

NGOs and Their Potential in Post-colonial Societies

Abstract This chapter sets out and analyses the roles of NGOs in post-colonial contexts towards understanding the extent to which NGOs act as facilitators of local development; the extent to which NGOs strengthen the local policy processes by encouraging people's participation; the possibilities of collaboration between NGOs and government in designing and implementing policies and programmes; and the possibilities of NGOs to act as intermediaries in networking between national, provincial and local government and the people. The chapter sets out the theoretical framework and the main arguments of the book through exploring post-colonial theory, government-NGO relations and policy network theory.

Keywords Local development • People's participation • Post-colonial theory • Government-NGO relations • Policy network theory

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Sri Lankan politics occur within the context of a unitary state structure where power is concentrated at the centre. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) within Sri Lanka have tended to be viewed by nationalists as imperial agents and threats to the sovereignty of the country. Therefore, in the contemporary Sri Lankan setting, the role played by NGOs in promoting social and economic development is both political and controversial.

After the tsunami disaster of December 2004, and with the end of war in May 2009, large amounts of foreign aid flowed into Sri Lanka for relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation. With central government overseeing the administration of this aid, its role in controlling the direction of social and economic development has increased significantly, while provincial and local government have had less influence. The aid, resources and technologies of the NGOs have typically been used for the government's large-scale construction projects¹ under the name of 'reconstruction and infrastructure development projects'. As this has happened, the aspirations and needs of the local communities have been neglected.²

Despite these centralising tendencies, NGOs have played an important role in supporting local government and local development through addressing the needs of local communities and stressing the development of human resources over physical infrastructure,³ and have influenced central government decisions on local policy, supporting the implementation of local policy effectively, and encouraging people's participation in the local policy process. This chapter reviews a group of theories related to post-colonial societies and assesses the impact of NGOs on local government and local development.

2.2 POST-COLONIAL SOCIETIES AND NGOS

The history of colonialism changed the economic, political, social and cultural structures of many colonised countries, leaving them with no chance of returning to their pre-colonial states. However, this has not meant that former colonies have lost their old social structures or have fully adopted new colonial structures. Instead, many former colonised countries are left with complex arrangements, a hybrid of new colonial settings and old societal structures.

Since 1505 Sri Lanka had been under Portuguese, Dutch and British colonial rule for more than four centuries. Sri Lankan pre-colonial

¹Large-scale construction projects include the reconstruction and infrastructure development projects such as roads, highways, bridges, airports, harbours, government buildings, tourist hotels, factories and sports complexes. These projects are mostly foreign-funded and controlled fully or partly by the central government.

²See ACIDI-CIDA, "Tsunami Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Programme".

³Kleymeyer, *Cultural Expression and Grassroots Development*, 4–6.

society was characterised by much complexity, arising from the many different ethnic, religious and caste systems and the existence of many related cultures. When colonial social and political structures were introduced into this environment, the complexities associated with governing only increased. For example, when the colonial rulers promoted Western religions, a considerable number of Buddhist and Hindu adherents converted to Christianity, while those who remained as Buddhists imitated the new Protestant system of education and started Buddhist schools aimed at competing with Catholic schools. It was within the context of such complexities that colonial administrative and governing structures were established and the traditional society transformed.

Following independence in 1948, the ruling power shifted from colonial masters to post-colonial rulers who have since been faced with the need to address the enduring complexities resulting from the history of colonialism. The multiple layers of colonial and pre-colonial social, political and economic structures have left post-independence rulers facing many difficulties. For example, with the British education system and the temple-based, ancient Buddhist education system (*Piriven*), both have remained and co exist. Alongside the British-based system of administration and government, ethnic, religious, caste and social class hierarchies have remained. Additionally, alongside an export-oriented economy designed to meet the needs of former colonial powers, the pre-colonial, traditional agricultural system remains. And while the indigenous cultures have been combined with and influenced by Western culture, those cultures have not been demonstrably altered.

A complicating factor is that post-independence rulers have had to continue to depend on former colonial masters, especially in the area of the economy. This dependency has provided a path for NGOs to become involved in the development problems facing Sri Lanka. The growing involvement of NGOs, however, has been criticised by anti-colonial nationalists in Sri Lanka. Some of their arguments can be found in post-colonial theory. This theory offers a set of ideas that help identify and explain the difficulties of governing in a post-independence environment.

2.2.1 *Addressing Post-colonial Complexities*

The term 'post-colonial' refers to a period after the end of colonialism and the experiences of countries formerly under the control of the

Western/European colonial powers. It focuses on the impact of colonial acquisition and control⁴ over resources, territories and cultures.

As colonialism has taken many forms and has many histories, decolonisation has been similarly multiform and complex.⁵ In another way, the experience of a new sovereignty typically encouraged the development of a post-colonial culture which radically revised the ethos and ideologies of the colonial state.⁶ Post-colonial also specifies a transformed historical situation, and the cultural formations that have arisen in response to changed political circumstances, in the former colonial power.⁷ It identifies that there is a continuation of colonialism, albeit through different or new politico-economic, socio-cultural relationships of the former colonies.

Post-colonial theory seeks to understand and explain these post-colonial situations. It is used for analysing the many strategies by which colonised societies have engaged imperial discourse, and for studying the ways in which many of those strategies are shared by colonised societies, re-emerging in very different political and cultural circumstances.⁸ This theory and criticism represents an attempt to investigate the complex and deeply fraught dynamics of modern Western colonialism and anti-colonial resistance, and the ongoing significance of the colonial encounter for people's lives both in the West and elsewhere.⁹ Post-colonial theory formulates its critique around the social histories, cultural differences and the political discrimination practised and normalised by colonial and imperial machineries.¹⁰ This theory provides a framework which encourages former colonies to utilise, strengthen and develop the resources of their own histories and political and intellectual traditions.¹¹ When national sovereignty or independence was finally achieved, countries moved from colonial to apparently autonomous, post-colonial status and in many ways, this represented only a beginning, a relatively minor move from direct to indirect rule, a shift from colonial rule and domination

⁴ Childs and Williams, *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory*, 1, 10.

⁵ Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory*, 203.

⁶ Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*, 57.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ashcroft, *Post-colonial Transformation*, 7.

⁹ Prasad, "The Gaze of the Other," 5.

¹⁰ Rukundwa and Aarde, "The Formation of Postcolonial Theory".

¹¹ Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*, 66.

to a position, not so much of independence, as in-dependence.¹² Post-colonial theory recognises, therefore, that although formerly colonised territories gained their political sovereignty, they remained subject to the effective control of the major world powers, which constituted the same group as the former imperial powers.¹³ Such economic dependency on international organisations (IOs) and on former colonial powers has been identified by neo-colonial critics as a new form of colonialism.

The critique of neo-colonialism which focuses on aid programmes argues that the economic object of neo-colonialism has been to keep the living standards of the less developed countries depressed in the interests of the colonial masters. In this way, 'aid' to a former colony is merely a form of revolving credit, paid by the neo-colonial master, passing through the neo-colonial state and returning to the neo-colonial master in the form of increased profits.¹⁴ These criticisms of international involvement in former colonies portray that injections of foreign capital lead to processes which result in the ongoing exploitation of the former colonies and, in turn, the difficulties of government in post-independence contexts are related to the legacy of colonialism.

It is not only IOs which are considered as the vehicles for neo-colonial processes by anti-colonial nationalists. NGOs which constitute the 'Third Sector'¹⁵ have begun to play an increasing role in less developed countries, mainly through various aid programmes. NGOs that provide aid are, however, seen by neo-colonialist critics as a means by which former colonial-style relationships are sustained. They argue that former colonial powers are still responsible for the underdevelopment of former colonies. But this picture has changed over the years. A significant number of Asian, African and South American countries, which were former colonies, have been able to achieve remarkable economic growth and are being referred to as part of a category of newly industrialised countries (NICs).¹⁶ The category of NIC is a socio-economic classification applied to several countries around the world by political scientists

¹²Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*, 3.

¹³Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*, 45.

¹⁴Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism*.

¹⁵Sarkar, *NGOs and Globalization*, 8.

¹⁶For examples, from Asia, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, China, India, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand; from Africa, South Africa; and from South America, Brazil have been identified as NICs.

and economists. NICs usually share some other common features such as increased social freedoms and civil rights, a switch from agricultural to industrial economies, especially in the manufacturing sector, an increasingly open-market economy, allowing free trade with other nations in the world, large national corporations operating in several continents, strong capital investment from foreign countries, political leadership in their area of influence, and rapid growth of urban centres and population.¹⁷ For NICs, colonialism is not the barrier it was earlier as former colonies pursue development.

Post-colonial theory tends not to identify productive and positive aspects of the relationships between former colonies and colonising powers. Although post-colonial theory provides a background to identify and explain complexities of the post-colonial societies, it draws a negative picture of Western influences on former colonies and of the positive influence of former colonial powers in addressing the complexities of the former colonies through NGOs.

2.3 GOVERNMENT-NGO RELATIONS

The capacities of NGOs to contribute towards effective governance in post-colonial societies have been widely discussed with critical scholars arguing that they do represent a new form of imperial agency and constitute a new form of colonialism,¹⁸ with a tendency to undermine the sovereignty of the state.

Many of these critiques are based on the relations between governments and NGOs. While some governments are found to collaborate effectively with NGOs in the pursuit of socio-economic development, others are more wary of the implication that NGO involvement suggests governments are neglecting their responsibilities. Still others are found to try to control the way NGOs administer foreign aid, and seek to direct that in a way that reflects favourably on the government. Against this background, government-NGO relations can be seen to take various forms, both within countries over time, and across countries.¹⁹

¹⁷See Bozyk, *Globalization and the Transformation*.

¹⁸Lewis and Opoku-Mensah, "Policy Arena," 668, 670.

¹⁹See Appadurai, "Grassroots Globalization".

NGO involvement and government responses have taken many forms over time²⁰ in different situations and different policy areas in Sri Lanka. After more than six decades of independence, Sri Lankan society has continued to have many problems leading to and resulting in internal conflict and political disorder. Over this period, ethnic conflict has been an important driver of state policy. During and in the immediate aftermath of the war, which had consumed the full attention of the central government, the needs of local communities were basically neglected.²¹ In this context, attempts by NGOs to support the war-affected people and local communities, including encouraging their participation in local policy processes, have been significant.²² However, in the context that central government plays a dominant role, NGOs have not been encouraged to become involved in local government and local development.

2.3.1 *Governments and NGOs: Conflicts and Collaborations*

The relations between governments and NGOs are at times conflicting and collaborative at other times. Appadurai notes:

NGOs concerned with mobilising highly specific local, national, and regional groups on matters of equity, access, justice, and redistribution ... have complex relations with the state, with the official public sphere, with international civil society initiatives, and with local communities. Sometimes they are uncomfortably complicit with the policies of the nation-state and sometimes they are violently opposed to these policies. Sometimes they have grown wealthy and powerful enough to constitute major political forces in their own right and sometimes they are weak in everything except their transparency and local legitimacy.²³

The above statement reflects many of the dimensions and complexities of NGOs and their national and international relations. The main point highlighted here is that the relations between government and NGOs depend on the strengths and weaknesses of both parties.

²⁰Wickramasinghe, *Civil Society in Sri Lanka*, 84.

²¹Asia Economic Institute, "Economic Impacts".

²²See Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government, *Performance—2005 & Future Plans—2006* and Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils, *Progress Report 2009, Future Plans 2010*.

²³Appadurai, "Grassroots Globalization," 16–17.

The fear held by some governments of losing control of their own agendas is one reason to exclude NGO involvement in policy matters.²⁴ Moreover, such governments fear that politically sensitive issues can be transmitted to the wider public through NGOs and that this can lead to political pressure.²⁵ This leads some governments to put in place restrictions over NGOs. Bratton notes:

Because NGO activities can involve a wide range of sensitive political actors – donors in the international arena, neighbouring countries in the region, and social groups within its own territory – a government may even come to view NGOs through the lens of state security. Where leaders are confident of their grip on power, they will not fear a populace mobilised in autonomous organisations. The more fragile a government's sense of political legitimacy, the less permissive it is likely to be toward the institutionalisation of a strong voluntary sector. Therefore, the amount of space allowed to NGOs in any given country is determined first and foremost by political considerations rather than by any calculation of the contribution of NGOs to economic and social development.²⁶

While many government leaders express hostile attitudes to NGOs, even in broadly democratic societies, Willetts comments that virtually all government leaders, including those who have expressed hostility, will work with NGOs when they see them as allies in support of their political goals.²⁷ NGOs have to determine whether they can work within restrictions put on them by government, and work in accordance with government agendas, or whether to do so would undermine the NGOs' role in addressing actual needs at the local level.

A wide range of economic, social and technical problems outstrip the capacities of most national governments,²⁸ and in this context the capacities of NGOs to solve such problems have become significant. These capacities are based on resources such as expert information, finances, decision-making capacity, popular support or legitimacy, enforcement

²⁴Fitzduff and Church, "Stepping up to the Table," 9–10.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 10.

²⁶Bratton, "The Politics of Government-NGO Relations," *World Development*, 576.

²⁷Willetts, "What is a Non-Governmental Organization".

²⁸Pentland, "International Organizations and Their Roles," 244.

capabilities and diplomatic skills.²⁹ According to Bratton, governments see the strength of NGOs as a great weakness of government, but tend to value the NGOs largely because of the additional flows of development capital they attract.³⁰ While reporting the issues raised in the symposium on 'Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs' held in London in March 1987, Drabek points that the governments sometimes try to maintain control over NGOs precisely because of the NGOs' access to funds.³¹ For Willis, NGOs are often regarded as the answer to the perceived limitations of the state. NGOs have been able to provide services for local communities when government assistance is not forthcoming or appropriate.³² NGOs act as facilitators or catalysts of local development efforts.³³ There is a growing interest in the rural development field in the role of NGOs as innovators of new technologies and approaches to working with the poor.³⁴ One of the earliest examples of the pro-NGO case is Michael Cernea's report, written in 1988 for the World Bank (WB), which cites the NGOs' main contributions as strengthening local organisational capacity. He notes that the NGO priority on first organising the people embodies a philosophy that recognises the centrality of people in development policies and action programmes and the importance of self-organisation.³⁵

The role of NGOs is recognised as including the organisation of people to make better use of local productive resources, create new resources and services, promote equity, alleviate poverty and influence government actions towards these same objectives while establishing new institutional frameworks to sustain people-centred development. According to Cernea, many NGOs have been found to possess a comparative advantage over government agencies in four main areas: (1) NGOs reach the poor in remote areas where government assistance does not exist or is ineffective; (2) NGOs operate at a lower cost due to the voluntary nature of their activities and lower technological overheads; (3) NGOs promote local participation by working with community

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Bratton, "The Politics of Government-NGO Relations," *World Development*, 584.

³¹Drabek, "Development Alternatives," *World Development*, xiv.

³²Willis, *Theories and Practices*, 98–100.

³³Drabek, "Development Alternatives," *World Development*, x.

³⁴Lewis, "Individuals, Organisations and Public Action," 202.

³⁵Cited in Lewis, *The Management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations*, 77.

groups as partners emphasising self-help initiatives and local control of programmes; and (4) NGOs innovate and adapt to local conditions and needs.³⁶ Kloos points out four reasons for government's collaboration with NGOs: (1) NGOs can carry out activities such as local-level development and services with greater efficiency and more know-how than government; (2) NGOs can carry out tasks that cannot be carried out by government for political reasons (e.g. carrying out medical tasks in militarily uncleared areas); (3) NGOs can tap foreign financial and other resources that are more easily accessible for them than for government; and (4) The existence of NGOs is a legitimization of government's democratic intentions.³⁷

It is evident that NGOs are potentially significant partners with the capacities to fill gaps created by government limitations and failures. Bratton reports that some governments were organisationally ill-equipped to deliver services and respond to needs at the rural community level. Centralised agencies also lacked information about, and the flexibility to adapt to, local conditions. As a consequence, a phalanx of NGOs with programmes in relief and rural development arose to fill the gaps left by governments.³⁸ By focusing on specific missions and drawing on the support of local communities, NGOs are able to address issues that organisations in other sectors cannot or will not address. Despite massive investment in social programmes, governments have never been able to address fully the multiple needs of their citizens. NGOs, in other words, have emerged in large part to bridge the gap between what governments can do and what society needs or expects.³⁹

The policies and programmes set up at the official level may have little chance of successful implementation if they are not adequately tailored to people's needs at the local community level.⁴⁰ Fitzduff and Church further note that policy makers often find it difficult to access and address local needs and conditions unless these are established within an identifiable framework. NGOs can bring contextually relevant, locally sourced knowledge to the policy table which is a necessary dimension

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Kloos, *The Sri Lankan Government and the NGO's*, 25–26.

³⁸Bratton, "Non-Governmental Organizations in Africa," *Development and Change*, 88.

³⁹Seffrin, "United States Nongovernmental Organizations".

⁴⁰Fitzduff and Church, "Stepping up to the Table," 13–14.

for successful policy making.⁴¹ NGOs are believed to work effectively with local communities through organising and service delivery and to develop innovative solutions to local problems.⁴²

NGO activism may become, on some issues, an alternative to governmental responsibility rather than a hindrance to policy. International NGOs can relieve governments of political responsibilities while appearing to hold them responsible.⁴³ A government may ignore their responsibilities by handing such responsibilities to NGOs. On the other hand, Fitzduff and Church argue that NGOs need to consider the potential loss of independence that may result from cooperating too closely with government.⁴⁴ Furthermore, NGOs may not want to be limited or constrained by state or other official concerns, but the very process of joint decision making, and the relationships developed therein, may mean that NGOs find it increasingly difficult to criticise governments and others. NGOs can lose their credibility as independent and neutral actors in the eyes of those they are seeking to work with on the ground, resulting in a significant loss, as trust and goodwill are the crucial features of an NGO's attractiveness to local people.⁴⁵ Although it is necessary for the NGOs to cooperate with and complement the efforts of the government, they must not subject their operations, finances and activities to governmental control and manipulation.⁴⁶ Bratton suggests that government-NGO relations are likely to be most constructive where a confident and capable government with populist policies meets an NGO that works to pursue mainstream development programmes. These relations are more controversial where a weak and defensive government with a limited power base meets an NGO that seeks to promote community mobilisation.⁴⁷ This book seeks to understand how to positively utilise the contribution of NGOs in local government and local development.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Lewis and Opoku-Mensah, "Policy Arena: Moving Forward," 666–667.

⁴³ DeMars, *NGOs and Transnational Networks*, 60.

⁴⁴ Fitzduff and Church, "Stepping up to the Table," 12–13.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Badu and Parker, "The Role of Non-governmental Organisations," *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 38.

⁴⁷ Bratton, "The Politics of Government-NGO Relations," *World Development*, 585.

2.4 POLICY PROCESS AND THE INTERACTIONS OF NGOs

Government policy can be thought of as emerging from a ‘policy process’ that consists of various stages⁴⁸ and includes several actors.⁴⁹ Although there is potential for multiple actors to be involved, the government is generally seen as a prominent and dominant actor in all stages of the policy process.⁵⁰

As discussed above, in the Sri Lankan government context, authoritative power is strongly centralised⁵¹ and the local level is neglected. Local communities remain voiceless even in the local government policy processes, leaving many needs at the local level to remain neglected and unaddressed.

The potential contribution of NGOs in addressing the needs at the local level is significant. NGOs are seen as appropriate actors to encourage people’s participation and to build networks among various policy actors at the local level.⁵² This opens a way to address post-colonial complexities and to strengthen government-NGO relations. It is, therefore, relevant to review the issues related to people’s participation in the local policy processes, NGOs and their interactions in the policy process, and the relevance of policy network theory in addressing such issues.

2.4.1 *NGOs as Policy Actors: Promotion of People’s Participation*

A government-centric view of the policy process is a significant matter. The policy process seeks to take account of the manner in which problems get conceptualised and are brought to the government for solution; the governmental institutions and processes by which alternatives are formulated and policy solutions selected; and the implementation, evaluation, and revision of those solutions.⁵³ Policy is of major concern at the highest levels of government, and the work of the executive—the prime minister, or president, and cabinet—is dominated by policy

⁴⁸See Hogwood and Gunn, *Policy Analysis for the Real World*, 7–10.

⁴⁹See Howlett et al., *Studying Public Policy*, 46–57.

⁵⁰See Birkland, *An Introduction to the Policy Process*, Sabatier, “Fostering the Development of Policy Theory,” and Colebatch, *Policy*.

⁵¹Uyangoda, “Sri Lanka Post the LTTE”.

⁵²See Fernandez, “NGOs in South Asia,” *World Development*.

⁵³Sabatier, “Fostering the Development of Policy Theory,” 3.

decisions.⁵⁴ There are many voices within government, each viewing the issue from its own perspective and each seeking to turn policy making to its advantage.⁵⁵

In most democratic states, policy decisions are taken by representative institutions that empower specialised actors to determine the scope and content of public policies, but these institutions do not, as a matter of course, provide mechanisms through which the public can directly determine policy.⁵⁶ It follows that the public's role in policy making cannot be taken for granted as either straightforward or decisive. But neither should it be ignored. Elections rarely provide focused public input on specific policy options.⁵⁷ Anderson concludes that most people do not take the opportunities to engage directly in shaping public policy. Many people do not vote, engage in political party activities, join pressure groups, or otherwise display much interest in politics.⁵⁸ Through this, issues arise such as determining policy without the direct involvement of the public leading to inappropriate policies which do not address the actual needs of communities at the local level, and the policy process would be more successful if it took into account the ideas and needs of the people subjected to such policies.

Building public participation into the decision-making process can mean a broader range of policy considerations can be met.⁵⁹ Participation procedures focus on a single, discrete issue area, unlike representative politics, which bundles up disparate issues into unconnected bundles, such as election manifestos or legislative programmes.⁶⁰ Consequently, Colebatch argues that it is easier for some people, and more difficult for others, to take part in the policy process. A critical question is how people with little standing can challenge the existing order and participate in the policy process.⁶¹ Schattschneider argues that it is not necessarily true that people with the greatest needs participate

⁵⁴Colebatch, *Policy*, 40.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 125.

⁵⁶Howlett et al., *Studying Public Policy*, 63–64.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 65.

⁵⁸Anderson, *Public Policymaking: An Introduction*, 65–67.

⁵⁹Dunleavy and O'Leary, *Theories of the State*, 312–313.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

⁶¹Colebatch, *Policy*, 27.

in politics most actively.⁶² Those with power can exclude issues and problems from the policy-making agenda.⁶³ This non-decision making suggests that policy makers with power have the capacity to keep issues off the agenda which they control.⁶⁴ There is a need to represent the actual needs of the people in the policy process and to organise the people towards participating in the policy process.

In policy-making processes, expertise becomes an important way of organising policy activity.⁶⁵ The different levels of expertise and finance that IOs can deploy often turn out to be crucial determinants of the impact that international actors can have on domestic policies.⁶⁶ Osman refers to IOs and NGOs as donor agencies and voluntary agencies and notes how the scarcity of financial resources in developing countries has made donor agencies another dominant policy actor.⁶⁷ According to Bratton, NGOs have useful ideas to offer to rural development planners. By demonstrating alternative methods of getting things done at the village level, they can offer policy suggestions on questions of local resource mobilisation, recurrent cost recovery and programme sustainability.⁶⁸ Furthermore, NGOs have an important role to play in political development to the extent that they can offer ordinary people an opportunity to participate in decisions and represent local interests.⁶⁹ Therefore, other than their primary contribution to improve the delivery of economic and social services to poor populations, NGOs have an important contribution to make to the policy process where the content of rural development policies is shaped and decided.⁷⁰ This leads to arguing that NGOs can provide expertise in assisting people and government towards policy negotiations, and NGOs might contribute to mechanisms to organise people at the local level to participate in the policy process.

⁶²Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People*, 105.

⁶³Bachrach and Baratz, "Decisions and Non-Decisions," *American Political Science Review*, 641–651.

⁶⁴Anderson, *Public Policymaking: An Introduction*, 94–95.

⁶⁵Colebatch, *Policy*, 28–29.

⁶⁶Howlett et al., *Studying Public Policy*, 76.

⁶⁷Osman, "Public Policy Making".

⁶⁸Bratton, "The Politics of Government-NGO Relations," *World Development*, 582–583.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 585.

⁷⁰Bratton, "Non-Governmental Organizations in Africa," *Development and Change*, 116.

We might think of NGOs as being a part of the policy networks in which public and private actors interact. Policy networks are recognised as consisting of a bounded set of actors and one or more sets of relations that connect these actors.⁷¹ They may be informal or rule-governed.⁷² Policy network theory, to a greater or lesser degree, recognises that ideas as well as interests bind together the groups and individuals in a policy sector.⁷³ In seeking to address a policy issue related to a specific community, a policy network will bring together government representatives, community-based organisations (CBOs), intellectuals, NGOs and others. In sharing ideas in policy networks, people gain an understanding of various problems and how to encourage participation in policy networks. For example, participatory rural appraisal (PRA) can be identified as a networking approach used by NGOs to incorporate the knowledge and opinions of rural people in the planning and management of development projects and programmes.⁷⁴

NGO and IO involvement in creating policy networks helps in mobilising local activists, social movements, and other civil society organisations which can pressure governments to change their policies and practices.⁷⁵ According to DeMars, NGOs are the constitutive actors of networks: no NGOs, no network. Without NGOs, other actors with the potential to participate in a network may be present, but the leadership of NGOs is required to activate the network.⁷⁶ NGOs are, in his view, the most influential actors in networking.⁷⁷ It is worth arguing that the possibilities for NGOs to be involved in the policy process as intermediate actors, especially at the local level through networking with the people, local organisations and local government would lead to effective local development.

⁷¹Knoke, "Policy Networks," 210–211.

⁷²Scharpf, *Games Real Actors Play*, 116–151.

⁷³Fischer, *Reframing Public Policy*, 32.

⁷⁴Chambers, *Whose Reality Counts?* 106.

⁷⁵Knoke, "Policy Networks," 215.

⁷⁶DeMars, *NGOs and Transnational Networks*, 51–52.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 52.

2.5 CONCLUSION

Through reviewing the key insights from post-colonial theory, particularly the way that it focuses on foreign aid and NGOs as contemporary forms of colonialism, the potential for NGOs to act as agents in addressing the complexities of the post-colonial societies and governance has been recognised. The government-NGO relations and the ways in which they are in conflict or collaborate are significant issues. Government's response to NGOs is the decisive factor in determining whether there is benefit from such relations. The government-NGO relations diverge according to the differences in governments and NGO agendas. The government may hold a fear about NGOs, suspecting they might undermine the government's decisive power. Although there is a potential to neglect the actual needs of the people in government-centric policy processes, NGOs can promote people's participation in the policy processes at the local level by facilitating networks of policy actors.

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