



NGOs and government working in partnership: Pros and Cons

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Defining NGOs

- Organised
- Private
- Not-profit distributing
- Self-governing
- Non-compulsory





Why look at NGO-government relationships?

- The NGO is a significant sector in NZ
 - Contributed to 4.9% of GDP overall
 - 97,000 NGOs & workforce larger than most industries
- Increase of government support to NGOs in NZ
 - Government funding increase worth \$446 million
 - Recent tax changes to increase giving
- NGO services are increasingly contracted by government – Internationally!
 - NZ Government departmental funding to NGOs: 93% service contracts





NGOs can do great things!

- Contribute to GDP (4.9%)
- Provide essential services
- Fill in the gaps
- Highlight 'minority' groups needs
- Social capital - networks
- Chile, Brazil, Thailand, Indonesia – more democratic



Benefits to the relationship

➤ NGOs gain:

- Financial resources
- Management experience
- Networks with policymakers

➤ Governments gain:

- Specialised services without the work
- Reduced costs
- Ability to tap into local knowledge



Sounds good... what's the problem?

- What community?
 - Strong & diverse civil society?
 - BINGOs & PINGOs
- NGOs replacing the state?
- Who's 'running' the NGO?
- Is the NGO-government relationship good?
 - Accountability



Najam's (2000) Model: The Four C's

Goals (Ends)

		Goals (Ends)	
		Similar	Dissimilar
Strategies (Means)	Similar	Cooperation	Co-optation
	Dissimilar	Complementarity	Confrontation



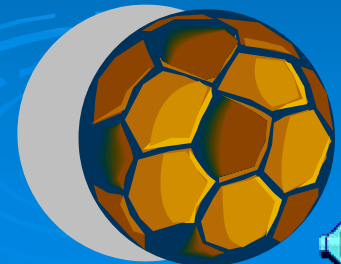
Why use a model?

If we better understand the relationship, then we can work to improve it!



NGO and government relationships: Cooperation

- Similar goals and strategies
- Absence of perceived threat
- Often seen in the 'contract' relationship
 - Health services
 - Environmental conservation services
 - Housing services
 - Welfare services





Potential problems with NGOs as service providers

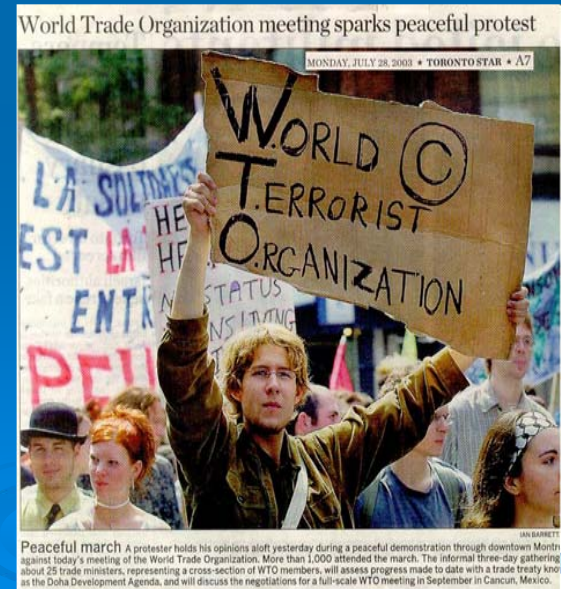
- 1990s Contract culture and mistrust
- Funding and contract process
 - Competitive, 'siloed' \$, uncertainty
- More bureaucratised
 - Networks, development, community, advocacy
- Accountability to citizens
- NGOs as a convenient solution





NGO and government relationships: Confrontational

- Dissimilar strategies and goals
- The Expected relationship?
 - Opportunity for opposing views
- Is this being lost?
 - Advocacy role under funded
 - Lobbying and state money



NGO and government relations: Complementarity

- Similar goals, but dissimilar strategies
 - By Māori for Māori services?
- Can take two forms
 - Government contracts
 - Outside funding
- How much should NGOs supplement government?



NGO and government relations: Co-optation

- Dissimilar goals, but similar strategies
- Each group is trying to influence the other
- The power asymmetry determines which relationship they engage in
 - Environmental NGOs 'win' in Pakistan
- NGOs going beyond the state?
 - Tool to legitimate agenda





'Solutions' in the literature

- Contextualised approach (Mercer 2002)
 - Tangata whenua and Mahi Aroha
- Incorporate soft accountability (Cribb 2006)
 - Balance: control and discretion – trust
 - Regulations: less detailed, outcome focused, 'relational' & long term funding
- Make relationships more transparent
- NGOs working together (NGO Working Group)
- Don't reinvent the wheel!



Conclusion

- NGOs are a significant sector in NZ
- Better understand the sector
 - Civil society, funding, control
- Better understand the relationship
 - Citizens rights & NGO autonomy
- Improve relationships
 - Soft accountability and contextualised approach
 - Work from what we already have



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