Grassroots Reform in the Global South

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ACRONYM LIST

BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme *(Pakistan)*
BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities *(Bangladesh)*
CONTAG	National Confederation of Agricultural Workers *(Brazil)*
CASATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions *(South Africa)*
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCHA	USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance
DRG Center	USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MLAR	Market-Led Agrarian Reform
MST	Landless Workers' Movement *(Brazil)*
NAC	National Advisory Council *(India)*
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPP	Orangi Pilot Project (*Pakistan*)
SHRC	State Health Resource Centre *(India)*
SPARC	Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers *(India)*
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

PREFACE

In 2016, USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance launched its Learning Agenda—a set of research questions designed to address the issues that confront staff in USAID field offices working on the intersection of development and democracy, human rights, and governance. This literature review, commissioned by USAID and the Institute for International Education, addresses research questions focused on the diffusion and scaling of grassroots reform:

1. **How and when does grassroots reform scale up?**
2. **When citizen participation has led to local reforms in a particular sector (*e.g.,* health), what processes lead to these reforms' influencing the regional or national levels of that sector (*e.g., citizen groups monitoring medicine supplies in local clinics leads eventually to pharmaceutical procurement reform in the Ministry of Health)?**

The resulting literature review, conducted by graduate students and faculty at Brown University, will help to inform USAID's strategic planning, project design, and in-service training efforts in the democracy, human rights, and governance sector. For more information about USAID's work in this sector and the role of academic research within it, please see https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/organization/bureaus/bureau-democracy-conflict-and-humanitarian-assistance/center.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report asks whether, when, and how grassroots reforms in the developing world scale up. It is based on a careful review of approximately 150 peer-reviewed and gray-literature sources in five world regions—East Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa—with an eye toward drawing *actionable* lessons for international development professionals.

The authors conclude that reforms are most likely to scale up when they are defended by *broad coalitions of local actors*—including skilled professionals, like doctors, lawyers, and engineers, who have a *degree of autonomy from central state authorities*. Broader coalitions have more ideas and influence than narrow interest groups; they are more likely to have the latitude they need to put their ideas into practice.

The report itself is divided into four principal sections:

- Section 1 outlines the context for the report by discussing the importance of grassroots reform, defining key terms, and describing its methodology. The authors pay particularly careful attention to the meaning and importance of "grassroots," different types of reform (*e.g.,* issue-specific or transversal), different understandings of "scale" and "scaling," and questions of sampling and analysis. They focus on the origins and fates of the most important or visible reforms in each region, and treat both 1) the campaigns, movements, or coalitions that achieved them and 2) the contexts in which they occurred as explanatory factors. Because the reforms that show up in the literature are not necessarily representative of the broader reform population, however, their conclusions are suggestive rather than definitive.

- Section 2 documents the experiences of different regions with an eye toward intra-regional comparisons. It is based on a sense that regional experiences are *relatively* coherent (*i.e.,* there is more variation between regions than within regions) and *interdependent* (*i.e.,* countries tend to learn more from their regional peers than from their extra-regional counterparts). So the authors compare countries with others in their respective regions, rather than across different regions. Some regions and countries receive more attention than others; insofar as the authors can tell, these differences reflect their relative weights in the literature rather than their intrinsic or intellectual importance—a fact that should be kept in mind when digesting their lessons.

- Section 3 distills two types of lessons from the regional experiences: relatively abstract lessons of broad relevance and relatively precise lessons of less general relevance. The more abstract and general lessons include the importance of state structures—and whether they afford local actors some degree of autonomy, in particular—and social coalitions, broader or narrower. While local autonomy allows reforms to take hold in the first place, it can pose an obstacle to their diffusion or development—that is, to their *scaling*. But the prospects for scaling are almost always enhanced, rather than hindered, by broader social coalitions that include skilled professionals, and are thus highest when broad coalitions defend and demand reform in polities that tolerate, or even encourage, local autonomy. The more precise or contingent lessons

concern the roles of public officials, international agencies and/or donors, and political parties, among other things.

- Section 4 discusses the translation of the authors' findings into actionable lessons and concludes by discussing the limits to their knowledge base, pending research questions, and methodological impediments to their resolution. The report's principal finding is that the prospects for scaling are shaped by state structure and coalition breadth; however, donors are unlikely to transform the former, and should thus focus their efforts on the latter. By creating "invited" or "public" spaces in which stakeholders can recognize and align their interests and strategies, the authors believe donors can broaden coalitions and raise the likelihood of success.

So how might donors foster broad-based reform coalitions? Below are five sequential answers:

1. Donors might establish or fund public spaces in which reform coalitions can emerge, grow, develop, and share their ideas, and build trust and confidence. Some of the World Bank's participatory accountability initiatives might offer one example. India's National Advisory Council might provide another. But, the key point is to create a space in which key stakeholders can develop and trade reform proposals, strategies, and tactics. There is no guarantee that creating such spaces will issue reform, let alone reform that scales up, but these tend to be very low-cost initiatives, so even with a rather low "win ratio" they will tend to have high payoffs.

2. The win ratio is likely to be higher if the right participants are around the table. There is no universal recipe, but the right participants are likely to include stakeholders with a relatively wide range of backgrounds, including not only the poor and dispossessed, who most need reform, but skilled professionals who have more influence and distinct knowledge bases. Public officials themselves might be useful participants, though that is likely to be highly context-dependent.

3. Given their distinct backgrounds and, to some degree, interests, we cannot assume that different stakeholders will simply reach agreement on their own. It is, therefore, useful to have a moderator (or moderators) in the room, and to choose those moderators carefully. In some environments, representatives of donor organizations (or other foreign organizations) might be (perceived to be) neutral outsiders, and might therefore have an advantage over local actors. Elsewhere, they might be perceived as interlopers, and insiders might have an advantage. There is no universal recipe, but attention should be paid to these and similar considerations as public spaces are being built.

4. Some team members believe that left-leaning governments offer more propitious environments for reform. Others were more skeptical, and worry that, if anything, this represents a disproportionate focus on left-leaning reforms in the literature. There are certainly contexts in which "market-oriented" or conservative reforms scale as well (Goldfrank and Schrank, 2009). The key point, therefore, is less to assume that one party or tendency is more conducive to reform and scaling in general than to be sensitive to these issues as reform coalitions are constructed.

5. The construction and cultivation of public spaces requires an immense amount of local knowledge: not only an understanding of which actors have the substantive knowledge and interest to participate but the resources and commitment to follow-through, the trust and interpersonal skills to collaborate effectively, the legitimacy and charisma required to win others to the cause, *etc*. This is not the sort of knowledge one can develop in six months or even a year. Insofar as donors want to promote grassroots reform and scale-up, therefore, they would do well to consider these factors when making personnel, budgeting, and planning decisions.

INTRODUCTION

How and when does grassroots reform scale up? The answer is particularly important in light of the "blueprints" and "best practices" approach to development policymaking by "bottom-up" alternatives designed to facilitate "local experimentation" (Rodrik 2007, Ch5). After all, the impact of grassroots reform is inherently limited by scale, and skeptics have therefore begun to bemoan the "celebration of the local" (Herring 1999, p14; Tendler 2002, p3; Carr and Norman 2008, p361; Anderl 2016, p215) by the donor community—and the corresponding tendency to ignore the perils of parochialism. "Remarkably little is understood about how to design scalable projects, the impediments to reaching scale, and the most appropriate pathways for getting there," explain Laurence Chandy and his colleagues at the Brookings Institution (Chandy *et al*. 2013, p3) "Despite its centrality to development, scaling up is rarely studied in its own right and has undergone little scrutiny."

The need for such study is particularly acute, moreover, in light of the growing preference for field experiments among development economists and policy planners (Mulligan 2014). For all their various merits, including more precise and persuasive estimates of the causal effects of interventions, even their proponents admit that randomized trials, or experiments, suffer from a lack of "external validity," or generalizability (Banerjee and Duflo 2009, p162). Experimental treatments that work in one location need not work in others, and we need more research to understand whether and how we can "scale" their results.

Nor is the problem limited to experimental research *per se*. An entire body of development scholarship tends to look not at the "causes of effects" but the "effects of causes." Will children who live near health clinics grow up healthier than those who live far away? Will health clinics that are staffed by women provide better health services than those that are staffed by men? Will parents take their children to health clinics in the first place if they are not paid for doing so? Questions like these are addressed not only by field experiments but by natural and quasi-experiments, instrumental variables, propensity score matching, and similarly sophisticated techniques. But the advocates of these approaches often ignore "implementation feasibility" as well as external validity, according to Lant Pritchett. "So the policy/program/project 'lessons' from 'rigorous' evidence about doing X are irrelevant if the government cannot or will not do the X" (Pritchett 2017).

We hope to fill the gap in the literature by reviewing what little is known about "what is scalable, particularly scalable by the public sector" (Pritchett 2017), in developing countries. To do so, we have carried out a comprehensive review of the peer-reviewed and gray area literatures on grassroots reform in the Global South. But before discussing our approach and findings in detail, we will define key terms.

A. Working Definition: Grassroots Reform

By "grassroots reform," we mean reform that is initiated primarily by local civic actors rather than by central or local government, foreign donors, or similar agents. Obviously, the lines between central and local, state, and civil and the like can be blurry, but the distinction is nonetheless important insofar as local or grassroots reforms are simultaneously critical to participation, sustainability, and accountability and vulnerable to the limitations of scale. They not only touch fewer people than large-scale (or nationwide) reforms, but are vulnerable to political counterattacks, fiscal and institutional deficits, and similar threats to their survival—let alone their growth.

B. Working Definition: Scaling Up

The definitions of "scale" and "scaling up" are arguably more controversial. In keeping with the market systems framework favored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), however, we draw an explicit distinction between "scale" as a noun and "scaling up" as a verb, and complement the traditional, breadth-based understanding of the former—*i.e.,* the percentage of the target population benefitting from a program—with a focus on program depth, *i.e.,* the degree, nature, and sustainability of impact. "Without this type of qualification," argue Ben Fowler and his colleagues (Fowler *et al.* 2016, p4), "the numbers generated from traditional scale indicators may just reflect temporary changes in behavior or benefits that could never be maintained because there was no corresponding change to the underlying incentive structure that influenced the pre-existing behavior." In that sense, moreover, our approach addresses questions of program quality as well as beneficiary quantity.

Understandings of "scaling up" tend to parallel or flow out of definitions of "scale." According to Peter Uvin, the most common definition involves the numerical expansion of a program's "membership or target group" (Uvin 1995, p928; see also Mittelman 1998, p862). Examples would include the "expansion or replication" (Linn 2013, p138) of an existing program in a new territory, or the development of a national program or priority based on a "local pilot" (UNDP 2013). Others address program quality as well as coverage, however, by defining the term to include "not just reaching large numbers of poor people but doing so with interventions that transform their lives" (Chandy *et al.* 2013, p6). And some develop broader taxonomies by distinguishing "functional" scaling (*i.e.,* taking on more functions or goals), "horizontal" scaling (*i.e.,* expanding coverage territorially or demographically), and "vertical" scaling (*i.e.,* laying the organization or institutional foundations for horizontal or functional scaling), *etc.* (see, *e.g.,* Hartmann and Linn 2007; WHO 2010; UNDP 2013; Brand, Fowler, and Campbell 2015; as well as Uvin 1995).

By the same token, however, the need for scaling up should not be taken for granted. Some grassroots reforms (*e.g.,* dams or flood prevention schemes) have natural limits, or confront "diseconomies of scale" that counsel against their expansion or replication. Others have temporal boundaries or windows of opportunity that counsel for clear expiration dates at a minimum. "Scale limits and sunset provisions are especially important in areas where public action is taken to correct for what are at best seen as temporary private market failures," explain Arntraud Hartmann and Johannes Linn (Hartmann and Linn 2008, p10). Examples would include government marketing boards, development banks, and the like.

Regardless of donor goals or definition, however, scaling up is the exception to the rule. Most grassroots success stories go unnoticed. Fewer still are replicated. And opportunities thereby foregone are immeasurable.

C. Reform Success vs. Failure

What differentiates the success stories from the failures? The existing literature is at best sparse and tends to focus on program design rather than context. Some emphasize sequencing (UNDP 2013). Others focus on financing (Uvin 1995). And many invoke—or perhaps even try to redesign or shape—the incentives faced by program participants themselves (Hartmann and Linn 2008, p19). In general, these accounts suffer from at least two related limitations:

1. Studying success stories that have survived and flourished, but paying less attention to failures that have stagnated or disappeared. After all, the former are better known and easier to find than the latter. But they are not necessarily different in design, and in the absence of a more systematic comparison, it is impossible to discern whether program design is the key difference between success and failure (Geddes 1990, Collier and Mahoney 1996).

2. Assuming that program design is independent of program context, when in reality they might be tightly coupled. If the latter is the case, moreover, it may be impossible to take design elements from one program or context to another, or success may be wrongly attributed to design, when it is really a product of context.

Consider, for example, a hypothetical success story that involves a civic forum dedicated to public procurement reform in a developing democracy. The goal is to put civil society organizations (CSOs) to work monitoring public purchasing practices in an effort to expose—and thereby mitigate—waste, fraud, and corruption. By all accounts, the forum is responsible for a 20 percent reduction in costs. It is therefore imitated in a developing autocracy—where it is found to have no effect at all.

What explains the difference? On further review, investigators find not only that the CSOs that participated in the forum in the democracy are either scarce or cowed in the autocracy, and thus prove ineffective at monitoring, but that democracies that lacked the civil forum but offered CSOs alternative opportunities to voice their opinions had similarly transparent purchasing practices. In other words, the key element was the democratic context and not the design of the program itself.

To synthesize what little is known about scaling-up, we carried out a thorough review of the academic and policy literatures on grassroots reform in the developing world. The details of the review process are described in Appendix A, but we nonetheless want to highlight the process. First, team members were given responsibility for regions in which they already had expertise: East Asia, Latin America, MENA, South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. Second, regional teams identified grassroots reforms from their respective regions by means of secondary research and informal communication with regional experts, and carried out thorough reviews of the secondary and gray area literatures on the reforms they had identified. Third, the lessons of those reviews were distilled in weekly meetings of the entire group, and used to build the backbone of this report—which was then written collaboratively and reviewed and revised in light of feedback received from USAID and Institute of International Education personnel.

A few caveats are in order:

1. We have done our best to cover the most important and illustrative reforms; however, we make no claims that regional or country representation is equitable or unbiased. On the contrary, it is likely to represent the extent and importance of grassroots reform in different locations, the extent to which reforms have been studied, and the existing knowledge and expertise of team members, among other things. We make no claims about representativeness and have little doubt that our sample is in some sense "biased." We think this is the nature of the endeavor given existing data and methods, and issue the obvious caveats about causal effects and their interpretation.

2. We have devoted the bulk of our attention to sectoral, distributive, or issue-specific reforms (*e.g.,* educational policies, health clinics) and paid less attention to institutional or transversal reforms (*e.g.,* procurement, civil service reform). This reflects our understanding of USAID's priorities and sense that other teams will cover the latter types of reform.

3. We have focused on the reforms themselves, and included information on movements, parties, NGOs, institutions, and the like, as needed. Insofar as we can discuss causality at all, in other words, we are interested in the "causes of effects"; the "effects" are the reforms and the "causes" are the actors and institutions involved in their adoption, implementation, spread, and scaling. Though in light of the myriad methodological limits in the literature and the report, we would rather think of our findings as interpretations, or even hypotheses, than as causal claims.

4. For the most part, we focused on works that had been produced within the past decade, but we made exceptions in certain cases. Exceptions are proportional to importance; that is, we were willing to go further back in time for more important works or reforms.

REGIONAL COMPARISONS

The literature on scaling-up in the Global South is surprisingly limited. Much more ink has been spilled asking what scales and why than attempting to answer these questions, let alone doing so with any degree of rigor, and it would therefore seem that Pritchett is only half-joking when he writes that "the only rigorous evidence about the scalability of rigorous evidence says it isn't" (Pritchett 2017; see also Bold *et al*. 2013). Moreover, this is true not only of the "rigorous" experiments alluded to by Pritchett but of grassroots reform more generally. While there are occasional studies of the diffusion or scaling of particular reforms (see, *e.g.,* Westney 1987; Schrank 2008; Goldfrank and Schrank 2009; Wampler 2010; Ganuza and Baiocchi 2012), they are few and far between—not to mention rather *ad hoc*. We therefore adopt a more flexible, inductive approach that starts with the "facts on the ground," region-by region, and endeavors to draw more general lessons (or at least hypotheses) on the back end.

A. East Asia
In East Asia, grassroots movements are more likely to scale up and influence the course of reform if the following conditions exist:

1. The grassroots movement has broad support from the society at large. This is the most important element determining whether a given movement could be scaled up.

2. Cooperation from political elites, be it at the national level or at the local level, is also a critical factor. In certain policy arenas, the convergence of interests between the state and the grassroots movements facilitates the reform agenda.

3. Sometimes the fragmentation of the formal state provides space and opportunities for grassroots movements to find alliances and gain momentum.

i. Broad-Based Support

Almost all the literatures on East Asia show that the successful scale-up of grassroots reforms requires a certain degree of broad-based support from the larger society. When such support is forthcoming, reform is more likely to succeed and scale up—even if politically and economically privileged groups reject it.

Broad-based support is obviously crucial in democratic systems. For instance, universal health care became the "flagship issue" (Harris 2015, p179) in Thaksin Shinawatra's campaign to lead democratic Thailand in 2001, having been adopted under the influence of a network of rural doctors who had themselves "sought to increase the visibility of universal health care through the creation of a pilot project in the old capital of Ayutthaya that could be scaled up nationally" (Harris 2015, p177) in the early 1990s. While precise numbers are hard to come by, a "surprising number" of Thai policymakers had visited and learned about the pilot project by the time Thaksin won the election, and his universal coverage scheme was thus approved by a landslide in the Thai parliament less than a year after he took office (Harris 2015, p182; see also Hughes and Leethongdee 2007).

A negative case comes from the Philippines, where pilot projects designed to foster market-led agrarian reform (MLAR) have proven less popular and therefore less successful—and vice versa. According to Saturnino Borras, part of the problem is that market-based schemes fail to acknowledge the "multidimensional function and character" (Borras 2007, p24) of land in rural communities, and that in the absence of such acknowledgement—let alone resolution—the very notion of placing a "market price" on land is absurd (see also Hirtz 1998, Franco 2008, Franco and Borras 2007). But the proponents of market-led reform are nonetheless happy to place a price on a parcel, and to thereby facilitate the achievement of their program goals, and in so doing to watch the land be snapped up not by the tenant farmers and farmworkers who have been cultivating it for years but by better-off farmers and speculators who—for obvious reasons—go on to oppose more redistributive land reform. The result is that MLAR not only fails to achieve its nominal goals of land redistribution and livelihood improvement for the rural poor but actually legitimates and entrenches their opposite: land concentration and poverty.

Broad-based support is perhaps even more important in less democratic countries. In China, where formal contentions and protests are discouraged or suppressed, broad-based social support is critical for grassroots reform to scale up. Studies show that across different reform areas, broad-based consensus in the society is a critical factor pressuring political elites at the central level to enact ideas advocated by

grassroots reformers (Mertha 2010, Nee and Opper 2012). According to conventional wisdom, market-oriented reform in China was pushed by the central state in Beijing. Using process-tracing analysis, Nee and Opper, however, show that the private sector, which accounts for 70 percent of GDP in China today, grew remarkably despite the Chinese state's continuous efforts to limit private economic activity and protect the state-owned sector. They write, the "emergence and rapid growth of a private enterprise economy in China was neither envisioned nor anticipated by its political elite" (Nee and Opper 2012, p1). Instead, private entrepreneurs overcame the difficulties within the formal policy framework by working outside of the state-controlled sector. In particular, even though uncertainty and collective action problems existed due to a state that was unfriendly to the market, private entrepreneurs built extensive social networks that connected like-minded economic actors who overcame these difficulties through building social norms that enforce trust. Later, these norms and practices were then diffused within the region of the Yangtze River Delta, and beyond, through mimicry. The extensive networks based on trust that these private entrepreneurs built led to the economic success of these private firms. The success of these grassroots firms pushed the Chinese government to provide formal rules that legitimatized them (Nee and Opper 2012). This research suggests that the collective action of private enterprises has to reach a tipping point so that the state is no longer able to enforce compliance. In this way, informal institutions that are embraced and supported by the broader society eventually replace the unpopular state institutions, thanks to individuals and groups who initially work outside of the system. Environmental reforms in contemporary China also confirm the importance of broad-based societal support in scaling up grassroots reform. Through studying local movements against dam construction, Andrew Mertha demonstrates that when the state is too powerful and the movement fails to mobilize public opinion, civic-action groups will not be able to achieve their goals of influencing policies or reshaping government behaviors (Mertha 2008).

ii. Active Support from Political Elites

Another factor that affects the diffusion and scaling up of grassroots reform is active support from the state. The East Asian cases show that in many policy arenas where vested interests are strong, states with high autonomous power can isolate themselves from the influence of powerful interest groups and work with grassroots movements in pushing forward reform agendas. The support from key state actors is another critical factor helping to scale up grassroots reforms.

Conventional understanding suggests that state autonomy means that states are endowed with interests independent from the interests of the society. However, the East Asian cases suggest that at least in areas such as economic reform, environmental reform, and welfare reform, sometimes state elites' interests and priorities converge with those of grassroots movements. Economic reforms that supported a free market and legitimized the activities of private enterprises in China, for instance, were pushed by private entrepreneurs and the broader society at the grassroots level. However, the success of scaling up also requires either the acquiescence or the active support of state elites. North Korea in the early 2000s also witnessed the rise of grassroots capitalism. However, such grassroots capitalism did not lead to broader economic reforms at the central level, mainly due to state's unwillingness to approve such reform (Lankov 2011). In contrast, in China, grassroots capitalism and other types of economic reforms that started from the bottom were quickly legitimized by the central state, not only because it was more broad-based in nature but also because the central state largely shared the same goal of promoting economic prosperity.

The use of policy experimentation, a method that the Chinese state uses in the post-Mao era to formulate economic and social policies, also supports this point. Policy experimentation in China rests upon the idea that the central party-state, which is committed to good governance, will legitimize whatever works at the grassroots level and spread the successful experiences across the country. Regional experiments that could foster growth, solve environmental problems, or provide better welfare services therefore will be scaled up and become nation-wide government policies. Hence, the cooperation from state elites is essential in promoting grassroots reform ideas (Heilmann 2008).

Elite support is no less critical to scaling in democratic contexts, where it is perhaps more pliable. Once again, Thailand offers an example. Most observers recognize the role of mid-level and elite bureaucrats in the promotion of the country's universal health care reforms. What is less well known, however, is that many of those bureaucrats traced their roots to the rural doctors' movement, and assumed their official positions as part of the movement's self-conscious effort to "capture" the Ministry of Health, in particular, over many years (Harris 2015).

iii. Fragmentation Within the State

Both the Thai and Chinese examples remind us that the state is not a unified entity. Instead, regardless of regime type, the state is a fragmented entity rife with internal political conflicts and tensions. The East Asian literature shows, moreover, that it is the very fragmentation of the state apparatus that provides space and opportunity for civic groups to seek alliances that promote their reform agendas.

Kenneth Lieberthal and Michael Oksenberg characterize the Chinese political system as using the "fragmented authoritarianism" framework. Within this framework, actors within the regime—local officials in different regions and officials in different governmental departments—can modify and even nullify aspects of central policy. Mertha, who works on environmental reforms at the grassroots level in China, believes that such pluralism and fragmentation are even more pervasive in Chinese politics today. According to Mertha, in the area of environmental reforms, this fragmentation has evolved into a political system "in which government agencies in opposition to these hydropower projects seamlessly ally themselves with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and, more importantly, with the third and fourth estates, the public and the press, respectively" (Mertha 2008, p3). Through various in-depth case studies, Mertha writes that civic-action groups that successfully influence the reform agenda tend to ally themselves with key officials or cadres who share the same ideals. This is necessary to winning policy fights against large industrial interest groups that often have strong political support. Due to the fragmented nature of the Chinese bureaucratic politics, the ultimate success of the grassroots environmental movement in each region depends on the outcomes of political contests among different local cadres who support different sides. The fragmentation of Chinese politics provides the possibility for grassroots reform—even those that are resisted by the central government—to find success in the process of local political bargaining. Successes in some policy areas and some localities increase the bargaining power of reformers and open up opportunities for scaling up.

Fragmentation is at least as important, albeit manifested differently, in a democratic context. The doctors who promoted health care reform in democratic Thailand were able to exploit divisions within parliament as well as fragmentation in the bureaucracy, for example, but insofar as they are available to opponents—as well as proponents—of reform, these divisions are a bug as well as a feature. While they catalyzed reform by reaching out to sympathetic policymakers, therefore, the Thai doctors worried that

their opponents "would 'cry out' and apply pressure to their own Parliament members" (Harris 2015, p180) as well, and they therefore conducted a blitzkrieg legislative strike designed to pass and implement reform as soon as Thaksin took office.[1] The literature thus offers insight into possible strategies as well as political opportunity structures.

B. Latin America

However unlikely it may have seemed three to four decades ago, Latin America's lessons for scaling up grassroots reforms primarily emerge from contexts of new democracies. In fact, such processes of regime transition often exist as an overarching structure for understanding when and why grassroots reforms are able to scale up. In this section, we consider four key lessons that have been identified in the literature on Latin American experiences with scaling up grassroots reforms. Some of these lessons have notable parallels with other regions, while others present contrasting perspectives on similar dynamics across the globe:

1. To scale up, grassroots reforms often require strategies that engage—and change—state institutions.

2. Diffusion and scaling up of grassroots reforms can benefit from external support.

3. Decentralization, on its own, is not necessarily commensurate with effective scaling up of grassroots reforms.

4. Middle class professionals and more "traditional" grassroots actors are often effective allies for scaling up reforms.

i. The State

The role of the state has clearly been central to scaling up grassroots reforms. State support can provide legitimacy to grassroots experiments, access to funding, and bureaucratic power. One of the most important reforms in Latin America in the educational sector is the "Escuela Nueva" reform first implemented in Colombia and later diffused to other countries in the region such as Guatemala and Chile. Key elements of the program include multi-grade teaching, "self-directed learning," and student self-governance. Twenty thousand of 29,896 schools in rural parts of Colombia claim to follow the model (see Benveniste and McEwan 2000, Forero Pineda *et al*. 2006). The program was developed to solve problems of coordination, infrastructure, and curricular appropriateness across hard-to-reach rural schools. It drew on ideas first propagated through UNESCO's "Unitary Schools" project in the 1960s.

While initial implementation of the UNESCO program was considered a failure, it inspired teachers to develop their own guides for multi-grade teaching (see Little 2001, McEwan 1998, McEwan 2008, Psacharopoulos *et al.* 1993). These guides were considered much more appropriate and gained widespread acceptance. The approach was supported by UNICEF, USAID, and the Colombian Ministry of Education, and implemented in 500 schools in 1976. The institutionalization of the program was helped by the developer of the guides, who was hired as a bureaucrat within the Ministry in 1978. This was credited with maintaining institutional support for continued scaling up of the program to 2,000 schools

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[1] Obviously, contemporary Thailand offers a distinct political context.

by 1982. Further support from the World Bank encouraged deeper institutionalization of the program, which is now operational in 17,948 rural schools. The most crucial component credited for the program's success is its focus on ongoing teacher training and student co-governance of schools (Kline 2002).

A more recent example of the role of the state in the education sector is the adoption of participatory educational reforms advocated by the Landless Workers' Movement in Brazil (MST). MST was able to work with the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG) to pressure the Brazilian Education Ministry to implement reforms to scale up MST's local schools, in large part inspired by radical pedagogues like Paulo Freire (Tarlau 2015).

Another example for state power to scale up grassroots reforms is the urban reform movement in Brazil. In this movement, which emerged as a mix of neighborhood movements in slums, architects, engineers, and academics aimed to build new institutional spaces in the state, especially at the local level. This was abetted by significant provisions for decentralization in the Brazilian constitution of 1988, after the country's dictatorship fell (Abers 2000, Fernandes 2007, Zaffalon Leme Cardoso 2015). These institutional spaces were pried open through participatory approaches to urban planning, budgeting (Avritzer 2008, Goldfrank 2011, Wampler 2010), and self-build home construction (Holston 2008), supported by local governments (Baiocchi 2003). The key point here is that breadth and autonomy of civil society often relied upon finding spaces within the state to validate and act on issues that first surfaced within deliberations in civil society (Avritzer 2002).

ii. External Actors
The role of external support in scaling up grassroots reforms is less examined in the literature. This may reflect a bias toward "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer and Schiller 2003) in social science research, as work on global and transnational social science is a much more recent methodological trend. Even so, the case of Escuela Nueva in Colombia is a significant example of diffusion of grassroots reforms across national borders, with a considerable role for external development aid assistance. The process of diffusion to Guatemala was supported by USAID and the Government of Guatemala. It was piloted in 100 schools first, and then scaled up in successive phases. The program underwent similar processes of institutionalization within the Guatemalan Ministry of Education as those in Colombia. The success of the program is attributed to the inherent flexibility of the model for teachers and students, which allowed it to be adapted to local context and indigenous traditions in rural areas of Guatemala. The challenge in both countries has been to maintain flexibility of the program while scaling up, given demands for standardization at larger scale. Generally, however, both countries' experiences are described in the literature as successes due to the adaptability of the program design to local context.

iii. Decentralization: The Paradox
Debates about decentralization are particularly central to questions of scaling up reforms. The dominant approach, echoed in literature on decentralization from other world regions, has been to suggest that scaling *down* governing authority enables institutions to be more accountable in ways that make it possible to scale *up* grassroots reforms. To a significant degree, this argument is echoed in the literature in Latin America. Decentralization is credited with significant gains in the construction of effective state capacity in Brazil, for example, due to grassroots reforms that have emerged in sectors such as housing (Donaghy 2013).

But comparative scholarship emphasizes some paradoxes of decentralization as well. Recent work by Herrera and Post (2014) and Carter and Post (2016), in particular, poses a potential tradeoff: decentralization can help citizens have a voice in pressuring government agencies for improved access to services, but it can also make it difficult to coordinate effectively across wider geographies, such as at the metropolitan scale. The Brazilian case of decentralization is cited as being particularly effective because of the active role of civil society. In other contexts, moreover, international agencies have pressured national governments to decentralize administration. In yet other contexts, however, local political bosses have applied pressure on central politicians to decentralize in order to maintain local political power. In addition to the factor of competing political rationales for decentralization, moreover, the devolution of authority to collect revenue, as well as the capacity actually to do so, are cited as key determinants of the effectiveness of decentralization.

Ultimately, however, the definition and details of decentralization need to be specified. In the Brazilian case, for example, empowered local governments are not particularly reliant on local revenue generation, receiving most of their funds from federal government transfers. Notably, these transfers are often earmarked for specific spending priorities, especially in health and education, so it is hard to describe this as a simple process of devolution or decentralization. Meanwhile, Colombia is generally classified as a "unitary" state, but is one of the most decentralized unitary states in the world, and is officially described as a "unitary, decentralized republic" under Article 1 of its 1991 constitution (Montoya 2016, p356). We therefore try to distinguish formal, or *de jure*, decentralization from the *de facto* provision of *local autonomy*, suggesting that the latter is more conducive to grassroots reform.

iv. Professionals as Protagonists and Allies

A final lesson concerns who we think of as the primary protagonist of "grassroots" reforms. While the term is commonly used to refer to reforms instigated by working class or informal actors, evidence from Latin America also suggests a key role for middle class professionals. Teachers, along with parents and students, were an important actor in driving educational reforms in Colombia and Guatemala in the case of Escuela Nueva. Water engineers and architects have been important actors, along with local communities, in driving reforms to the management of water basins in Brazil (Abers and Keck 2015). And health professionals have been important for driving reforms in the health sector in Brazil, as well as its universalization in many cases across the continent (Atun *et al.* 2015; Gibson 2016). These cases all suggest multiple roles for middle class professionals in scaling up grassroots reforms. First, they lend a degree of accepted expertise and legitimacy that can help open up spaces in bureaucracies for scaling up. Second, they serve as social networks for state actors that can help bridge larger divides between working class actors and bureaucrats (Dowbor and Houtzager 2014). Third, some issues, especially the case of water basin management, are highly technical and inevitably require degrees of professional expertise (Keck 2002, Abers and Keck 2015).

The role of middle class professionals can be fraught, and the intermediate role of "para-professionals" can also be important for bridging the gaps among working class actors, the middle class, professionals, and the state. Tendler's (1998) classic work on health care in the Brazilian state of Ceará suggests that these intermediate actors were able to build community capacity and scale up a grassroots approach to primary health care. The key here is that they were able to step into a context where ordinary residents had previously been alienated by doctors who were uninterested in simple curative tasks and regular

home visits. The program, which led to a five-year decline of the previous 36 percent infant mortality as well a 300 percent rise in vaccination coverage, was never really designed to achieve such outcomes. It was an incredibly minor part of an emergency employment creation program in the wake of a periodic drought. Yet, the program ended up as an international example with respect to local health institutional design. The key public health results were preventative in nature (drops in infant mortality and rise in vaccinations). But simple, curative tasks and community-wide campaigns that para-professional health workers either initiated or championed were instrumental to building trust and support within communities for activities more directly about prevention. More broadly speaking, a managed set of contestations and engagements between a) national, state, and municipal levels of government, b) professional and para-professional health workers, and c) para-professional health workers and ordinary citizens combined to produce a program that led to impressive results in health, employment, and broader trust in local government.

In sum, literature on grassroots reform in Latin America highlights the interplay between opening up spaces within bureaucracies, empowerment of local government, and a wide range of "grassroots" actors that make it possible to scale up reforms. It is worth emphasizing that while some of these mechanisms do appear in other contexts, much of the relative success or failure of different strategies has occurred in contexts of relatively new democracies. This has entailed constraints in terms of degrees of freedom available to governments, especially in terms of resource allocation given the need to respond to concerns of global markets. But by the same token, the process of democratization has opened up possibilities for rethinking of relationships between state and society such that grassroots reforms have been able to have quite significant consequences.

C. Middle East and North Africa

Tight control over civil society in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has been both a cause and consequence of the region being one of the least democratic parts of the world. Though the 2010-2011 Arab Spring movements provided some important exceptions of social movements leading to regime change, the ability for grassroots movements to scale up and affect policy or achieve institutionalized reform has, in general, been limited. In instances where popular movements have given way to the creation of broad coalitions, this process has often been marked by informality. By informality, we mean one of three things:

1. The absence of government/legal recognition of a particular organization.

2. Operation in areas or spaces that are either not recognized (*e.g.*, informal settlements) or are on the fringes of the state's purview.

3. The pursuit of actions that are legally ambiguous or illegal, especially where there has been a complete lack of effective state action of any sort.

The literature on specific instances of scaling up in the MENA region highlights two main factors: the ability of grassroots movements to capitalize on pockets of low state capacity and the nature of the coalition the movement is able to mobilize in support of reform.

i. The Question of State Capacity

One of the consistent patterns in governance across the MENA region is the concentration of political power. In this environment, decision-making and reform are often top down. Moreover, both responsiveness and accountability at the local level are typically lacking. Two relevant themes emerge from this political organization:

1. The first is weak local government. This is primarily due to a severe lack of decentralization or devolution of powers. However, even in instances where decentralization has taken place (*e.g.,* Lebanon), municipal governments are still under-resourced, dysfunctional, and/or hampered by central oversight authorities. In either case, the outcome for the MENA region is the presence of particular sectors or areas where the central government has either failed to execute or gain a foothold. This creates political and physical spaces with either weak service delivery or weaker rule of law, in some cases both.

2. Concentration also influences the nature of civil society. In order to operate within this political structure and avoid repression, civil society is either co-opted by the central government, fragmented and underdeveloped, or demobilized and skeptical of reform. Exceptions seem to occur in instances where civil society is either less heavily monitored, or where the organizations are deeply embedded in the community, perhaps in lieu of the state apparatus.

Both of these features point to the potential for grassroots movements scaling up in "pockets of low state capacity." This is not simply areas where the government has underperformed, but spaces where there is either a weak state presence or where effective government action has been largely absent. This general observation is noted by Fawaz (2002), as the author states that successful cases of municipal reform in the MENA have tended to be in "troubled areas," meaning regions or time periods where the state is either in flux or where local, non-state actors have gained a foothold. The author later concludes about this pattern, "one can read in it the presence of mobilized civil society…[emerging] at a time when central state authorities are weakened and thus forced to leave the space for this mobilization to occur" (Fawaz 2002, p8).

ii. Pockets of Low State Capacity

Pockets of low state capacity tend to be found on the physical periphery of the state, where public officials are simply absent, or in sectors (*e.g.,* the delivery of particular services) that are largely ignored, whether on the physical periphery or in the heart of the capital city.

An example of the former is the work noted by Bremer and Bhuiyan (2014) on community cooperatives undertaking self-help infrastructure projects (*e.g.,* tapping into official water pipelines) in informal settlements on the outskirts of Cairo, Egypt. In this case, local organizations were able to provide water to thousands of residents, collect payment from these new recipients to compensate the public utility company, negotiate with the state on other services and goods (such as roads), and petition for a formal recognition of the area. The peripheral nature of this settlement was both an impetus for civil society to emerge, as well as the necessary condition for it to operate in a manner that was, at first, legally ambiguous. The cooperatives were able to take advantage of this space to implement a substantial infrastructure project reaching thousands of residents, which was later sanctioned by the state.

These pockets of low state capacity are not only reserved for areas of informality, however. As seen in the 2015 "Youstink" movement and the subsequent Beirut Madinati party in Lebanon (Deets and Skulte-Ouaiss 2016), service delivery can also represent a sector where low state capacity can provide an opening for civil society to scale up. In this case, dysfunctional urban services, such as waste management, were the catalyst for a grassroots movement eventually culminating in the creation of a competitive political party in Lebanon. Local and national political leaders were unable to develop an alternative solution after the closing of Beirut's main landfill in 2015, leading to a halt in waste disposal. This crisis, compounded by a lack of a cohesive Lebanese national government and the weakness of the local government, culminated in mass demonstrations. The mobilization around service delivery, poor governance, and corruption was met with a new government plan to decentralize waste management. Moreover, participants in the Youstink protests utilized the movement's momentum to form the Beirut Madinati party, which ran in the 2016 municipal elections on a platform of improved urban service delivery. Though admittedly civil society operates more freely in Lebanon than in other countries in the MENA region, the ability to scale up in this instance came from grassroots involvement in an area where state capacity had been particularly dysfunctional or absent. This, in conjunction with weak local government, provided an environment where civil society was well received in the community and where it could rally around specific measures for reform.

Overall, these examples from the literature suggest that, due to the concentration of authority and relative weakness of civil society, pockets of low state capacity have played an important role in local reform in the MENA region. By providing opportunities for civil society to form strong ties within the community and avoid repression or co-optation, these pockets have made up some of the select instances where grassroots movements and organizations have been able to operate and achieve a form of scaling up.

iii. Coalitions

Given the authoritarian nature of many regimes in the MENA region, opportunities for broad-based collective action have typically been understood to be limited. State cooptation or stringent regulation within the formal arenas for associational life—such as universities, trade unions, and media—have historically created impediments for broad-based coalitions to mobilize and demand bottom-up accountability. Sectarian and ethnic divisions that are particularly prominent in some countries (Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Bahrain) have also often been cited as the reasons for the lack of broad-based coalitions for reform. Yet the recent events of the Arab Spring saw a diversity of sectarian, political, and inter-class coalitions taking part in democratization movements. Many of the protesters who took part in sustained political protests were not part of formal civil society groups. Informal organization and spontaneous collective action occurring outside formal civil society groups therefore became one of the ways authoritarian restrictions and oversight could be circumvented (Yom 2015).

In Lebanon, Tunisia, and Egypt, countries in the region known to have relatively well-developed civil society spaces, inter-class mobilization and even inter-sectarian collective action has occurred in recent years. Social movements in the MENA region have historically been urban and centered around the metropolitan middle and working classes. While the events of the Arab Spring may confirm the urban bias for many of the democratization movements, many did nevertheless display broad-based inter-class and inter-sectarian coalitions.

In Egypt's pro-democratization "*Kefaya*" (Enough) Movement, which was a precursor movement to the revolution of 2010, demands for government accountability helped create an inter-class coalition with a wide spectrum of political parties, ranging from Islamist to liberal, working with NGOs and unions (Oweidat *et al.* 2008). In Lebanon, the extent of the garbage crisis cut across both class and sectarian divisions that typically mark the Lebanese political and social landscape. Although largely centered in Beirut, the Youstink Movement is a notable recent example of both inter-class and inter-sectarian alliances being successfully forged (Abu Rish 2015). In a country where political parties are mobilized around religious identity and institutionalized in a confessional parliamentary system, the Youstink Movement was a rare display of inter-sectarian unity for a shared common goal that affected all metropolitan communities in Beirut and adjacent cities. Leaders within the movement were able to effectively mobilize diverse coalitions of protesters, through a shared message of improved and more democratic governance, centered around a very tangible and visible failure of the government to adequately respond to the garbage crisis.

While broad coalitions have been able to come together, united by a common goal, the challenge has been to create long-term institutionalized spaces for these demands to be channeled into the state. Even relatively diverse movements for accountability, such as Kefaya and Youstink, fragmented when faced with the prospects of engaging in electoral politics, indicative of the lack of democratic forums for deliberation over public issues. Political infighting within the diverse political parties represented within the Kefaya movement ultimately led to the movement's fragmentation, as political leaders could not agree on a shared political strategy (Oweidat *et al*, 2008). Nevertheless, the movement provided important lessons in coalition building that would be reignited during the 2010 revolution.

The events of the Arab Spring have also brought attention to the use of technology as a mechanism (or means) for citizens to organize collectively, often outside the traditional civil society structures. In contexts where both informality and coalition building are an important part of scaling up, outlets such as social media provide a unique space for connection, communication, feedback, and dialogue. While anonymity can be a double-edged sword for building a consensus and mobilizing participants, social media provides a relatively democratic space that allows for persistent engagement in contexts where civil society is otherwise repressed. Urban activists across the region have used the internet, particularly social media, to organize and disseminate messages. In their analysis of online media content used in the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings, Howard *et al.* (2001) find that social media played a critical role in helping urban activists to both organize and spread their political message and mobilize diverse coalitions to assemble for informal meetings and protests. Viral videos on Youtube and Facebook, communication through Twitter, and a proliferation in Arabic language political blogs and online content helped urban activists spread their message both domestically and abroad. Although the role of technology should not be overstated, its rapid embrace—particularly by the important demographic in the region of urban youth—for political mobilization is indicative of new sources of collective action that enable messages to spread to diverse groups, often circumventing state restrictions.

D. South Asia

Emerging from a shared colonial history, with broadly comparable institutional legacies of strong centers and weak local governance (Jalal 2005), India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have nevertheless had somewhat divergent pathways to building institutionalized welfare regimes. India's movements for the rights to information, work, and food (Pande, forthcoming; Pande and Houtzager 2016) are illustrations

of how the iterative processes of elite lobbying that sought allies in political parties and openings within the bureaucratic state apparatus, on one hand, and sustained grassroots mobilization and public action, on the other, resulted in putting a robust rights-based welfare architecture in place. Comparisons with Bangladesh and Pakistan, where there is a relatively weaker translation of grassroots campaigns into legislative action, can provide insights into the political conditions under which such scale-up is possible and where potential opportunity structures lie. In Bangladesh, a grassroots NGO movement that emerged in the 1970 and 1980s was scaled up with support from foreign donor assistance and resulted in the proliferation of NGOs focused on microfinance and expanding access to credit for the poor (Kabeer 2010). In both Bangladesh and Pakistan, where civil society spaces have been weaker during periods of authoritarian rule, strategic alliances between NGOs, donors, and allies in the bureaucracy have been key to successful scale up. The recent emergence of large-scale social protection programs— in Bangladesh (Employment Guarantee Programme) and in Pakistan (Benazir Income Support Programme)—were in large part the result of successful strategic engagement between civil society, the donor community, and key actors in political parties and the bureaucracy.

i. Invited Spaces within the State

Spaces for participation and representation of civil society actors within public institutions and the political backing of these "invited spaces" (Cornwall 2004) were critical to the enactment of prominent rights-based legislations around food, information, and work in India. An example of how the demands of long-standing grassroots campaigns and movements were translated into national legislations through such an invited space was the National Advisory Council (NAC). The NAC was a consultative body that provided policy and legislative inputs to the government of India between 2004 and 2014 and was constituted by the then-leader of the ruling party. Formal representation on the NAC enabled activists to "use their seat at the table" (Pande, forthcoming) to directly introduce demands of grassroots campaigns into the agendas of parliamentary standing committees. With the leader of the ruling party chairing its discussions, the NAC also had a high political profile, which gave its recommendations considerable weight (Sharma 2015, Chopra 2011).

In Bangladesh, state bureaucracy initially actively supported the expansion of NGOs, given the significant lack of government capacity to meet basic service delivery needs. NGOs and civil society groups forged alliances with government advocates to allow for the expansion of NGOs, particularly those focused on complementing government objectives to improve human development and basic service provision. However, as NGOs expanded, government-NGO relations have often been strained, with NGOs enjoying a significant degree of financial autonomy from the state. Donor funding has played a critical role in the scaling up of NGOs in Bangladesh, such as BRAC, ASA, and Grameen Bank, which are now amongst the largest in the world (Kabeer 2010).

ii. Co-Production Arrangements + Associational Autonomy

The State Health Resource Centre (SHRC) in Chhattisgarh, a high poverty central Indian state, is an example of how an independent, civil society-led but government-endorsed body scaled up a community health worker program to cover 20 million people. Although based on a formal agreement between the Department of Health and Family Welfare and prominent CSOs such as Action Aid and campaigns such as the *Jan Swasthya Abhiyan* (Public Health Movement), the successful scaling up of the SHRC has been attributed to its relative autonomy from the government, a pluralistic governance structure with representation from government and civil society, the ability to raise funds independently

of the government, refusal of any form of political patronage, attention to the career aspirations and needs of female frontline health workers, and convergence between the public health system and the community health worker program (Nambiar and Sheikh 2016; Nandi and Schneider 2014; Krishnamurthy and Zaidi 2005).

In Pakistan's largest city, Karachi, grassroots community-based organizations such as the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) played a critical role in connecting local communities to relevant government departments for provision of sanitation, gas, and water. OPP's focus on social mobilization of communities to engage with local government have been particularly successful in creating long-term linkages and associational ties between communities and local government (Zaidi 2011). OPP's model is predicated on building long-term ties and movements for accountability and collective action with local communities.

iii.   Key Allies within the State
Multiple studies on the enactment of rights-based legislation in India have highlighted the role of senior bureaucrats in policy formulation but also protecting the deliberative processes that preceded enactment from counter-mobilization within the bureaucracy. These reformist bureaucrats worked with drafts of the Right to Information and Right to Work bills prepared by the NAC to prepare the version that was tabled in Parliament (Chopra 2011). Local bureaucrats also play an important role in early stages of scaling up reforms by championing measures proposed by civil society actors within their areas of jurisdiction. Such local officials provided the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, the organization which led the Right to Information movement in India, access to government records of drought relief works, which made it possible to conduct the first social audit and model its processes for replication in different locations and ultimate scale up. Pratham, an education NGO, worked with local officials and schools in one district of the state of Bihar to develop tailored pedagogical strategies for each child, and was successful in improving learning outcomes. This model of "Teaching at the Right Level" is now being replicated in some of India's other states (Banerjee *et al.* 2016, World Social Science Report 2016).

iv.   Political Party Ideologies
Access of grassroots campaigns to political leaders has been attributed to the ideological position of the parties in power (Houtzager and Pande 2016). The presence of left-leaning parties in the ruling coalition played an important role in advancing the government's social justice agenda across the region. Leftwing party parliamentarians often have close associational ties with civil society activists and NGOs. The establishment of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Pakistan's flagship safety net program targeting more than 7 million women, emerged from longstanding demands within civil society for assistance for the poor. Civil society support for programs such as BISP have helped change the discourse around safety nets toward a rights-based approach, challenging the widely held view of them being vehicles for political patronage and clientelism.

In India, the importance of the ideological position of parties emerges in the contrasting trajectories of the scale up of the Right to Information and Work versus the Right to Food legislations and the extent to which they matched the versions first proposed by civil society actors. While in the former, most of the original demands of grassroots campaigns remained intact, the food security legislation went through a much more protracted process of revisions, eventually rescinding on key campaign demands such as keeping cash transfers out. In the second phase between 2009 and 2013, left wing parties exited the ruling coalition, which was then divided between two positions—a "nebulous social democratic platform

more accommodative toward the marginalized" and those in favor of a "neoliberal position with an emphasis on high GDP growth, fiscal consolidation, and economic reforms" (Hasan 2013). This conflict of ideological positions within the coalition government and factionalization of the majority party leadership led to a long phase of policy paralysis.

v.   Broad-Based Coalitions of Civil Society Actors

Mobilization of grassroots campaigns and organizations into a unified movement that cut across issues and classes was key to consolidating demands for rights-based legislation and building pressure on the Indian government to act. A multi-scalar and long durée view of these mobilizations show how alliances were forged between middle class urban activists, the rural poor, and community-based organizations and leaders to push for these laws. The pan-national character of these movements is also striking. Baviskar and Sundar (2008) note that three examples of rights-based legislation—the Forest Rights Act, the Right to Information, and Right to Work—"owe as much to the capacity of subaltern groups to wage sustained campaigns that range from rural India to the footpaths of Jantar Mantar[2] as to the prescience of the ruling class" (p87).

vi.   Decentralization and Expanded Opportunities for Local Claim-Making

Democratic decentralization and expanding the institutional surface area of the state at the local level increase claim-making and invite greater grassroots mobilization. For example, the Kudumbashree program (women's self-help groups) was able to achieve scale fairly rapidly in Kerala to a large extent because of the strength of the *Panchayati Raj* system in the state through which most of the program's poverty alleviation activities were implemented (Glyn *et al.* 2013). Again, the Pande piece (forthcoming) highlights the iterative processes through which the Right to Information and Right to Work movements in India successfully reinforced each other and have contributed to securing their modest but important contributions to social welfare in India. An important part of this story is that these larger demands for legislative action from the Indian state grew out of thousands of claims made of panchayats after the amendment that devolved significant funds, functions, and functionaries to local self-government structures—in contrast to Pakistan, where social policy has a history of being centralized at the federal level, particularly during periods of military rule (Jalal 2005). However, since the landmark 18th Amendment passed in 2010, while social policy was formally decentralized to the provincial level, decision-making did not go much further. Therefore, bottom-up claim making at the district and municipal level remains relatively weak in Pakistan, which underscores the distinction between *de jure* decentralization and *de facto* local autonomy.

vii.   Donor Funding

In Bangladesh, donors played a more prominent role in facilitating scaling up. For example, Proshika, an indigenous grassroots NGO movement focused on education that emerged in the 1980s was scaled up through foreign donor assistance, which then resulted in the proliferation of NGOs in the country and the eventual institutionalization of welfare provision such as health, education, and nutrition (Kabeer 2010). However, donor funding has often come with specific priorities, which often crowd out local demands. Donor support for credit expansion for the poor resulted in the proliferation of microfinance organizations in Bangladesh. But, as Kabeer (2010) notes, this came at the expense of marginalizing

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[2] A designated area for protests in the national capital of India, which has been associated with historic struggles dating back to the colonial era.

other NGOs focused on social mobilization and long-term systems of grass roots accountability and engagement with the state, rather than reliance on private credit.

In both Bangladesh and Pakistan, where civil society spaces have been weaker during periods of authoritarian rule, strategic alliances between NGOs, donors, and allies in the bureaucracy have been key to successful scale up and institutionalization without significant grassroots mobilization. The emergence of large-scale social protection programs—in Bangladesh (Employment Guarantee Programme) and in Pakistan (Benazir Income Support Programme)—were in large part the result of this successful strategic engagement between civil society, the donor community, and the state bureaucracy.

viii.   Internal Structures of Grassroots Organization

The type of organizational structure and its link to scale up differ for each case. In the case of SEWA in India, the following internal organizational features have been identified as drivers of success:

- Trade union/member-based structures that strengthen ownership.
- Clearly articulated values and commitment to Gandhian principles that promote loyalty.
- Functional flexibility that facilitates adaptation and reduces turnover.
- Leadership training.

The Orangi Project (OPP) in Pakistan is a case of a successful low-cost urban sanitation model that has relied on community mobilization and building relations of trust amongst local residents of Karachi's largest informal settlement. The OPP's success in Karachi is rooted in its independence from donors as well as the government, along with its practices of community-level knowledge sharing and negotiations. The deliberate maintenance of a low profile and refusal to institutionalize is what has contributed to the success of this community-led sanitation model but also limited its diffusion. However, the OPP offers routines for working with local communities that activists and organizers in other places can use to mobilize communities (Zaidi 2001). There are parallels of this model in the work of Slum Dwellers International and SPARC in Mumbai (Bradlow 2015), which have built horizontal knowledge structures and actively use strategies of political neutrality, consensus building, and what Appadurai (2001) calls the 'politics of patience' to their advantage. These are participation-intensive projects where scale is difficult to measure, but they do offer important strategies on which other grassroots interventions can be modeled.

E. Sub-Saharan Africa

While examples of successful scaling of grassroots reform in sub-Saharan Africa appear to be relatively rare, the literature does produce several lessons about the linkages, networks, and processes of interaction among actors, organizations, and interest groups that may help or hinder the scaling of grassroots reforms and/or movements. These include the importance of:

1. The development of horizontal networks of NGOs with one another as well as with other civil society actors and organizations.

2. Linkages to international organizations, actors, and groups.

3. The nature of the coalitions formed between actors, including their autonomy from external influences.

4. Prior experience with community organizing that enables learning.

i. Horizontal networks

Successful reform strategies in sub-Saharan Africa often involve building coalitions across several actors and may include a combination of stakeholders such as communities, NGOs, community organizations, and other formal or informal institutions like financial institutions or women's groups. In addition to broad coalitions reducing resource and capacity constraints, a primary advantage of broad instead of narrow coalitions, or no coalitions at all, is that network development serves to overcome the hyper-local limitation of many grassroots initiatives to the contexts or communities from which they emerge (Nel 2001). Coalition-building among peacebuilding NGOs in northern Ghana in the mid-1990s, for example, emerged as a way for development NGOs to return to their normal, development-oriented operations that had been disrupted by conflict (Kaye 2011). While NGOs in Ghana were unable to broker long-term peace in the region because of the precarious nature of the cause around which they had become organized, this "bottom-up" peace brokerage strategy was successful for a time (*ibid*).

In South Africa, the People's Housing Process, a grassroots initiative that provided incremental access to good-quality affordable housing, was particularly successful in terms of providing housing because it mobilized community resources (savings) and built linkages to formal intermediary financial institutions to secure funding to build homes (Faranak 2003). This community-led, coalition-based approach stands in sharp contrast with housing initiatives in South Africa that compelled individuals to contract directly with developers to purchase land and build homes, which often resulted in inadequate housing access. Informal institutions or interest groups, too, often form key elements of coalitions. Women, for example, have formed key groups in housing service reforms in South Africa and peacebuilding efforts in Liberia, even when not formally organized (Gasparre 2011). From the literature, there is no clear indicator that it matters exactly *who* the members of grassroots coalitions are, but rather that a coalition is broad enough to make a particular reform appealing or compelling beyond the interests of a particular actor, group, or community. But, it is also important that that the coalition does not become too broad, or that a reform scales out too quickly, so that actors lose the ability to effectively organize members and activities. Mission drift and cooptation arise as a particular concern once coalitions broaden to include international actors, a common feature of grassroots initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa.

ii. Linkages to International Organizations, Actors, and Groups

Coalitions take many shapes in sub-Saharan Africa, and, while some do not involve international actors, international actors are a common feature of many coalitions in the region and are often credited with being instrumental to the sustainability of grassroots reform initiatives. International conferences and organizations can provide important platforms for legitimizing movement claims, for acquiring new information, and for accessing training that can be used to achieve local goals. Women's movements in both Uganda and Botswana had linkages to international organizations and groups that proved to be instrumental to jumpstarting or reinvigorating the movements at various points (Bauer 2011, Goldenberg 2008). Goldenberg (2008) tells the story of a Ugandan NGO that sent NGO staff for training in Kenya, through a global network of women's organizations, to learn about strategies to engage local

authorities about issues such as women's property rights, domestic violence, education for poor children, and support for people with HIV (p449). Involvement of international actors is not, however, unproblematic, especially if their support for a grassroots initiative is financial. Mission drift (Igoe 2003, Oyugi 2004), structural changes within grassroots organizations in response to donor recommendations (Igoe 2003), or competition between coalition members for donor funding (Kaye 2011) can impede the success of grassroots reform scale-up and sustainability.

iii.   The Nature of Coalitions

Beyond the development of horizontal networks through coalition-building across various types of actors, the autonomy of grassroots initiatives from external influence—whether from communities or from cooptation by the state—is a common theme that emerges in the literature on grassroots reform in sub-Saharan Africa. In reforms to encourage sustainable resource use and forest management, one of the most successful reforms has included those in which communities have decision-making power over resources as compared with schemes in which communities only have access to the use of resources (Wily 2001). The former is more likely in *de facto* decentralized environments. Autonomy can also include NGO autonomy from donor influence (Igoe 2003), civil society autonomy from political influence (Hirschson 2007, Tripp 2001), or more generally the autonomy of scale-up efforts from state cooptation or influence (Debusscher and Almagro 2016, Mati 2012, Demirel-Pegg 2015).

iv.   Experience and Learning

The success of grassroots reform in sub-Saharan Africa has been in part the result of the learning that occurs as individuals and groups participate in civil society organizations and engage in processes of grassroots organizing over time. This speaks to the importance of public spaces for coalition-building alluded to earlier in the Indian case. Sharkh (1999), writing about the South African women's movement, argues that its success in advancing women's rights (characterized by the far-reaching legal rights women achieved in the Constitution and representation in the post-apartheid South African government) was in part because the movement benefitted from the "organizational resources" that had been established by the anti-apartheid movement, including a focus on an equal rights frame, legal rights/reform, and political participation. Learning also occurs at the individual level when individuals who have participated in activism or movements translate their experiences to coalition-building in new reforms. Activists of the anti-apartheid movement have played central roles in the activity and leadership of post-apartheid housing policy initiatives (Faranak 2005).

v.   Vertical Ties

The literature on grassroots movements in sub-Saharan Africa also emphasizes two interrelated vertical ties, one between the state and civil society (autonomy vs. co-optation) and another between civil society and its respective community (the extent for which the organization involves or empowers community members). Importantly, this is not as simple as centralized versus decentralized political systems. For example, Tripp (2001) argues that the women's movement in Uganda maintained its focus under one of the most longstanding authoritarian regimes in the world, in part because it could align its interests with those of the Museveni administration. The evidence thus suggests that successful grassroots scaling up involves strong alignment with community interests and autonomy from the state, plus building capabilities to collaborate with the state as well.

vi. Community Alignment

The Ugandan case, like others in the literature, speaks to the relationship between the grassroots movement and the community it represents. Where interests are more tightly coupled and understood, success is more common. Gasparre (2011) highlights how the South African Homeless People's Federation has found success by engaging with the citizens through community dialogue and surveys. This has allowed the organization to respond to feedback and better monitor progress. Moreover, Wily (2001) argues that natural resource management organizations in Tanzania have been successful when they have empowered community members to be land managers, providing them with a recognized role of authority over resource management in the villages. This strategy has worked because it encourages the community leaders to uphold and enforce the rules for conservation management. Another related issue is internal democracy and control within the organization. Hirschsohn (2007) studies the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) to demonstrate how "social movement unionism," involving greater worker control, institutions for participatory democracy, and an agenda that is firmly centered around workers' interests, has persisted beyond the democratic transition and remains one of the factors in COSATU's resilience.

vii. Autonomy and State Cooperation

Another dimension involves moving vertically from community-civil society ties to the relationship between civil society and the state. Tripp (2001) discusses the women's movement in Uganda and the importance of utilizing President Yoweri Museveni's promotion of women's leadership as an instrumental attempt to gain vote share and electoral support. Despite fairly close relations, the women's movement has been able to maintain a high level of autonomy from the ruling National Resistance Movement party. Moreover, it has protected its freedom to pursue ambitious policy reform and select its own leaders within the organization. The author distinguishes these as the defining factors behind the movement's success.

While autonomy is important, Muller and Mitlin (2007) and Mitlin (2008) also note that success with the Shack Dwellers Federation in Namibia has come from the organization's self-sufficiency and ability to work with the state through a co-production of services. The authors reiterate the community-based approach emphasized in the above section; however, they also stress the need to utilize the resources of the state and work more collaboratively to achieve its goals. This encourages capacity building in the organization and allows the organization to have greater control on how public resources are allocated. Furthermore the Shack Dwellers Federation has been able to remain self-sufficient and more autonomous from the state in achieving its goals of reform.

Overall, these findings highlight the vertical relation stretching from the community to the grassroots movement to the state. It is unclear whether these variables can be reduced to more structural factors (*e.g.,* degree of centralization, strength of institutions, regime type) in the region. Nevertheless, the literature on these successful cases demonstrates that striking the careful balance between different forms of embeddedness and autonomy has been crucial to grassroots movements scaling up in sub-Saharan Africa.

CROSS-REGIONAL COMPARISONS

There is obviously more variation across than within regions. The differences between, say, largely democratic Latin America and the largely authoritarian Middle East are striking, and similar distinctions also loom large (*e.g.*, external actors are more salient in poorer than in better-off regions, etc.). But we are nonetheless struck by three related lessons that seem to come out of the cross-regional comparison:

1. The importance of state structure (and strength).

2. The tradeoff between the conditions that facilitate grassroots reforms and the conditions that allow them to scale.

3. The role of coalitions and their members in determining whether these tradeoffs prove fatal or merely vexing to reforms and reformers.

A. State Structure/Strength and Grassroots Reform

The regional analyses demonstrate a simple lesson: There is simply more room for grassroots reform to take hold in polities that afford localities and their actors more autonomy. But local autonomy takes hold and manifests itself in different ways in different times, places, and types of polity. In democracies like Brazil and India, for example, it is a product of formal federalism. Regional and/or local governments are *supposed* to have a degree of policymaking and budgetary autonomy, and it is their autonomy that makes them receptive to grassroots reform. Elsewhere, however, it results from a mismatch between formal structure and *de facto* responsibility. To take an admittedly extreme example, Colombia is a unitary state that distributes approximately one-third of all public expenditures through 32 departmental and 1,190 municipal governments (Levitas 2017), a striking mismatch between formal structure and facts on the ground. (*n.b.:* elsewhere the mismatch works in the opposite direction. For instance, Pakistan is nominally a federal state but is highly centralized in practice in both authoritarian and democratic periods, and thus much less hospitable to grassroots reform than neighboring India.)

Similarly, striking distinctions can be drawn among autocracies. In countries like Egypt and Lebanon, for example, local autonomy is a product of state weakness. It was the very absence of local government (or perhaps governance), rather than formal decentralization, that allowed and encouraged the development of self-help infrastructure projects on the outskirts of Cairo, or for the Youstink movement to take hold in Lebanon. Insofar as formal decentralization occurred in the latter case, it was a response to—rather than a source of—the movement's success. In China, by way of contrast, decentralization was a deliberate government strategy that gave birth to a range of policy experiments, some of which scaled for different reasons in a context of "fragmented authoritarianism." The key point, however, is that local autonomy seems conducive to grassroots reform no matter how it occurs.

B. The Paradox of Decentralization

The second lesson to emerge from the regional analysis concerns the tradeoff between the conditions that facilitate the scaling of reform and those that give rise to reform in the first place. While local autonomy seems to open the door to grassroots reform, for example, by offering more reformers the incentives and opportunities they need to experiment at all, it arguably makes scaling more difficult for at least two reasons:

1. Different (or rival) governments or parties may resist mimicking even the most successful reforms, especially if they cannot claim credit for their design and discovery.

2. Local governments may lack the resources or fiscal autonomy they need to deepen and entrench reforms at home.

In keeping with the market systems framework, the former threat poses an obstacle to the *broadening* of reform, and the latter would seem to pose a threat to reform *deepening* (Fowler *et al.*, 2016).

C. *Resolving the Paradox with Broad Coalitions*

Insofar as the paradox is resolved, in our experience, it is resolved by broader coalitions of reformers. In South Africa, for example, the People's Housing Process proved successful "because it mobilized community resources (savings), and built linkages to formal intermediary financial institutions to secure funding to build homes," whereas more narrowly focused housing initiatives proved less successful or sustainable. Similarly, Thai health care reforms went national when their elite sponsors captured the public health care bureaucracy, reached out to key policymakers, and eventually gained influence in a dominant political party. Nor is the finding limited to the relatively propitious conditions of South Africa or Thailand. Insofar as we find (relatively) successful reforms in the Middle East, for example, they are those like the ones promoted by the Youstink movement, which have cross-class and cross-sectarian foundations.

The point is not only to broaden the coalitions quantitatively, however, by drawing in more members, or geographically, by expanding their territorial scope, but to broaden their bases in terms of skill and social class. The evidence we have adduced suggests that professionals play an outsized role in successful movements (Chorev and Schrank 2017). This is true not only in Lebanon, where Youstink transcended the class divide, but in Thailand, where doctors sponsored health care reform, Brazil, where engineers, educators, and health professionals have pushed reforms in their respective sectors, Colombia, where teachers stood behind the Escuela Nueva, and India, where frontline health workers were critical to the success of the State Health Resource Centre (SHRC) in Chhattisgarh.

By the same token, however, opposition from professionals can prove fatal to reform. While the general practitioners who dominated the Thai doctors' movement eventually won their campaign, for example, they spent years fighting off the efforts of highly paid specialists who sought to derail universal coverage. In their efforts to do so, moreover, the doctors benefitted from donor efforts to confirm their estimates of the costs and benefits of reform and in so doing to legitimate their arguments.

Our suspicion, therefore, is that the prospects for scaling are best when broad-based coalitions push reforms in polities that afford them local autonomy (Figure 1). Local autonomy allows the reforms to get off the ground, and broad coalitions raise the likelihood that they will scale in terms of breadth and/or depth.

Figure 1: Summary of findings and interpretations

		Local autonomy	
		Higher	*Lower*
Social coalitions	*Broad*	Higher probability of scaling	Limited likelihood of reform
	Narrow	Reforms without scale	Limited likelihood of reform

To be clear, these are very abstract findings that manifest themselves very differently in different contexts. Broad coalitions in decentralized environments include everything from alliances of private entrepreneurs and public officials in authoritarian China to alliances of architects, engineers, activists, and left-leaning local governments in democratic Brazil. But the idea that scaling up is most likely when broad alliances push reform in decentralized polities would seem to provide a useful takeaway message in the short run, and a hypothesis to be explored over time.

CONCLUSION

We have reviewed the scholarly and gray area literatures on grassroots reforms in five world regions and tentatively concluded that they are most likely to scale when they are introduced in permeable polities backed by broad coalitions. While broad coalitions are better able to champion reforms in the first place, porous or decentralized polities provide more hospitable reform environments, and the two factors together converge to make scale-up most likely. By way of conclusion, therefore, we would like to draw actionable lessons from our research. To do so, we would like to begin by noting that one of our key variables—the degree of local autonomy or permeability of the polity—is essentially a feature of regimes, and that most donor organizations are not in the business of regime change. We will therefore focus on a different question—how might donors foster broad-based reform coalitions?—offering five sequential answers.

First, we think that donors might establish or fund public spaces in which reform coalitions can emerge, grow, develop and share their ideas, and build trust and confidence. Some of the World Bank's participatory accountability initiatives might offer one example. India's National Advisory Council might provide another. But the key point is to create a space in which key stakeholders can develop and trade reform proposals, strategies, and tactics. There is no guarantee that initiatives will issue reform, let alone reform that scales, but these tend to be very low-cost initiatives, so even with a rather low "win ratio" they will tend to have high payoffs.

Second, we believe the win ratio is likely to be higher if the right participants are around the table. While there is no universal recipe, the right participants are likely to include stakeholders with a relatively wide range of backgrounds, including not only the poor and dispossessed, who most need reform, but skilled professionals who have more influence and distinct knowledge bases. Public officials themselves might be useful participants, though that is likely to be highly context-dependent.

Third, given their distinct backgrounds and, to some degree, interests, we cannot assume that different stakeholders will simply reach agreement on their own. It is therefore useful to have a moderator (or moderators) in the room, and to choose those moderators carefully. In some environments,

representatives of donor organizations (or other foreign organizations) might be (perceived to be) neutral outsiders, and might therefore have an advantage over local actors. Elsewhere, they might be perceived as interlopers, and insiders might have an advantage. There is no universal recipe, but attention should be paid to these and similar considerations as public spaces are being built.

Fourth, some team members believe that left-leaning governments offer more propitious environments for reform. Others are more skeptical, and worry that, if anything, this represents a disproportionate focus on left-leaning reforms in the literature. There are certainly contexts in which "market-oriented" or conservative reforms scale as well (Goldfrank and Schrank, 2009). The key point, therefore, is less to assume that one party or tendency is more conducive to reform and scaling in general than to be sensitive to these issues as reform coalitions are constructed.

Fifth, and finally, the construction and cultivation of public spaces requires an immense amount of local knowledge: not only an understanding of which actors have the substantive knowledge and interest to participate but the resources and commitment to follow through, the trust and interpersonal skills to collaborate effectively, the legitimacy and charisma required to win others to the cause, etc. This is not the sort of knowledge one can develop in six months or even a year; insofar as donors want to promote grassroots reform and scale-up, therefore, they would do well to consider these factors when making personnel, budgeting, and planning decisions in their field offices.

A final reminder: The literature on this topic is still drastically underdeveloped, and all of these conclusions are quite tentative. The one thing about which we are certain, and it is certainly a cliché by now, is that more research is necessary.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

To synthesize what little is known about scaling-up, we carried out a thorough review of the academic and policy literatures on grassroots reform in the developing world. This was rendered difficult in part by the lack of an obvious sampling frame from which to choose the relevant reforms. There is no complete enumeration of grassroots reforms, and we were therefore forced to pursue the following, somewhat ad hoc approach.

First, team members were given broad responsibility for their areas of regional expertise as per the workplan.

Region	Team members
East Asia	Kristine Li, Andrew Schrank
Latin America	Andrew Schrank, Ben Bradlow
Middle East and North Africa	Marcus Walton, Rehan Jamil
South Asia	Patrick Heller, Anindita Adhikari, Rehan Jamil
Sub-Saharan Africa	Chantel Pheiffer, Marcus Walton

Second, responsible team members endeavored to identify grassroots reform campaigns—both successful and unsuccessful—by means of informal communication with regional experts and secondary research in scholarly and policy literatures. The former typically included emails asking the experts to identify particularly important grassroots reforms in their regions and countries of expertise and useful studies of their origins and results. The latter typically entailed subject and full-text searches of library databases (*e.g.,* JSTOR, ProjectMuse, EBSCO, SocIndex, etc.) and search engines (*i.e.,* Google) focused on several families of keywords alone or in combination with each other:

- Regions and countries (*e.g.,* Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, India, Brazil, Bangladesh, rural as well as urban settings, *etc.*).
- Issue areas including both sectoral (*e.g.,* health, education, food, transportation, environmental protection, sanitation, agriculture) and transversal (*e.g.*, democracy, decentralization, transparency, rule of law, women's and minority rights, e*tc.*) themes.
- Actors (*e.g.,* social movements, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, parties, unions, professional and trade associations, religious and/or identity groups, *etc.*).
- Processes (*e.g.,* grassroots, bottom-up, small-scale, entitlements, "policy experimentations," "from below," "scale up," e*tc.*).

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