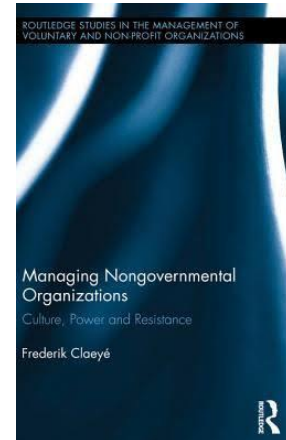


Frederik Claeeyé, **Managing Nongovernmental Organizations: Culture, Power and Resistance**. New York, NY: Routledge, 2014, 246 pp., \$88.41(hardcover), \$54.95 (Kindle edition).

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Globalization, and more recently its cousin term *glocalization*, is now firmly established as a master trope in cross-cultural research, with notions of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994; Kraidy, 2005), adding further theoretical complexity. Studies in organizational communication have likewise responded with examinations of the unique challenges and forms of management culture and practice in a global context (e.g., Gamble, 2010; Hofstede, 2011; Jackson, 2013). To this growing body of literature, Frederik Claeeyé adds **Managing Nongovernmental Organizations: Culture, Power and Resistance**, a valuable critical consideration of global–local dynamics in the third sector.



A central research question anchors the book: *How do the global and local interact in shaping management ideas and practices in nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)?* From this overarching inquiry, Claeeyé parcels out three framing questions that guide the progression of his research and the organization of the book: (1) How are NGOs managed?; (2) What discursive resources do they draw upon to construct their notion of NGO management?; and (3) Why are NGOs organized and managed in this way? In approaching these questions, Claeeyé draws on an avowedly critical orientation, marrying Foucauldian perspectives and postcolonial theory as he considers central themes of power, resistance, and hybridity in nonprofit management. His emphasis, therefore, lands squarely on the side of cultural, interpretivist approaches to organizational communication, concerned far more with patterns of discourse and relations of power than with prescriptive evaluations of program effectiveness.

The book is split roughly into two sections, the first offering contextual information and laying out the theoretical foundation of his approach, the second presenting Claeeyé’s own research and analysis. He begins with a thorough overview of the NGO landscape, outlining the rise to dominance of the aid-effectiveness agenda that has positioned NGOs as agents of development with an emphasis on businesslike approaches to organization and management.

He then tracks the various ways in which third-sector management has been theorized, from convergence approaches that align nonprofit management with corporate strategies to divergence approaches that view NGOs as unique forms requiring distinct managerial styles of their own. Noting the relative lack of attention that has been paid to cross-cultural encounters despite their salience in the context of international aid, Claeeyé also sets the stage for his own theoretical framework, urging the incorporation of postcolonial theory in considerations of the cross-cultural interactions that shape the discourses and practices of NGO management. Taken together, the first four chapters of the book provide an informative and provocative foundation for his research, establishing his position in relation to—and to some degree apart from—current literature and theorization related to cross-cultural management.

Chapters 5 through 8 are dedicated to Claeýé's research, a qualitative study of 15 nonprofit organizations in South Africa. Claeýé describes his two-part methodological approach as

an ethnomethodologically informed analysis of everyday discursive practices through which social reality (*in casu* 'NGO management') is constructed and social order achieved within an existing institutional and cultural structure; and, an analysis of institutionalised discourses, which is based on more post-structuralist and Foucauldian ideas and considerations. (p. 79)

His findings are grouped according to his three central subquestions, advancing by stages from descriptive to increasingly abstract and theoretical considerations of management in these organizations. Addressing how NGOs are managed, Claeýé begins with an analysis of everyday material practices, laying out patterns of day-to-day management that determine organizational structure and decision-making processes. He then progresses to the discursive practices that inform these managerial norms and finishes with a constructivist consideration of the underlying power relations at play.

The book concludes with a final summary and discussion chapter, summarizing his research and outlining key contributions and limitations.

In examining the practices, discourses, and power relations in these organizations, Claeýé identifies a fundamental global-local tension between cultures of management. Emanating from the global, Western-dominated aid infrastructure is a push toward increasingly managerialist and instrumentalist management practices, with an emphasis on quantifiable outcomes, professionalization of staffs, more structured systems of program and staff evaluation, and an overall more businesslike approach of rational economic logics. As this managerialist approach becomes normalized as the "rules of the game" and reified through training and capacity-building programs, organizations are either marginalized in the aid system or pulled into alignment by institutional norms and asymmetric power relations of donor dependence. Even as managerialist approaches are internalized and operationalized, however, Claeýé notes the persistence of local cultural approaches that push back against managerialist discourses in a process of contestation and negotiation.

He identifies *ubuntu* as a cultural construct particular to South and sub-Saharan Africa, referencing a worldview that emphasizes community, reciprocity, and interpersonal relationships. In contrast to the instrumentalism of managerialist approaches, *ubuntu* offers an essentially humanist orientation that repositions value more in reference to human experience than quantifiable measures of effectiveness. These two contrasting approaches of instrumentalism and *ubuntu* intersect in the management of these NGOs, creating both tension and opportunity. Here, Claeýé draws on Homi Bhabha's (1984, 1994) notions of hybridity to posit a process of active, agentic resistance, reinterpretation, and negotiation in which the two frameworks are merged into a uniquely hybrid "numbers though people" approach. Claeýé does not suggest total resistance or equal balance, but rather that the influence of *ubuntu* to some extent tempers the numbers-driven managerialist approach to draw it into closer alignment with local cultural values.

Claeyé's principal theoretical contribution is bringing postcolonial theory and ideas of mimicry and hybridity to bear in the study of nonprofit management, demonstrating the ways in which global and local influences clash, interact, and blend to create new forms of management. Throughout the book, he presents his work with clarity and cohesiveness; his analysis is rich and provocative, building a strong case for central roles of culture, power, and resistance in the conceptualization and operationalization of management practices. He is also particularly adept at balancing the general and the particular, incorporating concrete examples and substantial quotes from his interview subjects in a way that simultaneously illuminates and grounds his claims in lived experience. Although his research is limited to South African organizations, he makes a convincing case that although the specific construct of ubuntu may be locally bound, the processes of resistance and negotiation through which local cultural values moderate dominant managerial discourses may be similarly mapped across local NGOs that find themselves part of the political economy of the global aid landscape.

Additionally, from a pedagogical perspective, some of the earlier chapters of Claeyé's book offer neatly packaged overviews and considerations of key concepts and methods in organizational culture and communication that professors and students may find particularly helpful. His discussion and critique in chapter 4, for instance, of how power has been conceptualized in international management is particularly thorough and cogent, and will serve as a good introduction and theoretical reference for any scholar of culture interested in questions of power and resistance in the cross-cultural context, whether in the NGO sector or otherwise.

Moving from theory to practice, Claeyé points to the central role of organizational leadership, encouraging an embrace of hybridization as an active and consciously managed process of organizational change. He declines to make similar proposals for a concrete reorientation at the level of funders or the international aid system, although both are implicated as key actors throughout his analyses. This is perhaps in line with his thematic emphasis on the agency of organizations, but is somewhat surprising nonetheless. Likewise, although there is some distinction between the various types of organizations represented in Claeyé's research (categorized as faith-based, nondenominational, or community-based), the significance of these distinct organizational forms is not fully evident or explored in great depth.

Claeyé acknowledges that in reality there is far greater complexity and variation in the experiences of NGOs than fit neatly in his framework, and that he has sampled and interpreted his findings purposively and with self-reflexive subjectivity. Even so, however, there are nagging points of slight disjuncture in the premise and framework of the book, many of which he recognizes but unsatisfactorily addresses in his concluding chapter. The core managerialism-ubuntu tension is a compelling frame on which to hang his analysis, but it creates an inescapably David-and-Goliath narrative, with all its associated value judgments. Claeyé explicitly states in his concluding chapter that it is not his intent to posit a simplistic dichotomy of good ubuntu versus bad managerialism, but this subtlety is less present in the main body of the book and would have been a welcome and important reminder throughout his analysis. This is reinforced in part by the relatively minimal attention to practical effects of the two different management styles; although he references the risk of alienating or demoralizing staff members with a culturally inappropriate one-size-fits-all, largely Western model of management, elaboration of how

this is practically manifested is limited. Claeys is clear that his concern is not with evaluation, and this effectively frees his attention to focus more on deep analysis of discursive practices and the more innovative aspects of his incorporation of postcolonial theory into management theory, but a somewhat greater specificity of what is at stake may have further bolstered his argument and added nuance to his analysis.

Taken as a whole, Claeys's work represents a significant contribution to theorizations of management in hybrid third-sector organizations, reaffirming the primacy of discourse and power and shaping of institutions norms and illuminating the role of agency and identity in the active formation and enactment of organizational culture. Scholars of organizational communication and management will find much in *Managing Nongovernmental Organizations: Culture, Power and Resistance* to provoke thought and conversation, and considerations of nonprofit management in the global context will be richer for its deep qualitative analysis and innovative perspective.

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