Analysing Collaboration Between Non-Governmental Service Providers and Governments

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ANALYSING COLLABORATION IN SERVICE DELIVERY BETWEEN NGOs AND GOVERNMENTS

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SUMMARY

This article introduces a special issue on relations between governments and NGOs that collaborate in improving public service provision in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. NGOs are the focus because, while they are far from being the main non-state service provider, they are the sector most likely to enter into collaboration with government. However, such collaboration is often thought to lead to the loss of NGO autonomy and capacity for independent public action. The article analyses the factors that have led to the growth of NGO service provision and to the call for their partnership with government. It then describes the theoretical approach and research framework on which the special issue is based. The approach considers the institutional and organizational constraints to which NGOs subject themselves by entering into relations with government, but also their capacity for 'strategic choice' in the exercise of influence. Lastly, the article summarizes the contributions to this special issue and relates them to the wider literature.

Key words: government-NGO relations, service provision, collaboration, partnership

INTRODUCTION[2]

Governments have widely failed to provide adequate public services. In many developing countries, non-state providers could be seen as filling the gaps left by the failure of government services. Indeed, the situation is often reversed – it is government that is the minority provider.

Non-state providers (commercial, traditional, faith-based or non-governmental organizations) mostly operate independently of government, in parallel or in competition with public providers. Sometimes, they work under contract as agents of government. In an earlier special issue of Public Administration and Development (Volume 26 Number 3, 2006), we presented an analysis of relationships between governments and non-state providers (not just NGOs) in six African and Asian countries. This special issue focuses on governments' relationships with NGOs in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, based on

the authors' joint research on collaboration in the spheres of primary healthcare, basic education and sanitation in these countries.

We chose to focus on NGOs, not because they are the most prolific non-state providers but because, by comparison with private enterprises, they are more likely to enter into collaborative and not only contractual relations with government. Moreover, they are also more likely to have their own agendas for public policy. The term 'NGO' is an ambivalent one – for some, it implies non-profit, philanthropic organizations; for others, particularly in South Asia, it carries a more negative implication of high salary, donor-funded organizations (Bano 2008). We use it in a neutral sense to describe formally structured organizations that claim a philanthropic, non-profit purpose and that are not part of government[3].

An earlier special issue of Public Administration and Development (Volume 22 Number 1, 2002) also addressed relations between government and non-profit organizations. While it did not focus on service provision, it set out what has remained a defining framework on the concept of 'partnership'. We use the more neutral term 'relationship' because many of the forms of collaboration that we investigated are not based on the mutuality or 'equality of decision making' and 'the maintenance of organization identity' that for Brinkerhoff (2002) define an ideal partnership. As Brinkerhoff (2011) recognizes, the balance of power in decision making and the organizational identity of the collaborators are very often precisely what are under question in the relationship.

The articles in this issue examine the implications of collaboration for the autonomy, influence and identity of the organizations that engage in it. What influences the nature of the relationship and the balance of influence between them? Our underlying assumption is that, as independent actors, the partners are likely to have distinctive views about public services and how they should be provided. Also, the way that the relationship is formally and informally organized, by setting the rules of the game, affects the capacity of the actors to assert influence. The relationship between them may challenge their established approaches and even their organizational identity. They will have different levels of capacity to apply strategies that defend or advance their interests. In that sense, the nature of the relationship is dynamic and in question.

This article identifies the distinctiveness of the relationship between government and NGOs, outlines the research approach and framework that were shared by the writers of the following articles, summarizes the contributions of each of the articles, and shows how they relate to the wider literature. A full survey of the relevant literature follows in the article by Mcloughlin in this issue.

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[3] This is similar to Clarke's (1998: 2-3) definition: NGOs are 'private, non-profit, professional organizations with a distinctive legal character, concerned with public welfare goals'. However, their status and goals may be claims rather than objective reality - see Hilhorst 2003: 6

THE FOCUS ON NGOs AMONG OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS

In South Asia, as in many other developing countries, basic health, water and sanitation services are principally delivered not by government but by non-state actors (including small entrepreneurs, as well as NGOs, faith-based and community organizations, and households). In basic education the scale of non-state provision is smaller but is still significant. The post-independence ideal of universal state provision of basic services has not been realized.

The types of non-state provider vary between service sectors. Small-scale private entrepreneurs operate in health, education, water and sanitation, and are usually the most abundant but least known category. In many developing countries, they often operate beyond the radar of government, with their main strategy being avoidance of government regulation (Palmer 2006; Rose 2006). As such, their connection with government tends to be limited. Community and household provision is most prevalent in water and sanitation (Sansom 2006), although community organizations often also act as funders and managers of schools. NGOs are often direct providers of health and education, but more rarely active in water supply and sanitation except as facilitators (Batley 2006).

Our focus on NGOs is therefore not due to the scale of their presence as independent providers of services but to the roles they have often adopted in relation to government services: piloting alternatives, collaborating in the implementation of government programmes, undertaking services on behalf of government, criticizing public services and advocating improvements.

The article by Nair in this issue describes the evolution of the relationship between governments (or more broadly, states) and non-governmental organizations in the three countries. The experience is diverse but, behind the different histories, paths of economic development and political systems, there is at least one broad trend in common – towards increasing formal recognition by governments and development agencies of the case for collaboration with non-state actors.

Though this simplifies complex and different histories and variations between service sectors, three phases of the relationship can be detected in the post-colonial era.

1. Initially, states asserted their role as universal provider of services leading sometimes to incorporation, control or even suppression of voluntary and charitable service provision (Tandon and Mohanty 2003; Narayan 2003).
2. In response to the failure to achieve universal provision of publicly provided services, in the 1980s commercial provision burgeoned and NGOs rose as a recognized sector with independent and often external funding to compete with or complement the state sector. In the face of weak public services and the decline of support for state-led development, non-state actors, including NGOs, came to be more formally promoted as alternatives to state provision – either for ideological reasons or in recognition of the fact that they were in practice already filling some of the gaps in state services. In the South Asian countries the numbers and funding of NGOs dedicated to providing services or influencing government

provision grew greatly through the 1980s and 1990s (Alam 2007; Bano 2007; Kabeer et al 2010; Lewis 2004; Nair 2007).

3. From the mid-1990s, donor funding often carried with it the requirement for partnership between government and non-state providers. In India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and across service sectors, government policy came to employ the discourse of partnership with NGO and private actors (Haque 2004; 272; Lewis 2008a; Najam 2000).

These phases in the relationship – governmental control, independent non-state provision, collaboration and partnership – in practice have not simply replaced each other but continue to co-exist uncomfortably contributing to tensions between government and other providers about responsibilities, funding and relationships. The commitment to partnership is usually clear at the level of principle and policy, but in practice is often met with scepticism and mistrust on both sides. This is not peculiar to South Asia; Casey (2011: 3) analyses a similar trend to collaborative relations in North America, Europe and Australasia, but noting that 'collaborative symbiosis co-exists with head-butting antagonism'.

Because they do not appear to be acting for a private interest, NGOs are apparently well-placed to seize the opportunities presented by the call for partnership and collaboration (Robinson 2008; Salamon 2006). However, the very fact that NGOs like governments, claim to pursue the public interest can also be the basis of rivalry between them. To the extent that they are independently funded by voluntary contributions, endowments or payments by foreign governments, NGOs may have a peculiar autonomy in deciding how they operate and what services they deliver – by comparison with elected governments and with market operators. Moreover, they often define their role not only as service providers but also as advocates for and mobilizers of the poor, and contributors to the formation of policy (Tandon 2003). They seek to influence government policy as advocates as well as respond to it as service providers.

Moreover, by comparison with for-profit firms, non-profit NGOs are likely to have their own established practices and ideologies about the nature, purpose and processes of the public action in which they are involved (Lewis 2006). These established positions are built on accountability to different constituencies than those of government. The accountability of NGOs is often called into question, not only because it may be absent but also because it may be multi-directional to funders, members, subscribers and communities which may lead them to have difficulties in reconciling internal differences of priority and sustaining agreed positions (Edwards and Hulme 2003), and therefore also in maintaining an agreed position in a relationship with government.

For governments, involving NGOs presents opportunities to extend the coverage and diversity of service provision, but it also exposes them to risks of being unable to maintain policy coherence and of losing control of resources and power (Robinson 2008). For NGOs, there are questions about their engagement with government that are unlikely to be faced by firms. Do they seek to engage as insiders who collaborate on government's terms in service provision, as semi-insiders who seek to influence policy from within, or

as outsiders who choose to exercise pressure on behalf of particular groups? (Craig, Taylor and Parkes 2004) Can these roles and strategies be pursued together or do choices have to be made? Under what circumstances may they change over time? Can NGOs engage with government while conserving their identity and autonomy?

AN APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONS

One of the key findings of the literature reviews undertaken for this research (Teamey and Mcloughlin 2009; Teamey 2010) was that much of the literature has focused on comparing the quality and benefits of state versus NGO provision, and on presenting typologies of the relations between them when they do seek to collaborate. There is much less that analyzes the dynamics of the relationship between them, and the contextual factors that influence relationships – although the literature widely calls for more account to be taken of historical and institutional contexts (Mcloughlin, this issue). Mcloughlin's article, like the earlier working papers, is therefore not just a review of the literature on government-NGO relations in service provision, but is framed as a search for material that addresses these criticisms and supports a more comprehensive research approach.

This section describes the roots of our research approach in theory that brings together two apparently opposed views about inter-organizational relationships. The next section shows how this was applied through a research framework that underlies all the articles in this special issue. The last section connects the broad research findings back to the allied literature on government-NGO relationships.

In that literature, our closest points of reference are Najam (2000) and Ramanath (2005 and 2009). Like us they link two apparently contradictory perspectives in organization theory. There has been a long-standing debate about whether organizations' behaviour is determined by their institutional environment or whether organizational actors have capacity for strategic choice. The position we have adopted links the two sides of the argument: organizations are both a product of institutions *and* can influence them; institutional environments both constrain actors *and* provide opportunities for some to advance their interests. It emphasizes the "interaction of organizational actors with institutional contexts, recognizing the duality of structure and action" (Greenwood and Hinings 2006). Organizational actors can interpret, manipulate and even change the limits and opportunities that surround them.

The first (constrained) position is given by the emphasis of neo-institutional theorists on the dominance of institutions in setting the boundaries of legitimacy within which organizations function (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Scott 1995). Political institutions establish and impose conformity with policies, rules and laws, while social institutions set the values and the norms through which organizations can pursue their ends. In the institutional view, organizations evolve by successfully adapting their form, practices and identity to these requirements. They come to embed them in their own organizations on the basis of mimicry, conformity and cooperation (Rodrigues and Child 2008: 8-10).

This argument has been widely used in organizational theory to explain sameness (*isomorphism*) in organizations operating in a field: "by incorporating institutional rules within their own structures, organizations become more homogeneous, more similar in structure, over time" (Scott, 1998: 212-213; DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff 2002). The view that NGOs become more like the government and donor agencies with which they collaborate emerges repeatedly in the literature, as Mcloughlin's article in this issue shows.

As Rodrigues and Child note, this view tends to be one of 'corporate passivity': organizations evolve by adapting to prevailing systems, converging on established successful models, positioning themselves as far as possible at the centre of existing networks of power and privilege. In this view, change occurs where systems are shocked, not where actors choose to take action. 'Jolts' destabilize established practices; these "may take the form of social upheaval, technological disruptions, competitive discontinuities, or regulatory change" (Greenwood and Hinings 2006). Examples are the fiscal crisis that led to the emergence of neo-liberal and new managerial approaches in the 1980s, and the crisis of the western financial system from 2007. In these new institutional environments, actors that were previously at the margins of power may find themselves now better suited to the new conditions than those that were previously at the centre. Given their existing endowments, some may be well-adjusted to the new climate of ideas, developing appropriate organizational responses that others will mimic or have imposed on them.

By contrast, Rodrigues and Child (2008: 10-17) argue that organizational actors may not only react to situations of radical institutional disruption but also make proactive interventions under normal circumstances and continuously. While their view remains attached to the institutional perspective, it combines this with the idea of social agency: actors (such as NGO managers), guided by their interests and values, can make *strategic choices* that affect their position (Child 1997; Oliver 1991). Actors operate within institutional constraints and opportunities but can try to adapt to their situation, to shape it, or to avoid it by escaping into other spheres of policy, other organizational fields or other jurisdictions. Their bargaining power is affected by their level of 'resource dependence' on other organizations, that is the extent to which they control key resources such as finance, technology and expertise or have to comply with those who do control them. (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003)

The idea of 'strategic choice' suggests an analysis of how leading groups define the identity and interests of an organization, make sense of external constraints and opportunities, and use them to negotiate with other organizations. They may realize their goals "both through selection *between* environments and through seeking accommodation with external parties *within* given environments" (Rodrigues and Child 2008: 12).

These elements of organizational theory - institutional influences; organizational resources, interests and values; and actors' capacity for strategic understanding and action – have been brought together in a framework known as 'co-evolution' (Lewin and

Volberda 1999; Rodrigues and Child 2008). Organizations and context are interdependent and evolve over time through a process of mutual interaction and influence. Policies, regulations and social norms set the framework within which organizations operate, but organizational decision-makers can interpret them, develop strategic responses, and incrementally modify them.

THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK[4]

Our approach sees organizations and their goals as being conditioned by their histories and by the institutions that surround them. These conditioning factors act not just as external constraints and opportunities but are embedded in organizations as part of their make-up. Government agencies and NGOs therefore bring to any relationship their own pre-existing and more or less negotiable organizational forms, identities, values and practices. The relationships they form, whether in a contract or a looser agreement, create a new organizational framework within which these previous commitments are played out and new ones may emerge. At all stages, there is interplay between institutional influences, organizational structures and the strategies of actors.

The research, on which all the articles in this issue are based, applied this approach through a hypothetical causal chain of influences that is illustrated in Figure 1. This takes us from the macro-institutional factors on the right of the diagram to the study of particular organizational relationships on the left, and then back to the influence of the relationship on the identity of the organizations. Like Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff (2002: 12), we see the evolution of the relationship as a loop of 'engagement, feedback, adjustment and re-engagement'.

Going from the right to the left of Figure1, the causal chain goes from the influence of the historical and institutional context to the specific case study organizations and the relationship between them:
- The formative environment in which government and NGOs operate includes both macro institutions (legal, governmental and social) and meso institutions that operate within particular fields of policy. The meso factors include policies, regulations, professional norms and networks, and lines of resource dependency and accountability……..
- This environment conditions the formation of the organizations – their interests; identities, values and goals; their resources and capacity; their leadership and decision-making structures…….
- This affects the broad strategies of engagement that organizations bring to their encounter with partners – their priorities, commitments and incentives to collaborate……
- Government and NGOs, shaped by the influences described above, meet in specific relationships about service delivery. The way that the relationship is formally and informally organized (whether in formal contracts or looser

[4] For further information about methodology and case study selection, see
http://www.idd.bham.ac.uk/research/service_providers.shtml#Whose

agreements), by setting the rules of the game, affects the capacity of collaborators to assert influence……..

- Actors respond by developing strategies or tactics to avoid or use the relationship to their advantage……….
- The experience of the specific relationship may feed back into a general redefinition of organizational interests, identities and strategies.

[PLACE FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Our three main research objectives were therefore: first to understand the factors that condition the formation of the collaborating organizations; second, to understand the effect of the form of the relationship on the autonomy and influence of NGOs; and third, to identify the strategies that NGOs adopted to manage the relationship.

Early stages of the research began by examining the history and pattern of relationships between government agencies, NGOs and other actors operating within broad spheres of policy in each country. In the later stages, detailed case studies of relationships intended to be collaborative were undertaken. Where the case studies raised questions about the factors that influenced organizational behaviour, we took these back to the general level for explanation in broader policies and institutions, and then compared with the experience of other NGOs operating in the same policy field.

Our research was designed to obtain the benefits of the case study approach while also avoiding its weakness – that we only learn about specific cases. We located the case studies in a wider framework so as to use them as windows on more general experience. An important aspect of this was the identification of spheres of policy where there was significant collaboration between government and NGOs in all three countries, and where collaboration was sufficiently long-standing to allow us to observe its dynamics.

In India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, we examined relationships between governments and local or national NGOs across three service sectors. These were selected partly because of their importance in policy for poverty reduction – as indicated by their place in the UN's Millennium Development Goals – and also because they would allow cross-sectoral comparison of the factors affecting relationships:
1. Education: NGO provision of non-formal primary education and support to government primary schools
2. Health: NGO management of government primary health care centres
3. Sanitation: NGO delivery and support of community-based sanitation programmes.

After studying each of these at a national level, the research focused on cases of governmental collaboration with specific NGOs in each of the policy spheres (Table 1). An initial scoping of options led to the selection of nine cases of government-NGO collaboration - one per sector per country - using similar criteria as for the selection of spheres of policy, picking ones where there was a relationship between government and the NGO that had the status of a type or model seen by the parties as replicable. On this

basis we would claim that the experience of our case NGOs is not unusual. These NGOs were all significant national or regional actors, and had established a strong reputation for their work within each of the countries, and sometimes beyond. The three from Pakistan and the Indian health case were the largest actors in their field. The two other Indian cases were medium-sized NGOs working in basic education and community sanitation in the State of Maharashtra. The Bangladesh cases were all among the 20 to 40 NGOs selected by government to implement national programmes.

Table 1: The Selected Cases

	Sanitation	Health	Education
Pakistan	Orangi Pilot Project Research and Training Institute's facilitation of low-cost sanitation in Karachi	Punjab Rural Support Programme's management of basic health units	Idara-Taleem-o-Aagahi's support for government school improvement and NFE provision for child labourers
Bangladesh	Unnayan Shahojogy Team's implementation of a Community Led Total Sanitation programme	Population Services and Training Centre's management of primary health care centres in Dhaka	Friends in Village Development of Bangladesh child education programme, and participation in government NFE programme
India	Shelter Associates collaboration with Sangli Municipal Corporation in low cost sanitation	Management of primary health care centres by Karuna Trust in Karnataka	Door Step School's NFE programme, and support for government school improvement

Note: NFE denotes non-formal education

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

The articles in this special issue give attention to different parts of the flow diagram (Figure 1).

Mcloughlin examines how relations between government and NGOs have been understood and analysed in the literature – particularly, but not only, in the literature that addresses South Asian experience. She locates our research with other researchers who have emphasized the interaction between the parts of the flow diagram: the influence of the historical and institutional context, organizational arrangements and the strategies of actors. Nair examines the evolution of relations between states and NGOs in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh from a historical perspective, focusing on the macro-factors that have conditioned relationships, particularly in the selected service sectors. Bano's paper compares across the sectors in Pakistan. She looks at the relationship between the organizational features of NGOs - particularly leadership networks, technical capacities and financial sources - and their capacity to establish a sustained collaborative relationship with government. Alam examines relationships between government and NGOs in the health sector in Bangladesh to identify how inter-organizational relationships are becoming more contractual in nature, driven by the changing expectations and policies of donors and government. Rose compares the education cases

across the three countries, identifying the strategies NGOs adopt to balance service delivery and advocacy objectives and to maintain cooperative relations with governments. She examines the influence on NGOs' strategies of their dependence on funding sources, their contractual arrangements with government, and the national policy context. Sansom also compares across countries, focusing on community sanitation and considering the organizational and policy factors that have influenced relationships between NGOs and local governments, the development of collaboration through interaction and networks, and the influence of NGOs on government policy.

Batley traces the links across the whole of the causal chain presented in Figure 1 and across the three sectors and countries. He examines the influence on organizations' autonomy of structural factors - their sources of finance, dependency on government, and the terms of the agreements they enter into - and the ability of organizational actors to respond by making strategic choices to manage their environment.

Our broad conclusion is that, while institutional factors set the framework within which service delivery organizations in the three countries operate and inter-organizational relationships are formed, non-government service providers are not passive in the face of structural constraints. They adopt strategies that balance the need for financial survival, defence of their organizational identities, and commitment to their goals - including influencing government policy and practice. This position addresses several of the areas of debate identified by Mcloughlin, and in several respects challenges dominant views. We would not claim that our conclusions are universally applicable – there is too much variation in context and in the structure and behaviour of governments and NGOs for that to be the case. However, our case studies and the fact that we have located them in reviews of three important sector programmes involving governments with NGOs in three countries give our conclusions some force.

The debate tends to be polarized. There are those who see the *possibility* of partnership based on mutually agreed objectives and equal participation in decision-making (Brinkerhoff 2002) even if there is always the risk of co-optation by government (Brinkerhoff 2011). There are those who see NGOs as being almost inevitably subordinated and depoliticized by their engagement with government and donors (Wallace et al 2007; Kamat 2004). Our finding is that, even where NGOs are formally in a weak structural relationship with government, they may be less vulnerable to governmental dominance than either of these positions suggests.

Most of the agreements we studied had grown out of a long history of interaction and the accumulation of trust that led to the emergence of more formal agreements. Bano and Sansom in this issue find that the Orangi Pilot Project in Pakistan avoided written agreements but had clear informal understandings. Most others had entered into a written agreement as an expression of trust and to clarify roles. In about half the cases, the NGO had initiated the agreement and in some cases actually drafted it for government, as Rose notes in the Pakistan education case and Batley for the health case in India. Moreover, in those two cases, as Batley finds, the NGOs were effectively able to shape the relationship and 'reverse the roles of principal and agent'. Only in the Bangladesh cases can we see

relationships with government as being ones of subordination, where donor funding was channelled through government that entered into strict legal contracts with NGOs as executors of government's requirements. Such contracts were won on the basis of competitive bidding rather than the evolution of a relationship. Even here, the NGOs had options about whether or not to engage in such relationships.

The view that relationships with government and donors subordinate NGOs is adopted particularly in the literature about collaboration in service delivery. The argument is that the proximity to government undermines NGOs' independent role as advocates for change (Hulme and Edwards 1997; Matlin 2001; Smith and Lipsky 1998; Tandon 2003; Wallace et al 2007). Our findings are closer to those of Najam (2000) and Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff (2002): the advocacy role can be undertaken in any relationship but the tactics change. We found that NGOs engaged in service delivery had often had an important effect on government policy and practice. The articles by Bano, Batley, Rose and Sansom find that some NGOs – such as the Orangi Pilot Project in sanitation, the Karuna Trust in health or Idara-Taleem-o-Aagahi in education - had directly influenced government policy and practice. Others had asserted influence more implicitly and incrementally through their day to day interaction and example. Najam (2000) describes this as 'persuasive advocacy'. Sansom finds that some of NGOs we studied had passed the more direct advocacy roles to NGO forums (of which they were members), while themselves engaging on a more collaborative basis. Engagement in the practice of service delivery, meeting and talking with government officials are important parts of the persuasive model of advocacy. One could argue that this is a dangerous game: NGOs engage in a sort of 'calculated isomorphism', acting as semi-insiders, moving in the right circles and understanding the language and processes of government – without losing their separate perspective and mission.
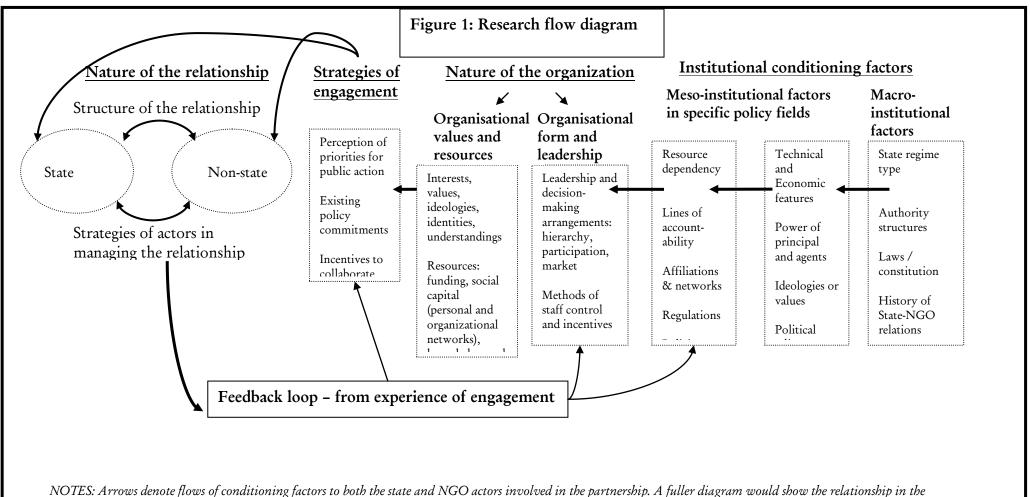
Most of the literature describes NGOs as if they respond passively to external pressures, rather than interpreting their environment and making strategic choices. However, our studies demonstrate that they are aware of the risks as well as the opportunities of the relationship with government. Even though strategies are not usually explicit, the practices of NGOs indicate tacit strategies that maintain their identity and influence.

What are the factors that enable NGOs to engage with government in a collaborative relationship whilst also maintaining their autonomy? Our research indicates factors that give NGOs credibility with government while also enabling them to maintain their distance. Bano, Rose and Sansom find, in different service sectors, that their credibility is based first on the technical expertise that they bring to government – for example in geographical information and mapping systems in sanitation, in current approaches to primary education and health, or in community mobilization. Second, it is based on their 'prior networks in the state that enabled them to form collaborative agreements' (Bano). The networks may be of elite connections that lead them to be selected for the provider role, of donor links that give them access to funding and familiarity with the language of partnership, or of professional affiliations that run across government and NGOs. Boundary crossing by NGO leaders whose careers have traversed NGOs, government and

international organizations facilitate this (Bano; see also Lewis 2008b and McFarlane 2007).

Boundary crossing and networking between government and civil society organizations is not only common, but is also an important basis for inclusive social change as a 10 year research programme on citizenship, participation and accountability concludes (Citizenship DRC, 2011). However, relationships based on technical credibility, networks and the evolution of informal relationships may be closed and exclusive. If these are the centripetal forces that draw NGOs and government together, what are the centrifugal forces that keep them sufficiently apart to maintain an open and collaborative rather than subservient relationship?

Bano identifies the importance of 'community embeddedness' - rooting the NGO in a particular community and employing local staff and volunteers - in securing the Orangi Pilot Project's independence from government. Sansom finds a similar situation in the Indian sanitation case and Rose in the Indian education case. At least as important and more generally applicable is a second centrifugal force: NGOs' maintenance of their financial independence. Batley and also Rose find that this is maintained in three main ways. First, there is the type of funding: some NGOs received untied funding from voluntary subscriptions, private donors and endowments that enabled them to engage with government without any financial exchange. Second, regardless of the type of funding, most NGOs had maintained a sufficient diversity of sources to reduce dependence on a particular source. Third, rather than having their interests directed by the source of finance, as Rose finds, some NGOs were able to reverse this by seeking the funder that shared their purpose. Ultimately, although the situation of some NGOs was more fragile than others, none was wholly dependent on a particular line of funding.

Figure 1: Research flow diagram

Nature of the relationship

Strategies of engagement

Nature of the organization

Institutional conditioning factors

Structure of the relationship

State — Non-state

Strategies of actors in managing the relationship

Organisational values and resources

Organisational form and leadership

Meso-institutional factors in specific policy fields

Macro-institutional factors

Perception of priorities for public action

Existing policy commitments

Incentives to collaborate

Interests, values, ideologies, identities, understandings

Resources: funding, social capital (personal and organizational networks),

Leadership and decision-making arrangements: hierarchy, participation, market

Methods of staff control and incentives

Resource dependency

Lines of account-ability

Affiliations & networks

Regulations

Technical and Economic features

Power of principal and agents

Ideologies or values

Political

State regime type

Authority structures

Laws / constitution

History of State-NGO relations

Feedback loop – from experience of engagement

NOTES: Arrows denote flows of conditioning factors to both the state and NGO actors involved in the partnership. A fuller diagram would show the relationship in the middle of the diagram, with an equivalent set of institutional and organizational factors for the NGO on one side and for government agencies on the other.

13

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