Editor’s Note

This third edition of the Africa third-sector researchers network newsletter highlights exciting spaces for third sector and civil society scholarly and praxis work in a post-Covid world. Of particular note are the two ISTR conferences taking place in 2023 and 2024 respectively. The first of these is the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Conference in October of 2023. The second is the International Conference in July of 2024. Calls for abstracts and panels are now open.

This newsletter edition also highlights critical publications for those working in the area of giving and philanthropy, community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations and social movements. Selected publications include the work of African scholars but also of scholars working in the global South reflecting resonances across themes and challenges.

Conferences

The ISTR International Conference to be held on 16-19 July 2024 in Antwerp, Belgium is open for the submission of abstracts and panel proposals under the theme: Crisis After Crisis After …: What About the Third Sector? The deadline for abstracts and panel proposals is 30 October 2023 and papers are due by 7 June 2024: https://www.istr.org/page/ISTR2024

The ISTR Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference is taking place on 9-11 October 2023 in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The theme is: Civil Society in Times of Democratic Reconstruction and Climate Crisis. Abstracts that have been accepted require paper submissions by 15 September 2023: https://www.istr.org/page/2023LatAm

Shauna Mottiar is Associate Professor of Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban South Africa where she directs the Centre for Civil Society. She is an ISTR board member and serves on the ISTR Publications Committee.
The British International Studies Association (BISA) Conference will be held on 21-23 June 2023 in Glasgow, Scotland. The theme is Human Rights and the panels Through the Lens of Struggle; Emotions, Social Movements & Resistance and NGOs & Civil Society: Navigating a Hostile and Impoverished World take place on 21 June: https://indico.bisa.ac.uk/event/241/timetable/?view=standard

The Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Entrepreneurship (CAPSI) African Philanthropy Conference is taking place on 31 July – 1 August 2023 in Dakar, Senegal. The theme is Philanthropy at an Inflection Point. Abstracts are due by 9 June 2023: https://capsi.co.za/call-for-research-abstracts-philanthropy-at-an-inflection-point/

The annual Association for Research on Non-Profit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) Conference is taking place on 16-18 November 2023 in Orlando, Florida. The theme is Advancing the Public Good in an Era of Disinformation, Mistrust and Democratic Backsliding. Emerging Scholars Research Roundtable submissions is open until 15 August 2023: https://www.arnova.org/2023-theme/

Festivals

The London School of Economics (LSE) People & Change Festival features a session entitled Can People Change the World? Activists, Social Movements, and Utopian Futures on 17 June 2023: https://www.lse.ac.uk/Events/LSE-Festival/2023/events/20230617/activism

The International Social Change Film Festival (ChangeFest) is taking place from 30 September – 12 November 2023. The deadline for submissions is 15 June 2023: https://filmfreeway.com/SocialChangeFilmFestival

Selected Books, Journal Articles and Working Papers


ISTR has also issued a new Working Paper Features: Call for Submissions: https://www.istr.org/page/WPFeatures

Deadline: 5 August, 2023

The newly created ISTR Working Paper Features is a designed publication opportunity for ISTR members, particularly advanced stage PhD students, early career academics, and pracademics, to present fresh-from-the-field works, innovative thought pieces, theoretical reviews, and more; and, to use this space as an important steppingstone for further development of scholarship and research collaboration. Moreover, the ISTR Publication Committee, acting as the interim editors of this Series, would like to invite all members to consider this space to showcase work-in-progress with grounded observations and reflections.
**Protest in South Africa: Rejection, Reassertion, Reclamation**

explores the underpinnings of protest in contemporary South Africa and both its short-term causes and structural drivers. Contributors to the volume provide an overview of the complexity of protest action, the diversity of protest spaces and actors, and the responses to protest from both citizens and state.

Heidi Brooks, Rekgotsofetse Chikane and Shauna Mottiar. Mistra: 2023

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**The Participation Paradox: Between Bottom-Up and Top-Down Development in South Africa**

debunks the conventional belief that grassroots democracy is always a panacea for the poor and disenfranchised. The last two decades have ushered in what has become known as a “Participatory Revolution,” with authorities called into communities to listen to ordinary people through “open” forums for engagement. The Participation Paradox argues that amplifying the voices of the poor and dispossessed is often a quick fix incapable of delivering lasting change.


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opens novel avenues of knowledge in the study of African philanthropy and development, this incisive book provides a critical assessment of philanthropic responses during crisis and non-crisis periods. It explores how collaboration between multilateral institutions and philanthropic organisations during a crisis can be harnessed and replicated to address the continent’s developmental challenges during non-crisis periods. Combining empirical insights with cutting edge theory, this forward-thinking book investigates the activities of high-net worth individuals, foundations, and corporate actors working with governments to create shared value. Through individual case studies and comparative analyses across diverse sectors and geographies, chapters demonstrate how shared value is crucial to building resilience in societies through philanthropy. The book ultimately makes a call for deeper and more meaningful forms of collaboration among the key actors in society: governments, the private sector, high-net worth individuals, and multilateral institutions.

Immigrant Volunteering: A Form of Citizenship from Below

Maurizio Ambrosini & Maurizio Artero

Abstract

Immigrant volunteering is a disputed topic. For some scholars, an important instrument for the social integration of immigrants, while others frame immigrant volunteerism as a regime of 'ethical citizenship' centred around the paradigms of 'civic integration' and 'deservingness'. Our research collected the experiences of hundreds of migrant volunteers in Italy (658 questionnaires plus 89 in-depth interviews) to address three research questions in particular: immigrant volunteers' levels of social inclusion, their reasons for volunteering, and the links between volunteering and other forms of social and political participation. Our findings show that volunteering is more dependent on social integration than on social marginality, represents a way to achieve a higher level of social integration, and can be framed as a way to perform active citizenship and anti-xenophobic claims. In particular, volunteering allows immigrant to present themselves as active subjects, oppose demeaning stereotypes, and express political commitment. Ultimately, this substantiates a form of citizenship ‘from below’ that re-writes the script of citizenship and enriches it with new ideas of entitlements and belongings.

A Changing Third Sector Research Landscape—Progress or Pitfall?

Mirae Kim & Paloma Raggo

Abstract

The last two decades have seen rapid advancements in data processing, collection, and analysis. While these have offered great opportunities for finding answers to enduring questions, the rise of new technologies for research purposes has raised the question of data neutrality, privacy, and equity. Expansions in data categorization, cleaning, and analysis require a broader understanding of the data collection process and its increased technification also increases the access gap to information. This introductory article focuses on the implications of new techniques and technologies to conduct research on the third sector and the nuances around data representation, equity, and justice in third-sector research. We also aim to identify new opportunities that the digitalization of the third sector...
has opened for nonprofit research, highlighting key methodological and ethical implications for future studies. We conclude by pushing third sector researchers to have more open discussions about issues of equity, inclusion, and representation in the ways we collect and analyze data.

Indigenous Peoples and Third Sector Research: Indigenous Data Sovereignty as a Framework to Improve Research Practices

Raymond Foxworth & Cheryl Ellenwood

Abstract

Indigenous communities have historically been some of the most researched communities around the globe. But much of this research has caused great harm to Indigenous peoples. In response to these harmful and abusive research practices, Indigenous leaders and scholars have envisioned new research principles, practices, methodologies, and policies that center Indigenous peoples, values, worldviews, governance and knowledge systems: Indigenous data sovereignty. This article examines the current state of third sector research relating to Indigenous peoples. We find that Indigenous communities are largely absent from third sector research and there are significant issues with how third sector research conceptualizes Indigenous peoples. We introduce Indigenous data sovereignty as a demand and framework of Indigenous communities aimed at supporting more equitable research practices and pathways to advance research with and for—and not on—Indigenous communities.

What Counts? How to use Different Sources of NGO Data

Elizabeth A. Bloodgood, Sarah S. Stroup & Wendy H. Wong

Abstract

The quantitative data sources for NGO scholars are increasing, introducing new possibilities for our understanding of the global NGO population. The most frequently used data sources tend to privilege larger NGOs located in more politically open countries. We highlight two developments. First, we introduce a new Global Nonprofit Registry of Data Sources (GRNDS) dataset. GRNDS documents the information that governments collect and release to reveal variations in the data environment. Second, new sources of information from social media and donation platforms avoid the filtering and curation of reports from nonprofit regulators. These include Twitter, Google Trends, and new data from #GivingTuesday. Together, this richer information on cross-national variation in reporting and quickly available digital data should help research build a richer picture of the global NGO sector.
How do civil society organizations influence climate change politics? Evidence from India, Indonesia, and Finland

Eeva Luhtakallio, Tuomas Ylä-Anttila & Anu Lounela

Published online: 03 Feb 2023

ABSTRACT

In this article, the efforts of civil society organizations to influence climate change policymaking in three countries with very different traditions of democratic decision making are compared: in a newly developed democracy (Indonesia), in an established democracy in the Global South (India), and in an established democracy in the Global North with an exceptionally strong civil society (Finland). The empirical material consists of 57 in-depth interviews with Civil Society Organization (CSO) representatives. The following three arguments about CSO influence in climate change politics are made: (1) the nation-state is an important avenue of influence for most CSOs, alongside global institutions; (2) CSOs influence states through specific contact points, rather than by challenging the state as a uniform entity; and (3) CSO actors' perception of influence in climate politics may be stronger where state capacity is weaker, rather than where civil society itself is strong.

More tangible and less theoretical: Understandings and experiences of neighbourhood-led Mutual Aid groups during the COVID-19 pandemic

Catherine El Zerbi, Naomi Hartopp, Amy Ramsay & Sally Marlow

Published online: 15 Jan 2023

ABSTRACT

This exploratory study sought to understand the role of Mutual Aid groups during the Covid-19 crisis. Group members were approached through convenience sampling across London and Leicester. Fifteen interviews took place from June to August 2020. Data were analysed using Thematic Analysis. Groups were based on solidarity not charity. Most were delimited by geographic ward and provided rapid support to support neighbours with urgent material and health needs, primarily food support, collecting medical prescriptions and providing telephone companionship. While many groups successfully collaborated with community projects, relationships with local authorities were often difficult, though not always. Local leaders and policymakers should seek to establish effective collaborations between Covid-19 Mutual Aid groups and local authorities to ensure essential material and health needs at a neighbourhood level are identified and met.
CONSTRUCTING RELATIONAL AND VERIFIABLE PROTEST EVENT DATA: FOUR CHALLENGES AND SOME SOLUTIONS

Pamela Oliver; Alex Hanna; Chaeyoon Lim


Abstract
We call for a relational approach to constructing protest event data from news sources to provide tools for detecting and correcting errors and for capturing the relations among events and between events and the texts describing them. We address two problems with most protest event datasets: (1) inconsistencies and errors in identifying events and (2) disconnect between data structures and what is known about how protests and media accounts of protests are produced. Relational data structures can capture the theoretically important structuring of events into campaigns and episodes and media attention cascades and cycles. Relational data structures support richer theorizing about the interplay of protests and their representations in news media discourses. We present preliminary illustrative data about Black protests from these new procedures to demonstrate the value of this approach.

MECHANISMS OF COALITION FORMATION: VENUE SHIFTING IN THE ABORTION RIGHTS MOVEMENT BEFORE ROE V. WADE

Drew Halfmann


Research suggests that coalitions between social movement organizations (SMOs) are more likely under conditions of perceived political opportunity. But what are the mechanisms of this effect? Extant research suggests resource-need, collective-benefit, and emotional mechanisms. Here, I theorize a venue-shifting mechanism. When an SMO switches to a new political venue to pursue a perceived political opportunity, it lacks the specific resources necessary for success in that venue and seeks them from another SMO. Drawing on primary and secondary historical data, the article demonstrates this mechanism in the coalition behavior of the National Association for Repeal of Abortion Laws (NARAL) before the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that legalized early abortion on request in the United States.
Welcome to the 2023 State of Civil Society Report from CIVICUS, the global civil society alliance. This year's report, the 12th in our annually published series, looks back on 2022 to explore trends in civil society action, at every level and in every arena, from struggles for democracy, inclusion and climate justice to demands for global governance reform.

About the Newsletter

The Africa Third-Sector Researchers Network Newsletter is an initiative of the International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR). The third edition is hosted by the Centre for Civil Society, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.