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## “Nadie es Profeta en su Tierra”: *Community, Civil Society, and Intervening Institutions in Rural Chile*

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In this article we examine community level civil society in Chiloé, Chile. We look at the interface between community and the wider systemic environment in the community development process. Issues such as the paradox of community solidarity, culture of dependence, obstacles to grass-roots participation, and leadership are examined in the community context. These issues are set in relief against a systemic environment comprised of traditional municipal politics and modernist ‘intervening’ agencies of the state. We refer to the case of one organization, ProRural, to examine the successes and failures of an interventionist strategy in Chiloé. Our central argument is that structural powerlessness, and dependent relations on the state, are reproduced through traditional cultural patterns in small community settings. These obstacles can be overcome through the development of leadership capacity and small project successes which in time stimulate new cultural patterns. The role of intervening organizations in this process is vital. But such organizations have to adopt a long-term, capacity-building strategy based on flexible and responsive relationships with their constituencies.

**Key words:** civil society, community development, intervening institutions, Chile

### Introduction

There are many examples of communities and regions around the world that have found niches in the global economy (see Burkett 2001; Ettlenger 1999; Kayatekin and Ruccio 1998; McMichael 1996). Some authors emphasize the importance of social capital as a vital dimension of healthy

communities (see Allen 2001; Hibbitt et al 2001). Others stress the role of intervening agencies and institutions, which facilitate linkages with the systemic political environment (see Cohen 2001). In this article we examine civil society at the community level and its relationship to the wider systemic political environment. What are the correlates of successful community development? We focus on communities in the archipelago of Chiloé in southern Chile and use the case of one inter-governmental, community development agency, ProRural, to assess the role of intervening institutions in the process.

Our central argument is that the longstanding powerlessness common to isolated rural communities is a complicated problem that lacks quick fixes. Traditional dependence on outside agencies is reproduced through local cultural patterns such as fatalism, passivity, and an anti-leadership mentality rooted in an egalitarian ethic. Internal divisions, conflict, and factionalism tend to reflect the local face of clientelism. These patterns in effect disable local civic institutions and may turn these institutions into local agencies of traditional outside power interests. This may appear like an intractable vicious circle. However, our case study shows that it can be reversed when communities develop ‘transformational’ leadership, small successes that build trust and horizontal social capital, and encounter systemic intervention strategies that are focused on long-term, leadership capacity-building as much as short-term project funding.

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## The Community Context

The role of social capital and civil society is widely heralded as the central feature behind community resilience (see Chenoweth and Stehlik 2001; Minerbi 2001). Community "spaces" provide an opportunity for interaction, the emergence of social networks, and a shared sense of identity (see also Bolland and McCallum 2002; Grant 2001; Joseph 2001; Lyons et al 2001; Wiesenfeld and Giuliani 2002). There is a well-established connection between sociability, communality, and collective agency. Social capital is the concept used to capture this relationship and the benefits that accrue to participants in collective activities (see Coleman 1988; cf. Bridger and Luloff 2001).

There are important links between social capital and civil society that are correlated with community cohesion. Civil society acts to articulate and mold the amorphous social ties and networks that constitute community-based social capital for functional and productive purposes. It is molded and shaped to produce concrete outcomes and benefits for the participants individually, organization as a whole, and the community at large. In the very act of participation people cooperate and develop a density of acquaintance, which in turn builds trust. Trust then facilitates altruistic action and lowers transaction and opportunity costs for individuals and the organization itself. Social capital is not only channeled but also enhanced (see Barrett 2001; Putnam 1993). For it to be dynamic, networks need to emerge between members of organizations and among organizations (see Sharp 2001). It is the synergies that stem from such organizational networks that make for robust and resilient communities.

Social capital may not be the panacea for all a community's problems. Rural communities are rarely homogeneous, cohesive, or egalitarian. Social capital reflects these complexities as it may be rooted in bounded networks based on friendship, kinship, ethnicity, power, political attachments, religion, sports, etc. (see Dyreson 2001; Foley et al 2001; Silverman 2001; Sobels et al, 2001). In their study of power networks in a Bolivian town, Bran et al (2001) identify social and political networks that rely on social capital and that influence the manner and outcome of social development projects. Scholars have drawn a distinction between horizontal and hierarchical social capital. The former is based on reciprocity, trust, and equality, while the latter is based on obligation, deference, and inequality (see Flora 1998; Schulman and Anderson 1999).

But the connection between civil society and cohesion is not unproblematic either. Jennifer Glanville (2002) discovers that organizational memberships are not necessarily a good indicator of social capital. Involvement in organizations does not always build trust. She finds some organizations such as sports clubs are negatively associated with trust. Communities have histories. The legacy of conflict between families in rural communities can be an impediment to cohesive organization-building. Flora et al (1992) argue that "role

homogeneity" may militate against open and frank conflict resolution strategies (see also Baum 1997). Consequently a civil structure may emerge characterized by exclusionary organizations that exacerbate factional divisions and entrench conflict. In this sense, civil society can reflect the vertical cleavages in a community and become an active conduit in the accumulation of hierarchical social capital.

The really interesting community development question then is how civil society can act to reverse such problems. A healthy civil society presumes grass-roots participation and effective leadership. What are the factors that lead to high levels of popular involvement in civic organization? Chinman and Wandersman (1999) argue that the benefits of participation need to outweigh the costs of contributing time and energy after the first year. Leaders can enhance participation and organizational viability through "incentive cost management." Further, organizations should provide "selective incentives," which make the rewards that members gain contingent upon participation. Reitsma-Street, Maczewski and Neysmith (2000) argue that engaging in relationships, accomplishing tasks, and experiencing "the power to decide" are positively correlated with high levels of participation, while assignment to meaningless tasks, lack of information or consultation, and manipulation lead to decreased involvement.

Purdue (2001) focuses on the issue of leadership. The effectiveness of organizations and their ability to build trust and facilitate the accumulation of horizontal social capital will depend on the quality of leadership they have. In the modern age this is a major obstacle for isolated traditional communities. Purdue says that effective leaders have to be "transformational," which means they have to be entrepreneurial and have the ability to build outside partnerships in order to advance their communities. External links are vital to counter the power of unsympathetic or oppositional political administrations (see Appadurai 2001; Beall 2001). Sharp (2001) observes that good leadership involves an "experiential" component, namely, individuals with multi-organizational involvement and membership that is beneficial to building community networks, mobilizing resources for projects, and garnering support. He refers to these people as "generalized leaders". Duncan's (2001) study of civil society in highly stratified and poor communities of Appalachia and the Mississippi Delta stresses that a leadership vacuum can stem from the "brain drain" such communities experience when the young, educated, and mobile leave. She argues that community resilience depends on the return of these individuals to their communities to provide vision and leadership. Fritz (2002) states that community efforts often depend on the leadership that newcomers bring to facilitate relationships that overcome traditional obstacles to cohesion and xenophobia (see Blanchet 2001; Chenoweth and Stehlik 2001). The central role that neutral "communicative spaces" play in the transformative process cannot be overstated (see Allen 2001; Aronoff 1993; Hibbitt et al 2001; VanderPlaats, 1998).

## The Systemic Context

Communities, even the most isolated ones, do not function in a vacuum. The systemic political context is a vital and increasingly important element in the community development equation. It is unclear what effect modernization has on horizontal social capital (see Babacan and Gopalkrishnan 2001; Cohen 2001; Flora 1998). In the Chilean context, Lechner (2002) argues that traditional social capital based on religion and the state has become quite "fragile" in the face of modernization. He cites a rise in individualism due to the corrosive impact of modern culture, such as through mass media, fads and fashions, and consumption styles. He feels that personal identities are changing in ways that erode cooperation and cohesion. Alternately, traditional social capital may intensify or find new reasons to cooperate as a result of modernization. In their study of Mapuche migrants to Santiago, Swearingen and Orellana-Rojas (2000) argue that a reinvigorated Mapuche identity has emerged through their struggles with capital and the state over communal space. Civil society has become a realm within which the community is articulating its aspirations (Campbell and McLean 2002).

Fisher and Shragge (2000) and Jennings (2001) argue that the "external" environment within which community organizations function has profoundly changed as a result of globalization and neoliberal policies such as downsizing, deregulation, and decentralization (see Atkinson 1995; Bienen et al 1990; Kearns and Joseph 1997; Read 2000). Oliver Costilla (2000) draws our attention to the "interventionist crisis" of the state under neo-liberalism. The globalization of capital, he argues, has accelerated the "redemocratization" of the Latin American state at the same time it has introduced new constraints. The impact has been that the responsibilities of local governments and organizations have increased while resources have shrunk. In the Chilean context, Pont-Lezica (1997) argues that if the potential benefits of decentralization are to be realized, the political parties that control the state apparatus have to become more responsive to grass-roots organizations.

Schild (2000) examines the role of the state as a mediator in the "neo-liberal modernization" of Chilean civil society. She argues that the hidden text behind various state "poverty reduction" programs is to develop "market citizenship," namely, to condition the populace for greater participation in a globalized economy. Pont-Lezica (1997) similarly argues that state decentralization has accelerated a change in the delivery of services from traditional patronage politics to "pure economic goods." He argues that it is necessary to be sensitive to the role that human agency, be it professionals, bureaucrats or community leaders, play in eventual outcomes. First, state programs are administered by many different "agents," i.e., individuals located in various levels of government with jurisdictions, mandates, and interests that do not necessarily complement each other. Second, the recipient communities themselves actively shape and condition the manner in which programs are implemented on the ground.

Cohen's (2001) study of social capital in poor inner city neighborhoods also highlights the pivotal role that outside "intervening institutions" play in coalescing and enhancing an otherwise weak or non-existent social capital. Chaskin's (2001) analysis of community capacity-building essentially arrives at the same conclusion. He argues that "broker" organizations are critical to forge ties among community organizations and between communities. In the social welfare and health domains, Krause (2002) examines the modern history of community intervention strategies in Chile. Since the re-democratization of the state, emphasis has shifted from a "rupturist" to an "institutionalized" approach where the state is a central actor in the provision of development and social programs. Interventionist organizations are able to foster inter-community ties in ways that municipal administrations cannot. Local development organizations are successful because they build networks and broker linkages between communities, companies, foundations, and state agencies (see also Carrion 2001; Green, et al 2002; Little 2001; Warner 2001; Wint 2002).

Kline, Dolgon and Dresser (2000) offer second thoughts on such collaborations. They refer to the "cultural hierarchies of status and power" that plague even the most enlightened and well-intentioned community interventionist efforts. Discourse, knowledge, contacts and so forth privilege outsiders over locals. State officials and the media gravitate to the educated and articulate. Knowledge and experience of even the most mundane organizational details (rules of order, minutes, treasury, mail, and agenda preparation) can reproduce power asymmetries. Chambers (1983) treats this as one of an entire cluster of "urban biases" which plague the development process (Gaffin 1997; VanderPlaat and Barrett, in press).

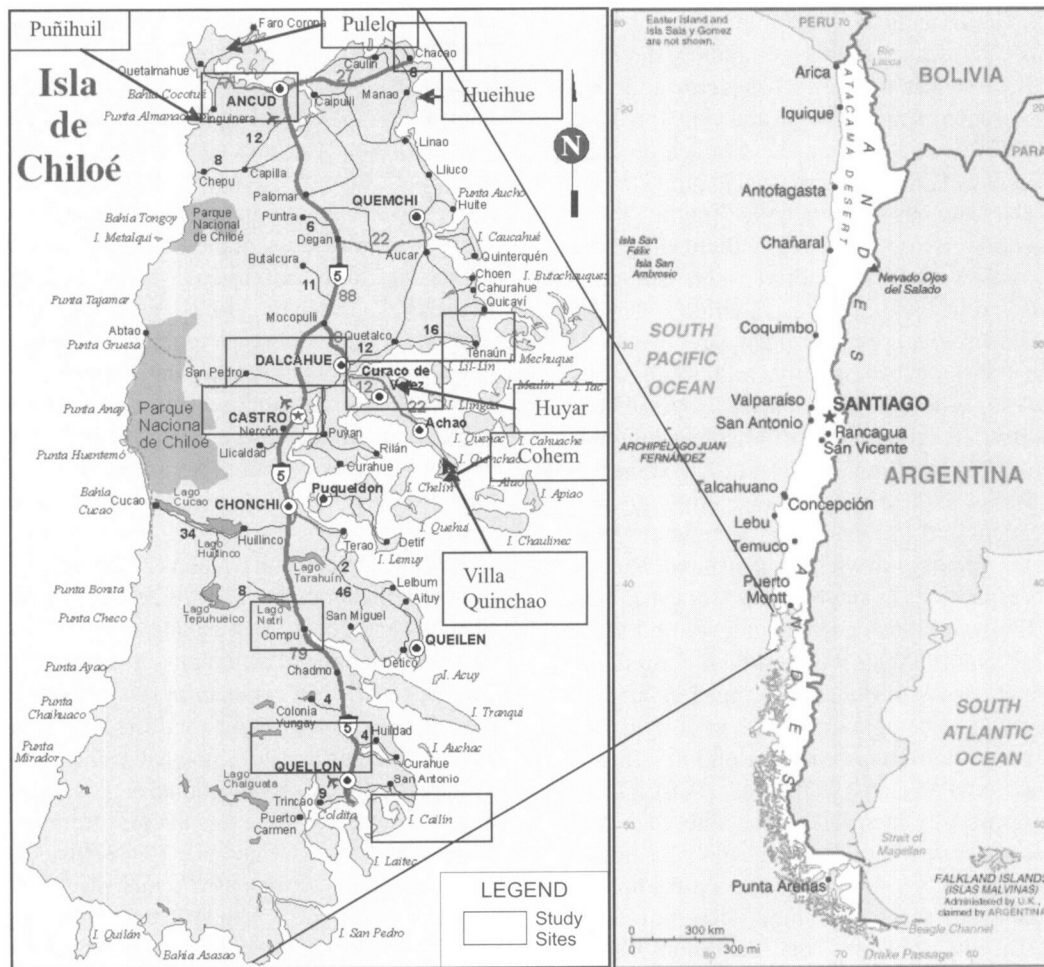
In addition to the political agendas that underlie interventionist strategies, there is also the reality of fiscal austerity measures that typify the neo-liberal state. At the agency level this manifests itself with a focus on short-term results. It is not clear at all whether interventionist agencies can pursue long-term capacity-building in any meaningful way, nor whether they have the flexibility and autonomy, as organizations, to be true "learning organizations": reflexive, evaluative, and responsive.

In the material that follows we explore a number of substantive issues about community and interventionist strategies with reference to communities on the island of Chiloé. What is the nature of social solidarity and civil society in these communities? What kind of leadership capacity do communities need to respond effectively to both the opportunities and the threats that modernization brings? What role does the systemic environment play in stimulating the development of grass roots organizations? What is needed to make intervening institutions effective vehicles for change?

## Methodology

This paper is the outcome of a collaborative effort between two Canadian scholars and two Chilean community

Figure 1. Isla de Chiloé



Source: Adapted from [www.chiloe.cl](http://www.chiloe.cl) and [www.ancki.com](http://www.ancki.com)

development consultants. The research design is fundamentally qualitative and in-depth interview focused. We relied heavily on the 10 years of participatory experience that our Chilean collaborators brought to the study in the selection of communities in which to do our work. Our Chilean partners were also instrumental in our choice of key informants, organizations, and individuals with whom to speak.

Fourteen communities on Isla Grande, Chiloé were visited on several occasions between December 2000 and March 2003. We selected communities to provide a representative cross-section of community life in Chiloé in a number of respects: organizational culture and civil society, ethnicity, degree of economic development, physical infrastructure such as roads or electricity, access to modern amenities such as hospitals, schools or shops, and degree of physical isolation. While Ancud and Castro are small urban centers with populations approaching 40,000; Dalcahue and Quellón are small towns with populations under 20,000. Cailín, Cohem, Campu, Curaco de Vélez, Hueihue, Bahía Huiyar, Pulelo,

Puñihuil, Tenaún, and Villa Quinchao were communities with populations at or below 3,500.

We gathered information from a cross-section of groups in the communities mentioned. The focus of the research design was to capture the experiences that members of the community, government officials, and community development professionals had with community development. We conducted 15 face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with community members and leaders; eight focus group interviews with women's organizations, indigenous groups, fish processing workers, and farmers; and a further 16 face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with key informants such as community development professionals, trade union leaders, municipal and provincial government officials, and NGO representatives. Interviews varied in length from 30 minutes to three hours. Where possible interviews were tape recorded. In other circumstances we relied upon hand written notes taken by the authors. To facilitate corroboration of observations, there were never less than two interviewers

present at any interview. Interview transcripts and notes were exchanged and analyzed manually by all members of the team according to a process of crystallizing common themes and patterns.

### **Community Context: The Archipelago of Chiloé**

The archipelago of Chiloé is a province in the X Region of Los Lagos. Chiloé is made up of the Isla Grande and more than thirty smaller islands. The population of Chiloé is 140,000, of which just over fifty percent is rural. Reflecting the marginalized nature of the rural communities, twenty-three percent of the population lives in relative poverty. Chiloé is divided into ten municipalities, which represent a great diversity in terms of rural conditions, production structure, levels of development, and social and economic integration. Traditional economic activity is based on renewable natural resource exploitation, agriculture, fishing, forestry, and more recently tourism.

Chiloé has long been considered a quaint, traditional backwater of Chile with a unique culture that stems from a centuries old mix of indigenous and Spanish cultures, architecture, dialect, and economic system based on subsistence and barter. Chiloé is characterized by a minifundia land holding system: "seventy percent of the population has five or six hectares of land" (Key informant). Subsistence-based, pluri-active households have existed for generations. We were told, "here in Chiloé extreme poverty does not exist." Potatoes, wheat, oats, and garlic are common crops. Fruit trees such as apples, pears, and cherries are also important household assets. Households commonly raise cows, pigs, sheep, goats, turkeys and chickens, geese and ducks, while oxen and horses are work animals. Flour, chicha (alcohol made with apples), and weaving are the main home products. Communal lands are also important for household subsistence activities. Forests are a source of firewood and medicinal plants; and shorelines are used for gathering shellfish and algae.

Modernization came to Chiloé with the explosion of salmon farming over the past twenty years. Chile has become the second largest exporter of farmed salmon in the world (APSTC 2000; Fundación Terram 2000; Phyne and Mansilla 2003). Paved roads, electricity, retail stores, government services, and modern consumer credit have accompanied this expansion. Where individuals and households have been seduced by the lure of regular income from the salmon industry (see Barrett, Caniggia and Read 2002) stories abound of the risks of giving up the traditional way of life. While we found some evidence of this 'deseampenización' effect, the traditional Chilota household however is still the norm.

### **The Paradox of Community**

The population of the rural communities in Chiloé tends to be very stable as families have lived for generations in the same area. Many of our respondents remarked that their

families had lived in their communities since the 1700s. Community activities reflect high levels of sociability, density of acquaintantship, and familiarity (see Freudenburg 1986). Mutual obligation and reciprocity are lingering community norms, which contribute to a strong sense of solidarity. Chilota communities are perceived to be cohesive, neighbors are friendly, and people look out for one another. In Villa Quinchao our respondents observed that: "[everyone] helps each other out with favors, gifts or work. If someone is sick or dies, they all help the family. This form of community has been the same for generations." We were told time and again that solidarity in Chiloé is especially notable on special occasions or in response to tragedy. In one community we were given the following account about two houses that burned down: "Everybody helped out immediately and they ended up with houses far nicer than anybody else!" The head of the Junta de Vecinos in Curaco de Vélez remarked that "Chiloé is characterized by solidarity. Even though everyone may fight, if something happens, everyone helps. If somebody dies everyone will show up with money, food, whatever. A problem brings everybody together."

But the issue of solidarity is a complex one. "Pueblo chico, infierno grande" [small town, large hell] is the local Chilota expression for this paradox. Solidarity coexists with mistrust and suspicion, egalitarianism with divisions and factionalism (see Greiner et al 2004). These contradictions represent the challenges local communities have to overcome to build grass-roots organizations.

As much as our respondents spoke about solidarity they remarked as frequently about conflict and mistrust. We were told of jealousy over land, wood, animals, and money. Suspicions over robberies that are never solved jeopardize relationships for years. Suspicion has a paralyzing effect in rural communities that is not common in urban settings where people can function without encountering each other frequently. One respondent explained this contrast as follows:

In Chiloé we are talking about people who are close to each other (relatives, neighbors). Whereas in the cities your friends are not going to rob you – rather it tends to be strangers – here in rural areas a stranger is not going to rob somebody – rather it is friends or family. It is like family violence or sexual abuse that tends to occur among people who know each other.

Our respondents consider members of communities to be egalitarian. Individuals we spoke with stated that there is very little that differentiates one household from another in their villages. When asked what types of differences they perceive between people in their communities a common reply was: "There are no differences, rather we are all on the same level, with all the same salary." In the community of Villa Quinchao women in a focus group responded: "...we are all equal, peasants working the land, all Catholics. Education levels are the same, previously most completed three years in school, but now our children tend to complete eight years."

Yet we did find evidence of long-standing divisions in some communities. In Puñihuil for example, a substantial divide separates a group of recently settled fishers from long resident farmer-fishers. The former are far more dependent on the fishery for their livelihoods and have a lower standard of living. The latter only fish part-time and access more income-generating opportunities by virtue of their land ownership. The division between the two groups manifests itself in neighborhood segregation and conflict in the civic arena. In the community of Huyar a division exists between the Huyar Alto (hillside) and Huyar Bajo (beach) districts. Over time each district has defined its own distinctive interests. Huyar Bajo is the beach zone and consists of poor fishers while Huyar Alto has a mixed fisher-farmer economy. But a third group exists as well – Huyar Medio. These are families with a commercial orientation who have organized to collect and market seaweed. The latter are the wealthiest group. Conflict has characterized the community for years, and it has recently spilled over into attempts at productive organization.

### Civil Society in Chiloé

On the surface civil society in rural Chiloé seems alive and well. Our respondents regaled us with examples of organizations active in their communities such as religious groups, neighborhood associations, father's and mother's centers, senior's groups, sports groups, and trade unions. In addition there are a variety of organizations with more productive, income-generating mandates such as artisanal aquaculturists, artisan fishers, tourist operators, forestry co-operatives, and indigenous organizations. The Junta de Vecinos have been in existence for at least fifty years in most localities. However, organizational diversity belies a high level of fragmentation.

To a large extent organizational fragmentation reflects the legal realities of associational formation in Chile. For example, to become a legal productive organization, that organization must have at least fifteen registered members. One leader remarked: "All organizations have their legal personality and autonomy so they can present their own projects." Membership on paper is not necessarily a good index of community participation in this context.

Many times what happens is a single family signs up, the mother, father and kids – so within the number of individuals in an organization, there may actually be only a couple or a few families represented. There are even cases with a single family – an organization made up of a single family.

While there is substantial overlap between the members of sindicatos, football clubs, and Junta de Vecinos, the reality is that there is very little inter-organizational synergy. The most common answer to our question of why there are not more joint initiatives was: "it's a good idea, we should have relations with them but nobody knows how." The fragmentation can reflect exclusion. For example we were

told of an aerobics class started in a community by the local Junta de Vecinos. Women from an artisanal sindicato in the same community told us they were made to feel unwelcome when they went to the class. This prompted the quip: "So the women from the Junta de Vecinos are thin and look good and we don't!"

There are important gender divisions between organizations. Women traditionally are involved in social organizations while men almost exclusively run fisher organizations. However, women have found that participation in productive organizations is difficult due to men's attitudes about their 'appropriate' role in the household and community. One erstwhile female organizer from Puñihuil lamented:

[I] want to form a women's group of the wives of the fishermen – a productive organization involved in crafts, tourism, fogon [a tourist center with fire-pit oven for making and serving a traditional curanto-style meal]. But the women depend on the opinion of their husbands and so [I] cannot convince them.

But fragmentation of civil society is not the only problem rural communities in Chiloé face. We heard various reasons from community members, participants in organizations, leaders and community development professionals for the weaknesses of civil society in Chiloé. Communalism is episodic and traditions of participation in permanent organizations are weak. This lack of participation is fueled by suspicion and mistrust. One community member felt that the biggest problems organizations face in her community are "problems with trust."

At the same time conflicts between individuals and families often carry over into the organizational meetings. The development workers we interviewed observed that communication within communities is deficient. Rural Chilotes "lack a system of conversation to resolve problems and conflict. They cannot differentiate between their opinions and feelings as individuals and outside forces." One community leader remarked: "Yes solidarity exists. In these small communities there is always help. Within organizations there is a lot of conflict, but among neighbors there isn't.... The most important thing is what is best for the [organization]. People have to learn to live with their personal differences."

Discourse can be emotionally charged: "In the end the relationships are personal and not institutional; they are not really rational relations." Participants with longstanding grievances that have not been resolved cannot separate their personal animosities from issues of relevance to the organization. One development professional had this take on the problem:

The campesino world is very 'reduced' as there is very little to occupy oneself with. When one sees a neighbor they can guess what they are doing. Therefore it is easy for campesinos to draw conclusions with small signals. This works to some extent within the family but falls apart outside the family unit, it does not function. There is a need for another type of communication.

Another development professional spoke of a "fear of words" in this context. "In the countryside," he said, "many times people say nothing, so others will not get mad at them." A leader of a Junta de Vecinos remarked:

In the community family relations are most notable. In general if there is some conflict in a meeting and there are a number of family members present, people will keep quiet so as not to be in conflict with family and friends. What is needed is more division between family relationships (and friends) and the relations within an organization.

What this means is that community leaders often face a dilemma between weak levels of participation and open conflict. Organizations may come to represent only one faction or possibly even one family. Alternately, discussions in meetings can be muted, disingenuous, or characterized by personalized arguments that can quickly degenerate into conflict. A community leader from an organization with a history of conflict remarked: "The majority have confidence [in new initiatives] but those who are in conflict are always the same ones. The people against [the initiatives] do not have their own ideas. They don't know what's good or what's bad."

A municipal official remarked that "it is usually the same people attending meetings and the same people in different organizations." A leader of one Junta de Vecinos we interviewed eloquently framed the participation problem as one of a difference in motivation between social and productive organizations:

Today the times are changing. We are living in a world of competition where everything is translated into money. As a result when people are called to participate for a reason that is not rentable [no financial gain] there is no motivation. But from a productive point-of-view, yes, people participate. From a social point-of-view, no.

In the context of people's daily struggle to make ends meet, an 'opportunistic' bias to participation is understandable. Local people are impatient to see results before they commit their time and effort to a project. A community organizer in Tenaún stated frankly: "[p]eople want to see things done, finished. If there are not immediate results they lose confidence in the organization." Even in the case of productive organizations, often the pay-offs have to be in the immediate future to ensure participation.

However, a short-term results orientation, without adequate attention to leadership capacity-building, is fraught with pitfalls. A widespread view among development professionals and community leaders appears to be that simply throwing money at community projects only makes existing problems worse. For example, "...[in some communities] they [are only] recently beginning to work with money, therefore they had another logic, a non-modern one. [Project funding demands] an economic logic where it did not previously exist." A community leader went on to say that money issues are a source of conflict within organizations: "The monies come easily and nobody knows how to handle the money.... It is

difficult to work in groups because of human nature where there is money involved."

A commonly held view is that leaders in organizations help themselves to organization funds. Leaders are not well trained and there is often suspicion of embezzlement. "If your account suddenly has three to five million pesos the temptation to steal is very high and in many communities this has happened." An incident was related to us as follows:

In organizations the disappearance of individuals with money happens relatively frequently. Therefore nobody wants to be responsible for the funds of an organization. For example in one organization a person had money for a FOSIS project [approximately three million pesos] and the money disappeared. His story was that he was robbed by gypsies, however there are no gypsies in Chilocé.

The "fear of words" mentioned above is another dimension of the leadership problem. It paralyzes grass-roots initiatives. Echoing the Biblical verse, the local saying is that "nadie es profeta en su tierra" [nobody is a prophet in their own land]. Leaders become lightning rods for gossip, suspicion, and criticism. Many leaders can be thought of as self-serving. In one instance, a group's leader donated land for a community tourism project, a fogon, adjacent to her house in which she also had a bed-and-breakfast business. Rumors were rampant in the community that she was simply given the money through the organization for her own business. A leader from another organization in the same community stated: "I don't like the way the fogon project got the money. In this organization the president, treasurer and representative are all the same person, which doesn't look good in terms of accounting for the money."

Leadership training is rare. One community member lamented: "people do not know how to organize. I myself would like to have training." Support for grass-roots leadership is lacking. A Junta de Vecinos leader from Curaco de Vélez remarked:

The leaders are the ones who have to leave their families and participate voluntarily. Many times there is pressure from the husband of a woman who is a leader; many times their work is not valued; it is criticized or they have to use money from their own pockets. As a result there is very little support for leaders.

Leadership is vital if organizations are going to bridge the divisions that fracture these communities. Communication and conflict resolution skills are the necessary elements in organizational capacity-building efforts.

In general a small number of individuals lead most of the community organizations. These individuals may be newcomers to the community who are relatively immune to the norms local face. The role of newcomers is an interesting one, which resembles many features of the classical "marginal person" status. However newcomers bring outside experience, new ideas, and a fresh perspective to their communities. One development professional argued that their

outlook and world view, a "modern rationality," provide a significant break with the traditional communication patterns that handicap organizational development in Chiloé. A leader of a Junta de Vecinos reiterated this viewpoint: "New initiatives are likely to come from leaders with national and international knowledge. Those who know how the world is advancing... leaders with interaction with other communities in the country.... Without such leaders we are left behind." On the other hand, a traditional "authoritarian" leadership style can easily resurface in this situation. For generations clientelism has tied local people to hierarchical power structures and with the arrival of newcomers who assume the role of leaders, there is a tendency for a new variant of this clientelistic relationship.

### Systemic Environment

There is a longstanding sense of powerlessness in Chiloé that has instilled a culture of dependence for generations. On the one hand, "others, and outside forces are always blamed for one's feelings." On the other hand, outside forces are always "out of reach and therefore they do not have the means to resolve problems." Reflecting on this condition, a development worker stated: "...The tradition of intervention on the part of the state and the municipalities is one of welfare.... The state and municipality are interested in maintaining this over-dependence - it ensures votes! People are used to this type of intervention." Junta de Vecinos are particularly vulnerable in this respect since their funding is channeled directly through the municipality. Another respondent argued that the political right is largely to blame for the dependency model.

This [dependency] has to do with the "ideological project" of each municipality. Municipalities want their organizations to be "clients", therefore their model of intervention is one of "welfare" [asistencial]. They are not interested in the organization's development, growth, or productive capacity, so they do not encourage this even though there are professionals in the Unidad Fomento Productivo (Productive Capacity-Building Unit of the Municipality) to do this work, they don't do it. There is an ideological problem of the Municipality taking the role of promoter, they want to have clients, political votes. So they give things, roofs, materials, etc., but they do not want development.

Interestingly, one municipal planner complained about this very phenomenon: "people come as individuals to the municipality to ask for everything. The municipality is 'papa' to everybody." A leader of a Junta de Vecinos seemed to concur with this viewpoint. "The municipality operates as a case-specific service. Someone shows up crying and the municipality says 'here have this - now go away.'" It is a system of assistance, not of promotion or change. Individuals and not communities are the main beneficiaries of political largesse.

What has been the experience of a generation of new 'intervening organizations' in relation to this traditional

systemic environment? We would argue that the results have been mixed. Agencies such as Fondo de Solidaridad e Inversión Social (Solidarity and Social Investment Fund, FOSIS), Instituto de Desarrollo Agropecuario (Agricultural Development Institute, INDAP) and Servicio de Cooperación Técnica (Technical Cooperation Service, SERCOTEC) are well-funded national organizations with local offices in Chiloé. We asked our community respondents about their experience with these agencies. While local staff workers are seen to be dedicated and well-intentioned, a shared criticism is that local communities have little or no voice in the types of programs that are offered. Policies follow national standards, which are not necessarily responsive to the needs of communities in Chiloé. Communities find that they have to adapt to the agency's priorities, rather than the other way round.

This top-down approach reflects the insufficient level of face-to-face contact between administrators in the program offices and local communities. The programs suffer from a 'professional bias' (Chambers, 1983). One community member remarked on the problems she is faced with in the municipal planning office: "there are many different people working there, many different faces, so support depends on the person we are dealing with." Another community leader felt that the lack of staff made it impossible for them to go into the field: "one has to always go to their office." Periodic changes to these programs follow evaluation and review, or political expediency, and tend to bewilder the local population. In the case of one program "every year of its existence there has been a debate as to whether it would continue." Such vicissitudes undermine the credibility of local development workers in the communities.

The most common criticism of development programs and agencies made by our respondents was their short-term bias. A number remarked on the pressure to show results in the short-term and the lack of attention given to long-term capacity-building. One person observed that this bias meant that "...once a project ends, the people and organizations tend to disappear." A leader of a Junta de Vecinos succinctly summarized the problem for us:

To get a project underway there is a competition among consulting firms. The successful firm gets the contract and hires a consultant for four to six months. The consultant is responsible for turning over the funds to the successful organization, and just when the project is about to be implemented generally the contract runs out and the consultant leaves - so the investment is left abandoned. Programs need a capacity-building phase which FOSIS, for example, does not have.

ProRural [Red de Cooperación Institucional para Zonas de Pobreza Rural - Institutional Cooperation Network for Rural Poverty Zones] was created under the Frei administration of the Chilean federal government in late 1997 as part of a more general policy to speed the modernization of the countryside. The program was cut by the Lagos government in December



2002. ProRural was a classic 'intervening organization' (see Cohen 2001). It was designed to stimulate critical linkages between state-level and regional-level rural development resources and programs focused on the elimination of poverty, the municipalities, and grassroots organizations. Its primary areas of work were to strengthen intra-municipal relations and community-municipal relations, productive diversification to strengthen the local economy and increase incomes, and the expansion of civil society.

Ostensibly, ProRural's intervention was to provide technical, organizational development and investment advice, as well as training. We found that it was much more than this. ProRural was an active instigator of capacity-building through attention to organizational and leadership issues in addition to technical and financial ones. One community leader remarked: "Their productive projects taught a work process, which did not begin and end only by passing a certain quantity of money." This practice was a reflection of ProRural becoming a 'learning organization'. It developed a self-evaluative capacity as its front line staff had the autonomy to implement responsive strategies. This development stemmed directly from the comments and complaints from the community. They were able to recognize the need for a strategic change in the approach that ProRural was following. A staffer recalled:

...in the beginning the work was designed as technical, which is why they contracted [staffer's name]; afterwards a type of work emerged that was specifically organizational development. Within ProRural the importance of the latter was observed. Thanks to the 'quejas' [complaints] our work of intervention within the organizations arose.

The development of leadership and human capital resources by ProRural stimulated community-based social capital. For example, the leaders of the productive organizations would also bring their newfound experience and initiative to the social organizations to which they belonged, such as the Junta de Vecinos or sports clubs. Apart from the immediate benefits community organizations bring to their members, overlap between organizations in terms of joint activities and common memberships provides an important safety net to communities. We saw some definite examples of this potential as a consequence of ProRural's work in Tenaún. For example, a fisher organization supplied fresh fish to a new fogón that had been opened by a tourism organization to stimulate rural tourism in the community. "the advantage for us [Comité del Turismo] is the freshness of the fish (sometimes we have to wait for the fish to die to cook it). This is a very low cost for us and there is the financial gain for the fishermen's organization." The same organizations also sponsored a student from the University of Chile to complete a feasibility study to designate the community as a zona típica - a cultural heritage site. A ProRural development worker observed the important buffer function this synergy provides for local economies:

The organizations are multi-faceted; a tourism organization may also be part of a fisher organization. This is important because it allows local economies to survive in moments of crisis, because today they may have a salary from a salmonera but if it closes there will be other possibilities to avoid hunger in the community if everyone does not work at the salmonera. In Chiloé a crisis at the level of the national economy is not noticed here.

ProRural attempted to alter the relationship between government agencies and departments, and the community. It demonstrated that grass-roots organizations could demand responsiveness from government programs. Unfortunately the early demise of ProRural undermined this transfer effect. ProRural ultimately failed to achieve one of its major goals, that of the creation of more responsive programs and administration of national agencies such as FOSIS and SERCOTEC.

With the end of ProRural what has happened in Chiloé? One community leader commented: "With the disappearance of ProRural there is a lack of support on the part of the municipality and organizations have to continue ahead on their own." The void left in the community development process is a significant one. Supportive municipal planners say they have been "orphaned," community leaders see themselves as "limping" "it is like going backwards and starting all over again." Former ProRural workers are left to watch the slow disintegration of their work because of a lack of political will.

The problem is the sustainability of the process of rural development. We ask what is the level of development that we left that may be sustainable with time? Specifically, at the level of capacity of local organizations, or at the level of community, or in terms of the articulation capacity at the level of institutions. All this was truncated.

## Discussion

The community development process in Chiloé offers vivid illustrations of a number of conceptual issues raised in this paper. Although mistrust, suspicion, and inequality are facts of life in rural communities, they are not insurmountable obstacles to the development of horizontal social capital. But the question arises whether it is possible to reconcile solidarity with mistrust and suspicion. We would argue that community in Chiloé represents a delicate balance between personal interdependence and independence. Minifundias place a premium on familial self-sufficiency. Communities are vulnerable to interpersonal suspicion, mistrust, and conflict. 'Artificial' cultural mechanisms evolve in such circumstances to reduce this risk. For example, transcendent symbolic bonds associated with religion or cultural traditions serve this purpose (see Butz 1996; Cohen 1985). One respondent explained to us that a "common spirit" is widely shared by people whose ancestors have lived and worked in the community for so long. Getting together to move a house, get water, or attend a fiesta are occasions when households have

an opportunity to overcome their isolation. In doing so they may gain information, opportunities, contacts, networks, and assistance. Community solidarity coincides with enlightened family interest. Solidarity based on shared commitments to overarching values, ideology, or beliefs may exist but it is secondary to family interests.

Cohen (1985) reminds us that it is precisely the flexible transcendent nature of such cultural symbols that allows conflicting interests to share something in common. However, this study shows that the concrete manifestations of solidarity such as neighborliness, co-operative labor, support in times of crisis, attendance of significant community events, are not so voluntaristic. Normative sanctions ranging from gossip and ridicule to ostracism preserve communality. Sanctions serve primarily as a threat to families that they stand to lose a social capital dividend if they don't conform to expectations of behavior (see Bliege Bird and Bird 1997). Such sanctions preserve solidarity by keeping familial jealousy and suspicion from breaking out into open feuds. Solidarity is therefore an ethic that can quite easily co-exist alongside suspicion and interpersonal jealousy.

Another question is how to reconcile egalitarianism and inequality? It is possible that our findings simply reflect the difference between public and private behavior. For example, in focus group settings when individuals are in the presence of their neighbors, they say "we are all the same." Privately they say otherwise. To be candid in a public setting is to risk hostility and conflict with one's neighbors (see Levi 1999). Another take on this issue is that egalitarianism represents an idealized perception of reality. As Pitt-Rivers (1971) found, egalitarianism is an important dimension of the ideal community: "who we think we should be" (see also Cohen 1985). People propagate this view of themselves, not only with outside interviewers, but also with each other. It is a view that represents an ideal norm of community cohesion. Egalitarianism reflects a shared expectation about how people in the community should and will behave under various circumstances. Notwithstanding differences in gender, wealth, education, social status, and power, individuals will act in certain ways to symbolize transcendent attachments to the community. Small talk, teasing styles of humor, greeting etiquette, nick names, fictive kinship, symbolic generosity are all leveling devices designed to reproduce an ethic of egalitarianism. At the same time, normative sanctions against boasting, rudeness, excessive formality, selfishness and so forth preserve and protect the egalitarian spirit. As with the solidarity ethic, egalitarianism is a vital building block for social capital in rural settings.

The culture of dependence that was noted above reflects a sense of hopelessness in the face of powerful external political interests. In Chiloé the legacy of clientelism, rooted in municipal politics has been shown to be a formidable complicating factor in effective decentralization (see, Read, 2000). Municipal political power can be an obstacle to effective grass roots organization as community members develop a culture of victimization and scapegoating (see Flora et al

1992; Gibson 1996). However we have found that good leadership, and the achievement of small, concrete successes, are vital steps in overcoming such attitudes and the inertia and skepticism that goes hand-in-hand with them.

Training of grass-roots leaders is one thing, but in order to avoid a lapse into traditional authoritarian styles, more is needed. A constructive beginning is the development of 'transformational' skills: empathetic listening skills, openness to dialogue, and critical self-evaluation abilities (Cherin 2000). Sharp (2001) observes that good leadership involves an 'experiential' component. Particularly valuable are individuals with multi-organizational involvement and membership that is beneficial to building community networks, mobilizing resources for projects, and garnering support. He refers to these people as 'generalized leaders.' Revenson and Cassel (1991) identify the correlates of leadership successes. Leadership 'hardiness' is seen to be highest where commitments remain strong and change is viewed as an opportunity for growth. One community leader in Chiloé proposes that such leadership has to be linked with participatory democracy and this has to start with children.

We have to start with students and children to teach them about democracy, transparency, to form ideas, react, and communicate. It is all connected.... By the time people are adults it is difficult to change their minds.... People only have relations with organizations when they are already adults, after they are married with a family. They have a problem and know they have to solve it, but they don't have the knowledge or experience - and they really have to start from zero.

But leadership and project successes require a supportive systemic environment.

We can begin with the municipality. We have found that it is in fact not monolithic. Municipal governments have two distinctive interests that may or may not coincide. Mayors are political actors with party affiliations and ties to regional and national organizations. Their interests are garnering dependencies that can translate into votes. Planners are bureaucrats and their interests reflect their jurisdictions that they want to preserve and protect. From the perspective of municipal planners it may not so much be dependence in the small communities that they foster, as control that they cannot give up. Each interest needs to be assessed and negotiated separately by community organizations and intervening organizations. A community leader provided an interesting recommendation as to what would effectively break the dependency of community organizations on the municipal power structure. He felt an independent social organism is needed to countervail the centralized local political power that exists in the municipality, such as a restructured Junta de Vecinos organization with their own funds independent of the municipality.

The experience of ProRural in Chiloé shows clearly that there is no quick fix to community development problems. Intervening institutions need the appropriate strategic time frame to address procedural and capacity-building issues.

They also need to develop ongoing evaluation mechanisms and the flexibility that allows them to be responsive, true "learning organizations." ProRural was becoming one of these and was a genuine break with the bureaucratic mold.

This study has argued that a dynamic assessment of the interface between the community—social capital and civil society—and the systemic environment offers insights into the process of community development. If communities are to meet the challenges of globalization they need to overcome obstacles and build on their strengths. Their resilience cannot be found entirely within themselves. Self-reliance is fine but self-sufficiency is a myth. Community development in the modern age is a complex dialectic between outside and inside; local and global; lay and professional; and traditional and modern.

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