction of particular ideas, meanings and cognitive and moral construction of a 'problem'. [It] involves struggles not just to promote a given social or political agenda, but to establish and promote certain meanings and problem-definitions as legitimate as against those who would dispute them. (2007: 11)

In short, the framing of the issue is central to generating mobilization, to the way citizens coalesce around it and act on it, and to the overcoming of opposition.

The cases described in this volume offer rich pickings in terms of how their core issues were framed. Framing was at the very heart of the South Africa case. The TAC's definition of the problem – the cause of, and hence the appropriate treatment for, HIV/AIDS – was pitted against the beleaguered black government's racial-political framing of medical explanations of HIV as stemming from racist white supremacy and black inferiority discourses. This deadlock in problem definition came to actually constitute the issue during several years of the campaign. In the Mexico initiative, the problem of high maternal mortality was delinked from the dominant explanation, which centred on high-risk pregnancies, and reframed in terms of the lack of adequate emergency obstetric care, which pointed to an entirely different set of policy solutions and budget

prescriptions. Brazil's multifaceted urban chaos, spanning issues of poor service coverage, untrammelled urban speculation, land use and titling disarray, was framed as a multiple negation of rights and the solution found in a new, multifaceted Right to the City with ample provision for democratic citizen participation in urban policy processes. In Morocco, activists underscored both Muslim and international human rights frames in the campaign for reform of the Islamic family law, deliberately casting reform as stemming from the Maghreb rather than international or Western actors. Similarly, protagonists in the Turkey case framed the gendered reform of the Penal Code as a national, women's, issue, not one inspired by Western cultural values or connected to the EU accession process the country was undertaking at the time.

The Brazil case illustrates well Leach and Scoones's point that framing is often about mobilized citizens overwriting the narrowly technical constructions that get advanced by other actors – typically bureaucrats or social conservatives – with alternative constructions that emanate from 'deeper moral and political commitments' (ibid.: 12). Conversely, the Morocco, Turkey and South Africa cases illustrate how profoundly moral and political the constructions of meaning can be on both sides of the struggle – mobilized citizens on the one hand and the government or religious establishment on the other. In them we see exemplified the 'protracted clashes over alternative framings' which do not reach straightforward resolution (ibid.: 12), and, particularly in Morocco and Turkey, how these deadlocks were eventually broken through a combination of foresight and clever manoeuvring.

As argued earlier, all eight of the case studies in this volume are examples of 'contentious politics' (McAdam et al. 2001), consisting as they do of collective political struggles. Our cases suggest that the framing of claims in successful stories of policy change is in itself an intrinsically contentious and dynamic process. If in analysing degrees and dynamics of contentiousness we focus on the claim in question rather than on the actors and politics of the process, which are many analysts' prime focus, there are various ways of classifying or ranking our eight cases. Yet as illustrated below, even the crudest attempt to rank these in order of contentiousness of the claim, and to derive lessons about how contentiousness is best navigated for a successful outcome, soon runs into difficulty.

The cases with significant redistributive dimensions – the Philippines, India and Brazil – were the most sharply contentious. However, highlighting the evident moral appeal and universal applicability of the RTI in the Indian context helped to counter this; and in the Philippines

and Brazil, the wave of mobilization for social justice driven by the anti-dictatorship, pro-democracy struggles gave these highly contentious claims the necessary traction at those points in time, although only via a very protracted struggle in each case and with successes that, albeit complete in de jure and symbolic terms, remain partial in practical and implementation terms.

Some cases – the reduction of maternal mortality in Mexico, the securing of child rights in Chile – were social welfare claims which might at first appear not to be especially contentious, having limited redistributive dimensions, evident social benefits that offset costs to the public purse, and constituting long-overdue steps towards modernization, of a kind with wide social and political appeal in these relatively urbanized and rapidly democratizing societies. Viewed from a different perspective, the position of the Mexican Catholic Church on reproductive health and abortion, as well as cultural factors of machismo and prejudice towards the most affected indigenous women, made even that issue a sensitive and difficult one. While this and the Chilean claim could be considered as 'pushing on an open door', from another vantage point there were local factors which meant collective action was still necessary for the hinges of the door to do their work.

Turning to South Africa, the claim – the quest for treatment for people with HIV/AIDS – does not appear contentious at face value in certain circles. Yet it proved one of the most contentious of all because it directly challenged the intellectual, political, social and moral authority of the key power-holder in the nation, the country's second black president in the post-apartheid era, and the fierce loyalties to the ANC forged during the anti-apartheid struggle. Contentiousness in this case derived not from the nature of the claim but from the tenacity of the president's position in the face of evidence to the contrary. In the Turkey and Morocco cases the claims were highly contentious in the eyes of the male population, the religious establishment and the political configurations constructed around this religious establishment and justified by it. That the cause stood to favour large numbers of women, and male progressives, did not make it non-contentious even from the perspective of these prospective beneficiaries. On the other hand, the causes were less contentious from the perspective of Western societies and dominant international rights discourses. Contentiousness, in this sense, is very much in the eyes of the beholders.

The level of contention of an issue, some have argued, relates to types of strategies that are needed to mount a successful challenge. In earlier work for this study, for instance, we argued that 'contentious

issues require contentious politics' (Gaventa 2008: 3). For instance, in the cases of maternal mortality in Mexico and child rights in Chile, the fact that there was little contention over the validity of the issue itself meant that the campaign had more of a technical and informational nature, and was characterized by collaboration rather than protest. On the other hand, in the cases of land redistribution in the Philippines, HIV/AIDS in South Africa, the right to information in India, and women's rights in the highly conservative environments of Turkey and Morocco, the issues were initially very contentious, and evoked clear divisions of interest in society. Campaigns on these required a greater focus on collective action and popular mobilization, as well as skilful use of high-profile media. They also often involved conflict and antagonism, rather than more comfortable partnerships with government. This required strong, relatively independent civil society actors who could challenge and hold their own against powerful interests.

On closer inspection, the contentiousness of the claim itself is not as fixed as we and much of the literature seems to assume, and a more nuanced, contextualized, dynamic understanding of it is helpful for honing an appropriate strategy. This does not render invalid the proposition we were working with earlier, but it does imply a need to qualify that proposition to capture the fact that a given issue is not uniformly, ubiquitously, eternally contentious to the same degree. Rather, the level and nature of 'contentiousness' are themselves constantly changing and shifting, requiring coalitions themselves to be able to adapt their strategies to changing circumstances.[17]

The Turkey case in particular shows how when the adversary upped the stakes by resorting to ultra-conservative counterproposals and vilification of the campaign protagonists, these regrouped, restrategized and devised ways of upping and outing the mobilization on to the streets and across the country, while their legal experts continued engaging with the system to push specific and detailed proposals for reform of the Penal Code. In explaining how change agents in these cases moulded their actions and mobilization strategies to the fluctuating contentiousness of their issues, the difference between strategy and tactics is key. The Turkey campaigners' strategy from the outset was to carefully avoid any framing of their struggle to reform the Penal Code to reflect women's rights in terms of international law or standards, until late in the day external circumstances – Turkey's process of accession to the EU, the appointment of a sympathetic and Turkish UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, and the intensification of opposition from the religious right in government – made this highly tactical. The deci-

sion was then taken to depart from strategy and arrange a high-profile dialogue meeting involving the UN Special Rapporteur, the government and the campaigners. The possession of multiple 'repertoires of collective action' or sets of tactics by change agents was key to facilitating adaptation of strategy to emergent situations in the course of their action (Ganz 2005: 224).

This, then, leads us to our sixth proposition:

Proposition 6 Policy change on contentious issues requires contentious forms of mobilization. Contentiousness is a dynamic and contingent concept. Successful collective action must also be dynamic, with the ability to frame issues carefully, adjust to changing circumstances and audiences, and draw upon a wide repertoire of strategies.

While contention is part of policy change, its management and effective framing are critical to success. But as we discuss below, 'success' itself is in turn a contentious concept.

The problem of 'success'

We started with a reasonably clear criterion of 'successful' policy change, looking for examples where there was strong evidence of impact towards social justice and material well-being for large numbers of people. The more we investigated and discussed these cases, the more we began to problematize what was meant by 'success' in campaigns to change national policy in the first place. There are different positions in the growing literature on how one measures success in advocacy or citizen engagement in policy change: while some want to focus on the narrow change – literally a change in policy, as seen in a law or procedure – others argue that the metrics of success must be understood more broadly.

Coe and Mayne, for instance, argue that 'the primary focus of many campaigns has traditionally been to change institutional policy and practice. But campaigners are increasingly recognising that securing policy change is not enough to achieve lasting and sustained changes in people's lives' (2008: 30), either because a new policy doesn't immediately translate into practice and/or because policies alone do not overcome other power relations in society which will affect whether and how the policy is taken up. They point to other goals that might also be important beyond the policy change itself, such as strengthening the capacity of civil society to hold institutions accountable for their actions, creating wider democratic spaces for future engagement, and changing individual or group attitudes and behaviours (ibid.: 31).

Similar arguments for the broader view of success have been made by others, some of whom also point to potential trade-offs and conflicts across these various goals (Chapman and Wameyo 2001; L. Fox 1997; Miller 1994b). For instance, Coates and David (2002: 530) warn that 'short-term successes of advocacy work may often be won at the expense of longer-term aims – such as building capacity among partners and contributing to more fundamental change in the future'. While Covey argues that a policy advocacy alliance can successfully combine the goals of policy change with the strengthening of civil society and thereby of democracy (1995: 862), she insists that this combination of objectives needs to be an explicit goal, contemplated in the design of the initiative, if it is to succeed. Leslie Fox (1997) proposes a continuum of advocacy strategies extending from 'transformational' (citizen empowerment) through 'developmental' (civil society strengthening) to 'instrumentalist' (policy influence). Instrumental objectives are said to carry no inherent value or normative dimension and as such 'may or may not advance democracy or contribute to its consolidation' – whether they do or not depends on how far the policy change objectives advance the broader public interest (ibid.: 12). Transformational objectives, on the other hand, are about 'the ability of the marginalized or disadvantaged – the powerless or poor majority – to challenge the status quo by gaining a sense of their own power, including the capacity to define and prioritize their problems, and then acting to address and resolve them' (ibid.: 9). These and policy change objectives can serve as mutually reinforcing. Conversely, citizen empowerment processes pursued with no substantive policy gain ensuing can end in frustration and disempowerment.

The case studies in this volume illustrate and echo the trade-offs involved in achieving success, while also adding further degrees of complexity to the debate. It is noteworthy, for instance, that few of the struggles described set out to achieve 'transformational' objectives relating to citizen empowerment. Most aimed at 'instrumentalist' objectives consisting of securing changes in, or implementation of, policies or laws. Several probably did lead to some empowerment of some of the actors involved; and their policy change outcomes undoubtedly have empowering potential – for instance, for Moroccan women within the household, Brazilian users of urban services, or indigenous Mexican women giving birth. But the possibility remains that one factor in explaining the policy change successes in the Philippines, Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Morocco and Turkey initiatives is that these focused very single-mindedly on their policy-change objectives rather than attempting to transform the social bases or strengthen the social actors with whom

they worked. The India and South Africa case studies, on the other hand, can and do assess the success of these initiatives in large measure on the basis of the transformational experience that the initiative represented for the grassroots actors involved.

Many of the cases, although solidly focused on concrete policy changes, illustrate that the degree to which policy change actually has an impact on the lives of people at the grass roots is contingent on a number of factors. First, as is discussed in the literature above, a long chain of actions and reactions runs from a change in or adoption of a law or policy to actual implementation on the ground. In India, even though the RTI Act was passed, and despite the presence of reformers and allies within the bureaucracy, there were others who continued to oppose and resist its implementation. A number of the cases, including the Philippines, South Africa and Chile, show that implementation can take many years, requiring continuous and sustained pressure from below.

Second, in several of the case studies, policy success at one level of governance did not automatically translate into success at other levels, owing to differences in state or provincial laws, as well as differing degrees of political will, civil society demand and bureaucratic support for reform down the line. The case study in Brazil, for instance, shows dramatically how the same national policy for the Right to the City had dramatically different forms of implementation at the local level, depending on the level of civil society organization and the level of political will to implement the policy closer to the grass roots. In the Mexico case, the national campaign for budgetary support for maternal care suffered when it reached the state and local level, where transparency laws were weak, local organizations were not initially mobilized, and state-level leaders could resist any national-level change. In both cases, mobilization at the state and local level became necessary for real implementation of change at the global level to occur.

Third, policy implementation is mediated not only by different administrative levels of governance, but by powerful social actors, who are able to resist and impede change. In the Philippines, there were strong anti-reform elements in both the state and in society, including powerful landholders whose interests were directly threatened by the laws for redistribution. In Morocco and Turkey, deeply entrenched patriarchal structures and norms could block the implementation of legal changes. In Morocco this made it strategic to focus on building public awareness to deal with entrenched social structures and attitudes, while in Turkey, it meant that breaking of taboos on issues of sexuality and fostering a

new climate of public opinion were at least as important as the legal battles won. In both cases, the campaigns took on a more holistic approach that engaged with changing social and cultural attitudes, not only with changing articles of the law.

While there are thus a number of facets of success and several factors that contribute to a successful policy reform and to its sustained success, this is not to detract from the importance of the policy changes themselves. On the contrary, as we have seen, these policy changes were important for a variety of reasons, both contributing to concrete development goals, and enabling the realization of fundamental human rights. Yet the case studies attest to other dimensions of success besides the policy changes, reflecting those outlined by Coe and Mayne (2008) and others. These are often of quite different orders to the policy change gains themselves: namely, strengthened capacity to hold institutions to account, the widening and institutionalizing of democratic spaces, changes in individual attitudes and behaviours.

It is not always clear, even in these case studies, which element of the multifaceted 'success' attained should be considered most important. In the South Africa case, there was a tension between focusing on saving lives immediately and building a tight single-issue coalition to do so, and the long-term goals of building broader coalitions for democratic reform. In India, the realization of the 'right to information' led to debate on whether information was really enough to secure change, while in Morocco there were similar internal debates as to how successful and complete the changes actually were. The emerging lesson is that 'success' itself is a contingent and contentious term, the meaning of which will vary greatly across different initiatives. As J. Fox has written,

> when considering approaches to and criteria for assessing advocacy impact it helps to keep one proposition in mind: where you stand depends on where you sit. Policy changes that may seem quite small in San Francisco or London – for better or for worse – often loom much larger when seen from below, at the receiving end. (2003: 520)

That said, these cases offer insights into what should be considered successful citizen action for national policy change, as well as how the attainment (or not) of this might be assessed. These insights are apposite in the current environment in which donors and policy-makers increasingly demand evidence of success against agreed indicators or measures. Our cases demonstrate that meanings and depths of 'success' cannot be assumed or at times predicted; and that tangible victories in terms of policy language or programme implementation must not

TABLE 1.1 Assessing campaign 'success'

	The policy change	The broader environment
National	Specific reforms in law or policy frameworks	New patterns of decision-making and participation
Intermediate	Better programme implementation	Greater government accountability and capability
Local	Material improvement in quality of life	Sense of citizenship and capabilities to claim rights

blind us to outcomes in the broader policy environment, such as building greater citizen awareness or stronger organizations for future campaigns. Building cultures and constituencies for change in the broader policy environment can be as significant an action in the long term as changes in government policies themselves. Conversely, simply changing policy or legislating new rights without building popular awareness of such changes does not mean they will be taken up. To be sustainable, policy success may need to be successful in terms of each aspect of change detailed in Table 1. The better implemented national-level changes are, the more likely they are to gain popular support. The more campaigns help to create perhaps less tangible outcomes in the broader environment, such as changes in decision-making processes, greater accountability and stronger citizens, the more citizen engagement will be able to hold on to the gains made, and the more they are likely to translate into material improvements in people's lives.

From this we derive our final proposition:

Proposition 7 'Success' can be understood in many different ways, especially among the different actors in a broad-based campaign or social movement. In general, robust and sustainable changes require campaigns which link the national to the local and which pay attention to the processes of empowering citizens and deepening democratic governance as well as to effecting policy change itself.

Implications for current debates and practice

Drawing upon the rich examples which are described more fully in the following case studies, this introduction has argued that collective citizen action can be an important force of national policy change – change which in fact goes beyond the policy itself, towards also building more responsive, accountable and democratic states and societies.

However, it is not always so. Using in-depth analysis of where positive change has happened through citizen action, we have sought to understand the conditions under which it may be so.

Working inductively upwards from the findings of these case studies, and using a lens derived from social movement literature to interrogate other literatures on citizen voice, participation and advocacy, this introduction has offered seven propositions for how and when successful citizen action for national policy change occurs. These are related in turn to the political opportunities available, the mobilization structures and agents, and the framing of issues and management of contention – all of which have bearings on the nature and meaning of success itself. In summary:

In relation to the nature of existing political opportunity and policy spaces:

Proposition 1 Political opportunities are opened and closed through historic, dynamic and iterative processes. While political opportunities create possibilities for collective action for policy change, these openings themselves may have been created by prior mobilization.

Proposition 2 Civil society engagement in policy processes is not enough by itself to make change happen. Competition for formal political power is also central, creating new impetus for reform and bringing key allies into positions of influence, often in synergy with collective action from below.

Proposition 3 While international allies, covenants and norms of state behaviour can strengthen domestic openings for reform, they can also be the subject of fierce domestic opposition. Successful reform campaigns depend on careful navigation to link international pressures with differing and constantly changing local and national contexts.

In respect of mobilizing structures, the identity and positioning of change agents and their ability to form and sustain broad alliances:

Proposition 4 Successful policy change occurs not through professional advocacy alone, but involves complex and highly developed mobilizing structures which link national reformers to local and faith-based groups, the media and repositories of expertise. Such structures are built over time, deeply grounded in the societies where they are found, and linked to the biographies of those who lead them.

Proposition 5 Alliances between social actors and champions of change inside the state are critical to make policy change happen. Social mobilization structures provide opportunities for state-based reformers to generate change from within, just as political opportunity structures provide spaces for social actors to do so from without.

As regards the way that issues are framed and mobilized upon, including how contentious they might be:

Proposition 6 Policy change on contentious issues requires contentious forms of mobilization. Contentiousness is a dynamic and contingent concept. Successful collective action must also be dynamic, with the ability to frame issues carefully, adjust to changing circumstances and audiences, and draw upon a wide repertoire of strategies.

Concerning the nature of policy success itself:

Proposition 7 'Success' can be understood in many different ways, especially among the different actors in a broad-based campaign or social movement. In general, robust and sustainable changes require campaigns which link the national to the local and which pay attention to the processes of empowering citizens and deepening democratic governance as well as to effecting policy change itself.

Each of these propositions, if more generally true, has important implications for how policy change occurs through collective action. Taken together, some overall themes also emerge about how change happens, many of which challenge existing approaches to change taken by donors, civil society actors and governments alike.

First, the cases illustrate time and again that citizen action can play an important role in promoting change, but such change comes through broad coalitions of deeply embedded social actors, who also link to and build alliances with reformers in the state. Such an approach challenges state-based or civil-society-based approaches to change alike. Rather it argues for coalitions for change, which link social and political actors, media, experts, international agencies, national organizations, faith-based groups and others in a common effort. In this linking, 'political opportunities' are important, especially those which are created through changes in political leaders, but equally important are 'social mobilization opportunities', which enable political reformers in turn to take up causes and achieve their aims.

Second, the nature of such change is dynamic, iterative and may take many years to achieve. Progress at one moment can lead to setbacks the next. But success on one front also creates spaces, coalitions and repertoires which can contribute to change on other fronts. This view challenges fundamentally approaches which are more linear, or which believe that policy fixes for severe development and democracy problems will occur quickly or predictably according to predictable models that fit neatly into time-bound project cycles.

Third, such change on fundamental issues requires contention and contestation – both inherent in how they are framed as well as

in how they are fought. But at other times it requires commonality and collaboration among a broad range of stakeholders who will not always agree. This view challenges approaches to participation and civic engagement which reduce such processes to technical approaches, or to notions of and processes of 'national ownership' achieved through non-contentious consultation and dialogue but which veil vast chasms of differences in power and interests. On the other hand, this view also challenges those who argue that change must always come from below and from outside through confrontation. The trick is to combine these, and know when to use which to achieve change.

Fourth, while national change is critical, it is enabled and under-pinned by international alliances, norms and frameworks, as well as by grassroots and local actors and organizations. Indeed, these cases challenge assumptions about the directionalities of change – some emerged from above, some from below, yet the two were always linked. Interestingly, whether from national or local levels, these significant movements for change were always led by actors deeply rooted in their own societies, suggesting that international actors, whether the international NGOs or other international organizations, may support national change strategies, but rarely will create sustainable policy reform if the movement for reform does not have deep national roots.

In practical terms, such lessons on how change happens have important implications. For donors, this approach means broadening their understanding both of how policy reform will happen and who will bring it about. While these cases involved broad-based coalitions, donor aid often goes either to state institutions alone, or, on the society side, to urban-based middle-class NGOs, which, while clearly important in these cases, by themselves lack strongly embedded civil society bases and may not be capable of mounting widespread coalitions for change (Robinson and Friedmann 2005). These cases suggest a different approach, one in which donors help create the opportunities for coalitions that link government reformers, media and technical expertise with national and local collective actors. Critical also is maintaining some democratic space – a policy environment where reform coalitions can operate freely and challenge governments on contentious issues.

For activists, the cases speak to the pivotal role played by nationally initiated and led campaigns for policy changes that protect rights and contribute to overcoming poverty as well as deepening democracy and amplifying citizen voice in the society in question. At the same time, campaigners need to be alert to opportunities offered by changes in democratic structures and spaces, while being flexible and capable

of adapting strategy to a constantly changing political context; create a web of alliances, including with state reformers and unanticipated bedfellows, but be prepared to back this with pressure if necessary; be strategic in the framing of the issues, depending on the audience and the national context; recognize that grassroots mobilization and inclusion take time but are important for sustainability of the gain; think about how international pressure opens and closes space for national and local action, without assuming that the best campaigns for national change will be internationally led or linked; and be committed for the long haul, not the quick fix.

Finally, similar lessons apply to those inside governments who seek to bring about policy reform and more responsive and accountable states. National policy change is vital for achieving more just and fair societies, as well as for inclusive services and inclusive democracies. Yet it will not emanate from the state alone, but from the synergistic effects produced by the actions of organized citizens. Just as political opportunities create possibilities for effective citizen mobilization, so too does organized citizen action create new possibilities for state reform.

Notes

1 We are grateful to all of the participants in the Participation and National Policy project for the stimulating discussions, case studies and commentaries from which many of the ideas of this chapter are drawn. We are also grateful to those who made helpful comments on the early drafts, including case study authors, Karen Brock, Jonathan Fox, Gary Hawes, Mark Robinson and Nick Benequista.

2 Indeed by some predictions, within a few years the majority of people living in poverty in the world will be in such 'middle-income countries', perhaps making this sample of countries even more significant.

3 This point is consistent with writers in the social movement field who take a 'political mediation' approach. As Amenta et al. (2005: 516–17) write: 'instead of asking whether movements are generally influential or whether certain aspects of movements are always influential, as others have done, we ask under what conditions are social movements likely to be influential. Our political mediation theory holds that political contexts mediate the influence of challengers' mobilization and strategies.'

4 While we will not go into extensive methodological discussion here, a great deal of work exists on the value of multi-country case study analysis to generate propositions and comparative insights. See, for instance, Yin (2003).

5 This meeting was co-sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. The case studies from Morocco and Turkey were added later in the project.

6 An in-depth review of the globalization and citizenship literature may be found in Benequista and Levine (2006).

7 See, for instance, other volumes in Zed's 'Claiming Citizenship' series, such as Cornwall and Schattan Coelho (2006) and Gaventa and Tandon (forthcoming), for discussions of engagement in local and global arenas, also pointing to the importance of the national arena.

8 For a further review of theories of social movements, and how social movements complement participatory strategies, see Thompson and Tapscott (2010).

9 Each of the case studies in this volume meets Tarrow's definition of contentious politics. Each involves collective interaction among actors, not just individualized voice and participation, and each involves broadly public processes of claim-making, not just those created by state-created consultation. To differing degrees, each also involves struggles over interests, though how these are presented, as we shall see, becomes part of the strategy of framing issues.

10 These factors were earlier articulated by McAdam et al. (1996). In the later book, McAdam et al. (2001: 15) also refer to a fourth element of the 'classic social movement agenda', which they call 'established repertoires of contention, how these repertoires evolve in response to changes in capitalism, state building and other less monumental processes'. While we do not use or address this concept directly, it resonates with our section on mobilizing strategies and framing processes.

11 For further elaboration of the idea of 'spaces' for citizen participation, see Cornwall and Schattan Coelho (2006), Cornwall (2002) and Gaventa (2006). For the purposes of this discussion, we will focus not so much on the conceptual distinctions across these ideas, but more on the conditions under which political spaces or opportunities for collective action on policy issues occur.

12 As in the larger social movement literature, the concept of political opportunity structure has generated a great deal of debate and critique, in part for placing too much emphasis on structure and not enough on agency and mobilization strategy (Goodwin and Jasper 2004).

13 Much of the debate has drawn from empirical examples in Western democracies. Tarrow himself recognizes the need 'to challenge our own political process models by confronting them with new and more demanding contexts ...' (2004: 45).

14 This echoes points made by political mediation theorists, who argue that 'an extension of democratic rights entails lowering the legal restrictions on institutional participation for the common citizens, including their ability to assemble and discuss issues' (Amenta et al. 2005: 520).

15 Commenting on Gamson's point, McAdam et al. (1996: 36) recognize that such a historically iterative approach is an important gap in social movement literature. 'Given that most movement scholars would probably say that they study movements because they view them as a powerful force for change in society, our collective failure to undertake any serious accounting of the effect of past movements on the various dimensions of political opportunities is as puzzling as it is lamentable.'

16 Social movement literature almost entirely ignores the importance

of international actors in creating political opportunities, a point also made by Thompson and Tapscott (2010) in their study of social movements in the South.

17 A similar point is made by McCammon et al. (2008: 1139) in a study of the movement in the United States for women to be allowed to sit on juries. Building also on the political mediation model, they argue: 'social movement organizations capable of achieving their goals quickly are not simply those that are well mobilized. Rather, those that carefully tailor their tactics and strategy to the environment in which they seek their reforms are the most efficacious.' They call this the process of 'strategic adaptation'.

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